PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY

Quarterly Journal

MARY BARHAM JOHNSON
b. 1895
(see inside, pp. 20-22)
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I leant upon a coppice-gate
When Frost was spectre-gray,
And Winter's dregs made desolate
The weakening eye of day.
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky
Like strings of broken lyres,
And all mankind that haunted nigh
Had sought their household fires . . .

At once a voice arose among
The bleak twigs overhead
In a full-hearted evensong
Of joy illimited;
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,
in blast-beruffled plume,
Had chosen thus to fling his soul
Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carollings
Of such ecstatic sound
Was written on terrestrial things
Afar or nigh around,
That I could think there trembled through
His happy good-night air
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew
And I was unaware.

— *The Darkling Thrush* (dated 31st December 1900) in *The Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy – Macmillan 1968.*

See inside, *Parson Woodforde and Nancy,* p. 40.

Issued to Members of the Parson Woodforde Society

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EDITORIAL

It is reasonable, I think, from time to time to stop and contemplate the position of the Society, both looking back on our history from the vantage point of the present day, and forward to what remains still to be done. Our financial state is much sounder than it used to be, thanks to the sterling work of our Chairman. Tne number of subscribing members keeps up well. While discussion and elucidation of James Woodforde's diary must be the main task of the Journal, the policy of extending the boundaries of relevancy to include much that was part of his familiar world, without his necessarily having been directly concerned in it, has I hope preserved us from the parochialism which dogs so many Societies formed to celebrate one particular figure in history or literature.

But the diary must come first. With the appearance of our latest publication, *Ansford Diary III,* the complete text of the diary for another three years, 1766-1768, is made available. The usual detailed notes not only make some expressions more immediately intelligible for modern readers but also do something to provide a historical background to the diarist's life in those years.

The successor to this volume is already far enough advanced for five-sixths of its text to be in the fair copy provided by the typist. It may be thought that by producing at such a speed we are in danger of outstripping our possibilities in the matter of publication. The point is surely that, while a given portion of the diarist's text in the rough-typed stage is no more than archive material, the availability of fair copies which have been provided for the printer must count among the important assets of the Society.

It is naturally disappointing that, after so many years, the general reading public's impression of Woodforde is still by and large that created by the Beresford edition. No text-book on eighteenth century social history is now complete without one or two quotations from the diary; but they continue to be about food, or the kind put in to provide a little comic light relief. It is

true that a reader looking for serious discussion of Woodforde's life and times will not find much of it outside the pages of the Journal. All the same, it is better for such writing to be there than nowhere at all, which would have been the case if the Society had not come into being.

– R. L. WINSTANLEY
Editor

GEOFFREY GRIGSON

Mr. Geoffrey Grigson, the poet, died on 25 November, aged 80. His family came from Cornwall, where he was born. Readers of the Beresford edition will perhaps recollect "A Mr. Grigson, a young Clergyman", whom Woodforde met at Mr. Bodham's on 22/5/1781. He was never married; but Geoffrey Grigson was a direct descendant of his brother.

Grigson was a many-sided man. Indeed, his standing as a poet might well have been higher if it had not been for his remarkable diversity of interests. He was a literary journalist of great skill, compiler of anthologies, editor, critic. As the *Times* has said, he was "a man of letters" in the broadest sense of that term. Perhaps his keenest interests lay in the direction of English romantic poetry and painting, and especially their relationship to the landscape. He had a great love for our countryside, on which he was a first-hand authority; while unlike many historians he had an understanding and appreciation of natural history that matched his knowledge of the human past.

No doubt we in the Society were a trifle disappointed that so intelligent and sensitive a man did not show more sympathy with Parson Woodforde. In a review of the latest reimpression of Beresford put out by O.U.P., Grigson called the diarist *a glutton of gluttons,* this harsh verdict appearing in the headline above the article. My letter, pointing out that it is impossible to tell whether anyone is a glutton until one knows how much he eats, of which there is no direct evidence in the diary to enable us to judge, elicited no reply.

Mr. Grigson was married three times. His third wife, by whom he is survived, was Jane Grigson, the noted cookery expert. Our sympathy is extended to her in her sad bereavement. (ed.)

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Your committee will be meeting shortly to discuss the future of our annual Gathering. Following that meeting you will be asked to indicate your views. Meanwhile, I renew my invitation to any member who has proposals or suggestions for the committee's consideration, to write to me immediately.

As promised, details of the Society's new volume of previously unpublished diary material are enclosed with this Journal. Printing is already well advanced and copies will be despatched as soon as can be arranged. This volume contains two indices, one for the years covered by the text and, in addition, a very useful index for the two earlier Ansford volumes. Members are reminded that it may not be possible to maintain the pre-publication price after the end of the year, so please order early.

Members may be interested to hear of the production of a greetings card to be sold in aid of St. Andrew's, Ansford, the church so well known to James Woodforde. The cards are of two kinds, a plain card bearing no message and one with a simple Christmas greeting. The cards are illustrated with a pencil drawing of St. Andrew's by a local artist. Copies, at £1.25 for 10, with envelopes, may be obtained from Mr. R. L. C. Goodall, 23 Woodforde Green, Ansford, Castle Cary, BA7 7LD.

I write these notes in November but by the time they are in your hands Christmas and 1986 will be almost upon us. Your Society can be justly proud of the fact that the year so nearly over saw a successful Norfolk Gathering, the continuation of our long term plan to make the full diary text available and, thanks to our tireless editor, a Journal which maintains a constant, superlative standard. I hope that we may anticipate an equally good year in 1986. May I extend to all members, their families and friends, traditional good wishes for both Christmas and the New Year, together with the hope that the diaries and our Journal will continue to give pleasure.

– G. H. BUNTING
Chairman

TALES OF TWO PLAYERS

When Goldsmith in one of his essays made use of the phrase "Bloody work at Drury Lane", he was of course alluding to the fictional violence which was mimed and declaimed, night after night, upon the boards, in the melodramatic productions so favoured by eighteenth century audiences. Still, I think actors have often shown a tendency to be influenced in their personal conduct by the roles they played on stage, and it may have been that the atmosphere of histrionic mayhem they breathed helped occasionally to produce real, not simulated, blood, wounds and death. Heroic tragedy deals by definition with the actions of the hero; that is, aggressive hyper-masculine behaviour which was held up as an ideal to be followed and imitated. It is of course possible that the two persons featured here, both notably bad-tempered and quarrelsome by nature, would have been much the same, whatever the way they had chosen to earn their living. But it is likely also that their avocation was not, in the circumstances of the time, one best suited to develop qualities of restraint and self-control. So much, then, for a preamble to our pair of related stories of the Georgian theatre.

James Quin, the illegitimate son of a barrister and grandson of a mayor of Dublin, was born in the actors' parish of Covent Garden, London, in 1693. His mother called herself a widow but appears to have had a husband, whose name was Grinsell, living at that date, and a son by him. After the death of his father in 1710 Quin brought an action in Chancery against this half-brother, for the recovery of his patrimony. It is difficult to see what claim he could have had, as the law respecting legitimacy stood at that time; and in any case Quin lacked the money to continue the suit. It was about this time that he first went on the stage, at the Smock Alley theatre in Dublin. By 1714 or early 1715 he had effected his transition to the great London theatre at Drury Lane.

Although his fame was overshadowed by the spectacular career of his younger rival Garrick, he was a successful and popular actor, well-known on the London stage for well over 30 years. He had a considerable reputation as an eccentric and joker, and

appears under his own name as one of the characters in Smollett's *Humphry Clinker* (1771). He was a man of some cultural pretensions, and as such one of the notorious "improvers" of Shakespeare, with which his time abounded:

> Mr. Quin had, during the course of his acting, from his judgment of the English language and the knowledge of the history of Great Britain, corrected many mistakes which our immortal bard Shakespeare had by oversight, or the volatileness of his genius, suffered to creep into his works; he also changed many obsolete phrases in his favourite poet . . .

Well, we know what this sort of thing amounted to. For example, Macbeth's desperate cry to the soldier: *The devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced loon! Where got'st thou that goose-look?* became *Friend, what means thy change of countenance?* – which sounds rather like Dr. Thorne enquiring why his patient doesn't look very well! Contemporary plays, of course, were mostly written in the stilted and unnatural language thought appropriate for the high drama. It was very different, as we shall see, from the way the actors actually spoke when they were off duty.

However, Quin's efforts as a linguistic reformer and his stage reputation brought him to the notice of the Prince of Wales, history's "poor Fred", who took him on as tutor in the English language to the royal children. They acted in plays under his direction. When the young George III made his first speech from the throne and was praised in Quin's hearing for the way it was delivered, he "cried out in a kind of ecstasy – 'Ay – I taught the boy to speak.' ". Quin remained on the stage until his late fifties. Then he retired to Bath where, with an annuity of £200 and "two thousand more in the funds", later supplemented by a pension from the king, he lived in comfort until his death in 1766. He was buried in the Abbey church, Garrick himself contributing the rhymed inscription on his tomb.

Almost at once there appeared a little book with the title of *The Life of Mr. James Quin, Comedian,* dedicated to Garrick. We have already cited a passage from this source. The D.N.B. writer had a low opinion of it, calling it "a lying biography". In

spite of that he accepted a story from it, to the effect that Quin killed a fellow-actor named Williams, "a native of Wales", in a sort of informal duel "under the Piazza" at Covent Garden, which was indeed a notable duelling place. But if we credit this we must then accept that Quin took the life of two people and was tried twice, both trials ending in the same verdict. I think it is a fiction concocted by a writer who knew hardly anything about Quin's life. Aware that the actor had been tried for murder, he no doubt found it easier to invent an anecdote than to research the facts. There is not a word in the *Life* about the real happening. For this the primary source is a book which appeared in 1721, entitled *A Compleat Collection of Remarkable Tryals of the most Notorious Malefactors at the Sessions House in the Old Bailey, from the year 1706, to the last Sessions 1720.* The part of this compilation which refers to Quin was added as a supplement by the editor of the 1887 reprint of the *Life.*

I think there is an immediacy and a vividness about trial depositions which are unmatched in any other historical document. Out of the amorphous and largely forgotten past there emerge scenes of a sudden dazzling clarity, as ordinary people respond to pressure to remember in detail what they saw and heard, what they said and did, during one very short space of time. Even the slight variations between one testimony and another, the different emphasis put upon the same sequence of events by prosecution and defence witnesses, highlight the accuracy of the whole and its essential truth.

James Quin was indicted for "The Murther of *William Bowen,* Gent., on the 17th of April, 1718, by giving him one mortal Wound with a Sword on the right side of his Belly, of the breadth of one Inch and the depth of four Inches, of which Wound he languished till the 20th, and then Died".

On the afternoon of that day, between 4 and 5 o' clock, Quin and Bowen, a fellow-actor, sat in the "Fleece Tavern Cornhill", drinking and arguing. As a witness was to testify, they "put pretty smartly upon one another with cutting jests". With some asperity they criticized each other's theatrical perfor-

mances, then began to dispute about honesty. Bowen boasted, "giving himself the Character of *as honest a man as any man in the World*". The argument got to the point of making a bet upon it, and stakes were handed to the witness. Quin then "charged *Mr. Bowen* with sometimes drinking Healths to the *Duke of Ormond* and at other times refusing it." The Duke was a leading Jacobite,* the Fifteen lay a mere three years back in the past, and passions were still liable to run high on the subject. Quin, pressing his advantage home, asked the other people in the room: "how could he be as honest a man as any was in the World who acted upon two different Principles?". The company agreed that it was impossible. We hear that "this Discourse was all the while carry'd on with a jocular air"; but as soon as the decision went against Bowen and he lost his wager, he "in a hasty sort of manner rose up, flung down some Money for the Reckoning, saying that he could not bear it, but must be gone". With that he left; but, the witness added, "he did not perceive in him any signs of a Resentment that should produce so fatal a consequence".

A short time later, a porter appeared, enquiring if Quin were still there. He whispered something to the actor, who left with him. These porters, often seen in the literature of the time, seem always to have been available to carry messages when required. The name of this man was Thomas Antrum, and he later deposed that Bowen had spoken to him "as he was standing by *Tom's Coffee House,* in *Cornhill*", told him to go to the Fleece and call out Quin, but given him nothing for his pains. On meeting again, Quin and Bowen first went to another inn, the Swan; but Bowen objected to the room they were given, as it smelled of fresh paint, and to the "Great Room . . . because of some Gentlemen drinking at one end of it". They left and so came to the Pope's Head, not far distant.

Bowen's son said his father had told him

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* *British Diarists of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries – X, Lady Eleanor Butler* in *Journal XVIII, 1, pp. 34-35.*

> . . . that he met *Mr. Quinn* [sic] at the *Fleece Tavern,* in Cornhill, who was always abusive to him, and he having given him provoking language there, he went away, and sent for him out to desire him not to give himself that freedom of Speech against him. That . . . they went . . . afterwards to the *Pope's Head,* where with a Volley of Oaths he gave him abusive Language, barricaded the Door with two Chairs, and he having given him such foul Language he could not bear, their Swords were drawn, and he catching *Mr. Quinn* by the Sword arm he wrested himself from him and gave him that Wound.

It may be necessary to read that passage twice, in order to disentangle the pronouns; but in it Quin emerges clearly as the aggressor. It was Quin who prevented the escape of his adversary, uttered the "foul Language" and, Bowen having vainly tried to stop him by grabbing at Quin's arm, had delivered the fatal thrust.

Mary Sewel stated that Bowen, half an hour before he died, had said he was "barbarously murther'd". Essex Weller, very hostile to Quin, said that the latter and Bowen had been on bad terms for two years; "and since that time *Mr. Quinn* had shown an Animosity against *Mr. Bowen,* saying that he was a vile Fellow, and was not fit to live; used to call him Turn-Coat . . . And once as *Mr. Quinn* was sitting by the Fire behind the Scenes and *Mr. Bowen* passed through, *Mr. Quinn* seeing him said, here comes that rascally, Whiggish, Tory Fellow, *Bowen,* who deserves to be stuck, but *Mr. Bowen* went on, not seeming to take any notice of it". This was in the "Scene Room" at Drury Lane, which we shall enter again when we come to Macklin's trial.

Not surprisingly the defence witnesses, and Quin himself in the statement he made from the dock, put a quite different construction on all these events. A number of people testified that Bowen had admitted getting his wound in fair fight and freely forgave his assailant. Most of these witnesses were servants at the various inns and coffee-houses to which he had been taken round in a sedan-chair, presumably in search of a doctor to attend to his wound. William Brown said that he was "always very fractious", while "Michael Owes depos'd, that he

seeing *Mr. Bowen* come into *Steward's Coffee House* in Disorder, did think he had been drunk and therefore said, *here comes Bowen in his old pickle*; but afterwards understood he was wounded".

Quin had not long before left Drury Lane to give his services to the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, but he was able to produce an impressive array of character witnesses, most of whom were well-known contemporary actors. Theophilus King "had known *Mr. Quinn* very well, had always found him rather inclinable to make up rather than provoke Quarrels, and rather take those things others called Affronts, than quarrelsomely resent them". Quin capped all this testimony when he declared that "I have done nothing but what I was compelled to do, had I not opposed *Mr. Bowen's* Violence, I must have been guilty of Self-Murther". After the fight he had gone straight back to the Fleece, enquiring where Bowen lived and saying he needed attention.

In cases of this kind, where premeditation was difficult to prove and where a factor of possible accident was to some extent present, it seems to have been usual to have two indictments, one for murder and one for manslaughter. Quin was in fact cleared of the graver charge but found guilty of the lesser. The trial took place on 10 July. Two days later a London newspaper, the *Weekly Journal or Saturday's Post,* carried this news item:

> Quin the Comedian was burnt in the Hand for killing Bowen.

So far as I know, this is mentioned by no other source. I have no idea whether such a sentence was actually carried out, but would very much doubt it.

The last mention of the victim is to be found in another newspaper, the *Original Weekly Journal,* which in its issue for 26 April 1718 stated that Bowen's body was "put on board the Prince Frederick Yacht, lately built by his Nephew, an officer in the Customs, in order to be carried to Leigh in Essex to be inter'd".

Late in September Quin's name reappears in the cast-lists. He was back at Lincoln's Inn Fields by 26 September, at the start of a new season, when he appeared in a play called *Don Sebastian, King of Portugal.* He stayed at this theatre for 14 years, then after spending some time at Covent Garden, returned to finish off his career at Drury Lane. By a macabre coincidence he was there, actually on the stage, when a few yards away another act of violence took place, which bore some similarity to that for which he had once been tried. Over a trivial quarrel about a stage wig, one actor killed another.

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Charles Macklin, or Mechlin as he appears in the theatrical cast-lists printed in *The London Stage,* and whose real name was Mc.Laughlin, such Anglicisations of Irish and Scottish names being common at the time, was born in Ireland some time between 1690 and 1697. He was thus a near contemporary of Quin; but his was a life of such immense length, and he was on the stage for so extraordinary a span of time, that he seems of a later generation. He was a well-known player, although not perhaps at the head of his profession, and also a dramatist, author of two successful plays, *Love à La Mode* and *The Man of the World,* a satire on the Scots. He was twice married, both his wives were actresses and he had a daughter on the stage. By far his most famous role was that of Shylock, which he seems to have played in an aggressive manner, as exemplified by a story that George III, pondering on the best way to overawe one of his Cabinets, jokingly suggested sending Macklin as Shylock round to scare them! A rhyme celebrated what his contemporaries saw as the fidelity and authenticity of his interpretation:

> This is the Jew
> that Shakespeare drew.

When Parson Woodforde saw him in this role he seemed to be nearing the end of his career. However, it was not until 14 years later, in May 1789, when having been taken out of retirement to play it again, he went on but could speak only a few words. He

turned to the audience, made an apology, and disappeared from the stage for ever. His last years were miserable. His only legitimate son, John, died in 1790 but not before he had spent all the old actor's savings, leaving him poor and senile. Even if the latest of the dates given above for that of his birth is the correct one, he lived to be a centenarian. There is a monument with an inscription to his memory in St. Paul's church, Covent Garden, where he was buried.

Macklin's reputation as an irritable and quarrelsome man was even worse than that of Quin. When he was not rowing with the management of the various theatres for which he worked at different times, he was engaged in feuds with his fellow-actors. The incident which brought him like Quin to the dock at the Old Bailey, charged with murder, seems to have been caused by a burst of furious ill-temper, of which the outcome is most shockingly at variance with the trivial dispute that sparked it off.

Three contemporary biographies of Macklin were written which all appeared within a few years of his death. For the account of his trial I have used the *Memoirs of Mr. Charles Macklin, Comedian* (2 volumes, 1799) by James Thomas Kirkman, a relation of Macklin and believed to be his son. All the same, it is impossible to understand the exact sequence of happenings unless the trial evidence is supplemented by cast-lists printed in *The London Stage,* to which I am indebted here.

On 9 May 1735 Drury Lane put on a comedy called *Love Makes a Man, or the Fop's Fortune,* an old play dating back to 1700 which had been cobbled together by the inevitable Colley Cibber out of two pieces of Beaumont and Fletcher. For the following night, a Saturday, the ever-popular *Cato* was billed. The name-part in that play had become one of Quin's famous roles, despite the fact that most critics insisted he was no good in tragedy. For the customary "Entertainment" to follow the play there had been selected a new farce, *Trick for Trick* by R. Fabian. It was clearly unsuccessful, and appears to have been put on only once more, in 1741. The first performance on 10 May was scheduled as the author's benefit, which means that he was granted a percentage of the takings.

Now Macklin's part in *Love Makes a Man* was that of a comic servant, "Sancho", no doubt one of the countless number of similar grotesques spawned by the Apothecary in *Romeo and Juliet*, whose tiny scene in the play was given a quite disproportionate emphasis in the staging.* There was a "Sancho" in the farce, too. It may have been written into the piece with Macklin in mind, for he was billed to play it, and clearly he was got up in very much the same way as the other "Sancho" in Cibber's play. Or, as Macklin put it in the speech he made in his own defence at the trial:

> ... I played *Sancho* the night before, and the wig I then used was proper for the new farce, and *absolutely necessary* for my part, as the *whole force* of the *poet's wit* depends on the *lean, meagre looks* of one that is in want of food.

Another character in the farce, "Guzman", was to be played by an actor named Thomas Hallam. He is an obscure enough figure about whom very little can be discovered. There are only two references to him in the whole of *The London Stage,* unless we suppose that some of the allusions to "Hallam", the surname only, are to him – there were three or four Hallams, men and women, in the theatres about this time. He may have been and probably was a recent recruit to the Drury Lane troupe. On 29 May of the previous year he had had a benefit night at the small theatre in James Street, playing the lead, "Lovegold", in *The Miser,* by Molière as adapted by Fielding, and a part in *The Devil to Pay.*

From the trial evidence we glean some interesting information about the ordinary backstage running of a theatre at this date. A dressing-room was called a "shift", from the reflexive verb 'shift' = "to change one's clothes". There were several of these at Drury Lane. Three or four men shared a room, but Macklin and Hallam were not in the same room. There were two dressers,

* The illustrated cover to Journal XV, 2, captioned *Interior of a Georgian Playhouse* by the authority from which I borrowed the drawing – I myself think it is slightly later in date – shows this very scene in progress. See also *Nicholas Nickleby,* Ch. XXV (Oxford ed., 329-30).

Whitaker and Greenwood, and a property-man, "Mr. Kitchen". They took charge of the costumes and properties at the conclusion of each performance.

Macklin must have arrived at the theatre near the end of the performance of *Cato,* to find that the wig he had worn on the previous night had gone, and that Hallam had taken it. They met in the part of the theatre called the hall, which must have immediately adjoined the stage. According to Macklin's no doubt much bowdlerized account of what happened, he asked politely enough for the return of the wig:

> . . . *I said to him, "You have got the wig that I played in last night, and it fits my part this night". – "I have as much right to it* as you", says he. I told him that I *desired it as a favour.* He said I should not have it. "You are a scoundrel", says I, "to deny me, when I only ask you that as a *favour, which is my right*". – "I am no more a scoundrel than yourself", says he.

The dresser Thomas Whitaker, who heard this exchange, deposed that just then another actor, named Mills, who was playing the part of "Juba" in *Cato* and had just come offstage, joined them. He said:

> ". . . What's the matter with you? We can't play for the noise you make". The prisoner answered, "The rascal has got a wig that belongs to me". *Mr. Mills* said to the deceased, "HALLAM, *don't be so impudent*; but give him the wig."

From this reproof we may judge that Hallam was no more than a subordinate member of the company. Others present also sided with the star. But Hallam still refused to give up the wig, whereupon Macklin snapped angrily, as the deposition shows: "G — d d — n you, such a little rascal ought to be made an example of". With that, he left the hall.

You may not believe this, but there was a "Mr. Woodford" present. Perhaps he was Uncle Tom, in the early days before he made his pile and settled down as a man of property at Ansford. He told Whitaker to go upstairs and "bring down a similar wig". Whitaker, in addition to being a dresser, also took parts on the stage. He had presumably a bit part in *Cato,* although his name

does not appear in the cast-list for the evening, and was still "dressed in character". He now took the opportunity to change into his ordinary clothes. When he came down again, he could not find Hallam, so he went into the "scene room", also known by the name of "green room"*, used as a sort of common room by the actors when they were offstage.

There the argument was still going on. The author of the farce, and several more actors, clearly anxious to avoid the trouble that would ensue if Macklin were further provoked, at last persuaded Hallam to go to his dressing-room and fetch the wig, while the property-man found another for him, the third wig to feature in the story. By the time Hallam returned to the scene room, Macklin was also there. The exchange was then made. Hallam gave the wig up or, as Macklin told the story, threw it at him, saying "Here is *your wig*; I have got one that I like *better*", or words to that effect.

It was shortly after this that the lowering tension all at once exploded into lethal violence. The witnesses on both sides were essentially in agreement as to what actually happened, and differ if at all only in slight and unimportant details. All the same, those on the prosecution side by no means support Macklin's contention that the other man had all along been the aggressor. In particular they show that his language was rougher, his manner far more contemptuous, than Macklin himself admitted. The evidence of Thomas Arne is abundantly clear on that point. By the way, he was certainly not the composer. At the start of his evidence he announced himself as having "the honour" of holding a humble post, that of the "numberer of the boxes at the theatre". His son was present, "Master Arne", a little boy who was dressed in girl's clothes in readiness to take the part of "Estafina" in the farce.

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* Also open to especially privileged visitors, friends of the players. Cf: "He for a considerable time used to frequent the *Green Room*, and seemed to take delight in dissipating his gloom, by mixing in the sprightly chit-chat of the motley circle to be found there".

— *J. Boswell: Life of Johnson, Oxford ed., 143.*

In his testimony Arne described the scene room, "where the players warm themselves", and the long settle "where five or six can sit", before the fire. He came in and sat down in a chair by the fire. In a little time Macklin entered, taking the side of the settle next to him. Arne then described what happened after the wig had been given back to Macklin.

> The prisoner, sitting by me, took the wig, and began to comb it out, and all seemed to be quiet for about half a quarter of an hour; but the prisoner began to grumble again, and said to the deceased, "G — d d — n you for a blackguard, scrub*, rascal, how durst you have the impudence to take *this wig*?". The deceased answered, "I am no more a rascal than yourself". Upon which the prisoner started up out of his chair, and, with a stick in his hand, made a longe [sic] at the deceased, and thrust the stick into his left eye; and pulling it out again, looked pale, turned on his heel, and, in a passion, threw the stick in the fire – "G — d d — n it", says he; and turning about again on his heel, he sat down. The deceased clapped his hand to his eye, and said it was gone through his head. He was going to sink; but they set him in a chair. The prisoner came to him, and, leaning on his left arm, put his hand to his eye. "Lord", cried the deceased, "it is out". "No", says the prisoner, "I feel the ball roll under my hand".

Other witnesses said that, just before Macklin struck out at Hallam, he said: "D — n you, you dog... dare you prate?", or "You little rascal, do you prate?", or, according to another: "You little puppy, get out", imperfect memories of words hurriedly spoken in rage. Thomas Salway, a defence witness, was asked these questions:

> *Counsellor.* "Did the prisoner aim at any particular place" ?
>
> *Thomas Salway.* "He seemed to be in *too great a passion* for that".
>
> *Prisoner.* "Was not *a stick necessary* for my part as a Spanish servant" ?
>
> *Thomas Salway.* "Yes, certainly".

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* 'Scrub'. "A mean fellow, either as is supposed to scrub himself for the itch, or as he is employed in the mean office of scourging away dirt; Any thing mean and despicable".

– *S. Johnson: A Dictionary of the English Language*

In other words, Macklin was carrying the stick as a stage property, not an offensive weapon. One newspaper report says it was "a Crabtree Stick". Salway, or Salwey, was also a performer; a year or two back playgoers might have seen him in something called "*The Medley; or, Hippisley's Drunken Man,* attempted by Salway, with several Drunken Songs".

Arne's evidence added that "*Young Mr. Cibber* came in, and immediately sent for . . . the surgeon". This was Theophilus Cibber, Colley's disreputable son, who later married the sister of Dr. Arne. He too had just come offstage, from playing the part of "Syphax" in *Cato.* The evidence of the surgeon, Mr. Coldham, concluded the case for the prosecution. He revealed the terrible injury which Hallam had sustained:

> On the 10th of May, in the evening, I was sent for, and dressed the deceased. He died next day, and I opened the scull, and found that the stick had passed through the thin bone, that contains the eye, into the brain. That bone is extremely thin, and can make but little resistance. Had the blow been else where, it might have had a less fatal effect. I was astonished that a man should die by such an instrument. When I first attended him, the prisoner shewed much concern, and desired me to take all possible care of him.

Macklin had not wanted to kill Hallam, but struck at him in blind rage. The verdict, guilty of manslaughter, was the same as that arrived at in Quin's trial. The difference between the two cases was that Quin was perhaps fortunate in that no-one knew what had really happened, and he was given the benefit of the doubt. Macklin's assault on Hallam was before a crowd of witnesses. It is difficult to see what other verdict could be reached today if the same circumstances were to be repeated. Macklin's biographer closes his chapter on the trial with a gratuitous, indeed fulsome, tribute to the character of his subject:

> Mr. Macklin's long and honourable life justified this verdict of the Jury; and his conduct as a father, an husband, a friend, and a member of society, ranks among the first, for tenderness, affection, friendship, and honesty.

Among the character witnesses who rallied round Macklin was Quin, whose own appearance in the same dock seventeen years before had now seemingly been forgotten by everyone. Unfortunately Quin and Macklin fell out some time later and quarrelled furiously. Macklin possessed nothing of the biting wit for which Quin was famous, and we see him now as the other man's butt. Quin went about making such remarks as "If God writes a legible hand, that fellow is a villain". Once indeed he is reported as having told Macklin to his face: "Mr. Macklin, by the *lines* – I beg your pardon, sir – by the *cordage* of your face, you should be hanged." It is true that Macklin's portrait reproduced as a frontispiece to the Kirkman book shows him with something of a saturnine appearance and a leathery complexion, perhaps warranting these uncomplimentary references.

Quin, at least at this stage of his life, was a very fat man, and the more spiteful critics of his acting called him "Guts". If Macklin had set about him as he had done Hallam, he too might well have received an unlucky blow. Macklin's readiness to use his fists in all circumstances, even in his old age, is well illustrated by this story, which comes from the 1887 supplement to the Quin biography:

> It was poor old Macklin who had three pauses in his acting – the first, moderate; the second, twice as long; but his last, or "grand pause", as he styled it, was so long, that the prompter, on one occasion, thinking his memory failed, repeated the cue (as it is technically called) several times, and at last so loud as to be heard by the audience. At length Macklin rushed from the stage, and knocked him down, exclaiming, "The fellow interrupted me in my grand pause!".

With this triumph of fisticuffs, if not quite of histrionic genius, we may leave him.

A TAILPIECE

I should very much like to know who the "Mr. Woodford" was, who told the dresser to fetch a second wig for Hallam. He does not appear at all in the voluminous index to *The London Stage,* which includes the names not only of actors but also of dramatists, people connected in one way or another with the

running of the theatre, and even on occasion spectators. Yet he must have been well known to the company, since no explanation of his presence in the scene room had to be given at the trial. A rather tame conclusion, in which I do not personally believe, is that the name was printed in error for that of Thomas Woodburn, an actor who appears in the cast-lists from time to time between the years 1734 and 1746. If the records of Drury Lane and the other London theatres still exist and may be consulted, they would perhaps throw some light on this problem of identity.

I remarked once that the researcher spends his time asking the Muse of History impertinent questions, many of them unanswerable. Here is one – how did the Drury Lane players that evening cope with the farce that they were almost due to put on? Hallam would never walk on to a stage again; and as for Macklin, although at the time he could hardly have suspected that he had literally given Hallam a death-blow, it is unlikely that he felt in the mood for displaying himself in a farce. It does not seem to have been the practice of the time to use understudies; and one of the great triumphs of Quin's younger days came when he *read* the whole of a star part when substituting for another actor who had been taken ill. I suggest that this was what happened here; one, possibly two parts in the farce were read. I am certain that the management would never have dared to cancel the performances. Audiences in the great London theatres were rough, brutal and always prone to violence. They had been known to wreck theatres if they got the idea that their wishes were being flouted. In October 1772, a long time after his trial, Charles Macklin caused ructions in the theatre when he appeared as Macbeth, a part he had taken over from another popular actor. For some reason the audiences objected to this, and greeted him with yells and abuse as soon as he walked onstage. This went on for some weeks, and culminated in a tremendous uproar in which the manager was forced to dismiss Macklin on the spot. Macklin later brought an action against the leaders of the riot, was awarded £6000 by Lord Mansfield, but agreed to forgo the damages provided that the defendants bought three hundred pounds worth of theatre tickets.

PARTY TIME FOR QUEEN OF HARPS

Six harps being played in the same programme is rare enough. When one of the players is a woman celebrating her 90th birthday, it is a phenomenon for the history books.

It happens in Norwich on Monday, the 90th birthday of Miss Mary Barham Johnson. The music party is arranged by Martin Wyatt, Stewart Green and Patricia Riley, three of the people Mary taught to play. A tall handsome woman, who lives in Christ Church Road, she can say that she has been playing the harp for 82 years. She still has three pupils.

A few days before her birthday she gave me a sample of the music she would play. She enchanted me with her performances of *Butterfly* by Oberthur, which has all the quick flutter its title implies, and with Bach's *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring.* I was mesmerised by the nimble fingers and the lovely sound but she said: "The footwork is the really hard work on the harp."

She says she loves talking, and having a remarkably interesting range of family connections and acquaintances to talk about, is very good at it.

Her family is related to both the Kembles, the stage family, and William Cowper (1731-1800), the poet. It was her great grandfather, Dr. John Johnson, rector of Yaxham and Welbourne, who looked after the poet in his last years at Dereham. Mary's mother, Catharine Bodham Johnson, who was 105 when she died, edited letters concerning the poet and produced another book on the life of her grandfather, William Bodham Donne, author and examiner of plays and believed to be a descendant of the family of John Donne, the poet.

Mary herself is just bringing to a conclusion her own book which distils 240 years of family letters.

Her talent as a harpist showed itself at a very early age. The daughter of the Rev. Henry Barham Johnson, rector of Welbourne, she took lessons in the technique of harp playing from the rector of Easton, the Rev. Warrenne Blake, from the time

she was eight until she was 13. She had one year with another teacher, Gwendoline Mason of London, and then at 14 won a scholarship to the Royal College of Music. Among her contemporaries was the astonishing Goossens family – Eugene, who played violin and led the college orchestra; Marie, harp; Leon, oboe; and Adolphe, horn, who was to die in battle during the first world war. Sidonie, harp, was of a later generation.

She took a degree in English at St. Hilda's Hall, Oxford, and became a teacher of English and music, with music gaining the upper hand, at Lincoln Training College, Salford School, Manchester, Norwich Training College and the then Keswick Hall.

She played the harp with Norwich Philharmonic Society for many years and in retirement (which dates from 1955) she took up work as a private teacher of harp and piano.

Why did she not take up music as a profession?

"My father thought it was not financially secure. And I have got to be "the tops" or nothing. I felt I wasn't quite the tops. I know I can still play very well. But you have got to play more than very well for the profession. You have got to be brilliant."

Apart from teaching music in retirement she has also taught people by correspondence to transcribe Braille, a subject she studied because her mother became blind.

Again, by correspondence, she taught for the College of the Sea which arranged for men in the Navy to study 'O' levels so that they had a better chance of obtaining jobs when they came ashore.

Correspondence gave the humorous Mary a cue to mention another idea for a book but I'm not sure how serious she was. "One day," she said, "I must do an anthology on how to apologise for not having written."

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BOOK REVIEW

Christopher Somerville: Twelve Literary Walks
– W. H. Allen & Co. (1985)

I met Christopher Somerville on the occasion of our last-but-one Norfolk "Gathering", when he was collecting material for the present book. We had a good deal of pleasant conversation about Woodforde, one of the figures dealt with in it, and such slight assistance as I was able to give him has been acknowledged very generously by the author.

Now the book has appeared and I have the equally pleasant task of reviewing it. Books about houses and places associated with famous literary personages are common enough, but Mr. Somerville's plan is most ingenious and, so far as I know, unique of its kind. He has taken, not so much writers as books and, having visited the places which serve as background for these books, has described much of the action in them by relation to their surroundings. A reader could have quite an enjoyable time in Mr. Somerville's company without ever stirring from his armchair.

But of course, the author's primary aim was by no means to provide the material for a spell of sedentary reading. This is an eminently practical book. For each of his twelve chapters he has mapped out a walk, and full instructions are given to enable one to follow the author's track without getting lost. Each of the walks is provided with its own relevant section of an Ordnance Survey map, these being printed at the end of the book. The maps have sometimes been taken from the 1 : 25,000 Pathfinder scale and in other cases from the 1 : 50,000 Landranger series. Together with Mr. Somerville's admirably lucid and explanatory text, they make it easy to follow the walks and identify all the places mentioned. There is also a selection of interesting pictures, mostly photographs, and the price (£8.95) is modest for these times. Altogether, this is a very worthy book which I am more than delighted to recommend.

As for the choice of walks; well, this is an idiosyncratic sort of book, strongly individual in its nature, and I think Mr. Somer-

ville was wise to follow the direction indicated by his own taste, rather than contrive an assortment based on other people's criteria. And his taste is indeed eclectic. Eight of his choices are the work of novelists, who include Emily Brontë and the author of *Tom Brown's Schooldays.* There are three diarists: Kilvert, Dorothy Wordsworth, with occasional contributions from William; and of course Parson Woodforde. The book concludes with a walk based on the "poetry" of a gentleman named Tommy Armstrong, billed as 'The Pitman Poet'. It would have been better, I think, to select some more representative poet than this, for Tommy's offerings are mere doggerel. Indeed, Mr. Somerville himself may have been aware of this, for he abandons Tommy somewhat abruptly before the end of the chapter supposedly devoted to him, and finishes with the account of a mining accident.

Naturally, every reader who buys or borrows this volume is entitled to feel disappointed that some favourite of his own was not included. I myself was desolated to find no mention of the Inimitable. I should have loved to stand in the desolate marshland churchyard of *Great Expectations,* just when it was growing dusk, and heard that "terrible voice" snarling "Hold your noise!"; then afterwards, with Mr. Somerville for my guide, to take part in the wonderful chase after the escaped convict.

For that I would willingly have swopped one or two of the writers admitted by Mr. Somerville. John Fowles is the kind of novelist you either like very much or do not like at all. The sort of fantasy dealt in by Richard Adams, of *Watership Down* fame, is not, I am afraid, for me. I have never read either *Cider with Rosie* or *The Further Adventures of Dr. Syn.* On the other hand, I was charmed to see a walk based on Dorothy Sayers' famous detective story *Five Red Herrings,* set in the beautiful Galloway countryside so well described in that novel.

As the reader follows the walks, he picks up much incidental information, criticism of the books as well as biographical and other data on their writers. Here Mr. Somerville has done very well indeed. He is invariably accurate and correct, in all the

places about which I am qualified to express an opinion. Only once or twice I noticed that he was quite at sea – for example, in his account of Kilvert's illness and death. I do not believe, either, that Charlotte Brontë met her death through getting caught in the rain while pregnant. That sort of thing was no doubt good enough for 1855; not for us. In any case, the latest book I have read on Charlotte cast doubt on her ever having been pregnant at all. And when I was told about *Jane Eyre*, that it is "considered by many readers to be the finest novel ever written", I felt exactly like the indignant coachman at Tony Weller's party who was so affronted by Sam's song, which he held to be derogatory to all coach drivers; and wanted to cry: *"I demand the name"* of those readers who could express so absurd a critical postulate.

As this is after all the Journal of the Parson Woodforde Society, I thought it would be fitting if Mr. Somerville's walk in Weston Longville were covered in some detail.

He calls it "A Prodigious Fine Walk", thereby doing some violence to eighteenth century idiom, for that adverb was really applied only to *objects which were very large,* such as the pike about which Woodforde really did use the term.

Parson Woodforde indeed was not much of a walker. Very few people of his time were, and if a ramble right round the parish had been suggested to him, like that which Mr. Somerville conducts his readers, he would infallibly have concluded that the person who mooted it had gone off his head! I must confess that my imagination is not up to the task of visualising the Parson with us as we enter Weston Church, which Mr. Somerville describes carefully. Then away we go, past the Five Ringers and along the Honingham Road, to the turkey farm which has been dumped down on the remains of the wartime airfield. It was this, by the way, that ruined the village; up to that time it must have been very much as Woodforde last saw it. Hungate Lodge, which used to lie somewhere on the northern extremity of the airfield, is noted. Mr. Somerville does not mention it as the home of Press Custance, only that of Mr. Corbould, whose name he spells as "Carbould", this being one

of Woodforde's errors, which he afterwards corrected. We pass Glebe Farm, and reach the Old Rectory, of which there is a good photograph.

Mr. Somerville has a few words to say about the Parson's home. It would have been asking too much to expect the two inevitable drunken pigs to be left in peace; but they certainly did not live in a "stye". He continues:

> . . . a steady trickle of Woodforde pilgrims turns up each year to ask the owner's permission to gaze at the pond, the trees and the empty lawn where the old Parsonage stood. Then they leave as quietly as they came, down the drive where Farmer Forster staggered after Woodforde's Tithe Audit of 3rd December 1782, having made a thorough nuisance of himself after a skinful of the parson's home-brew.

It is very seldom indeed that Mr. Somerville slips into this kind of would-be fine writing, all the more unfortunate because it here enshrines an error. Woodforde does not say that the farmer was drunk. What happened at that particular "Frolick" makes it clear that he was complaining about the size of his tithe-contribution, and the impressionistic picture of his "staggering" along the drive is quite unhistorical. Again, Mr. Somerville notes the disappearance of footpaths, in line with "the recent hedgeless, big-field farming policy". Indeed this is so; but our author then continues: "Squire Custance might have approved of the trend, though: he was one of the few landowners to resist the almost universal enclosure measure of the eighteenth century." This is quite unwarrantable. Custance was against enclosure, not because he liked big fields, but because he thought it was harmful to the interests of the village people, while the traditional open-field farming pattern he favoured was not the least in the world like the ranch-type monoculture in vogue today.

Lyng Church, Vicarage and the Mill House are next dealt with. Using the author's careful directions, we make our way to Lenwade Mill. He notes the disappearance of the three-arched stone bridge Woodforde knew, replaced by a concrete structure in 1927. From there, Weston House is reached, "the last item

of Woodforde interest on the walk". There is a passing glance at Weston Old Hall, before the long straight trudge back to Weston Church is tackled. (ed.)

THE BEAUCHAMP-PROCTOR SISTERS

(With grateful acknowledgements to Mrs. L. M. H. Hill whose article *The Custances and their Family Circle – Journal III 4, passim* – provided a large part of this compilation.)

> . . . I never knew two sisters in all
> my life testify more regard one to another
> more than Lady Bacon and M^rs^ Custance, and
> I believe them to be as good Women in
> every respect as England ever produced –
>
> *– Diary: 3/1/1792*

The closest relationship existed between Lady Bacon and her sister, Mrs. Custance. Anne Bacon was the elder daughter of Sir William Beauchamp-Proctor, Bt., the wife of Sir Edmund Bacon, Bt. of Hessett, Redgrave and Drinkstone (Suffolk), and Raveningham (Norfolk). He was the Premier Baronet of England, and his actual titles were 8th. and 9th. baronet. This arose from the fact that two separate baronetcies were created in the seventeenth century and held by different branches of the family, and one had run ahead of the other, as it were. In the time of Sir Edmund's father the other line had died out and he inherited. The early genealogy of the Bacon family is confused but Sir Edmund was the direct descendant of the great Tudor statesman Sir Nicholas Bacon, Keeper of the Great Seal, and father of Francis Bacon, the Lord Chancellor. The Custances had twice intermarried with the Bacon family in the course of the sixteenth century.

Anne Bacon closely resembled her younger sister, being attractive and fragile-looking, although in her portrait she seems to lack the character of Frances Custance. The two sisters were deeply attached to one another, and were seldom long apart. A room in Weston House was known as "Lady Bacon's". She, with her husband, were constant guests. They

lived at Earlham until 1785 so that the journey to Weston was reasonably easy. After the move to Raveningham they had to travel over 10 miles, which made short visits difficult. When he first met them Woodforde was uncertain about Sir Edmund, being put off at first by the cast in his eye and his bubbling good humour: ". . . rather merry and very cheerful – He is a young Man and personable, but has an odd cast with his eyes – rather cross-sighted –". Sir Edmund was painted by Walton looking very good-humoured and with one eye carefully in shadow. His wife's portrait may also be by Walton, although the painter has given her an austere look with none of the quiet radiance of Mrs. Custance. She is shown there holding a music-book, presumably reflecting her interest in music, although the diarist never mentions this. After a long acquaintance Woodforde declared, failing in his enthusiasm to complete his sentence:

> S^{r} Edm^{d} Bacon looked remarkably well and I believe a better kind of Man, more open, more generous or more charitable – [sic] Lady Bacon the same in every respect – They are worthy People and worthy of Praise from every one.
>
> – *Diary: 27/2/1798*

Lady Bacon often accompanied the Custances on their visits to the theatre and concerts in Norwich, resplendently "full dressed", and when at Weston she often "dropped in" at the Parsonage with her sister for a morning visit. She was present at the baptism of the Custance children and often stood sponsor. Like the Parson, she seems to have had a liking for Yarmouth, where he called on her on one of their coincidental visits: "In the Evening I called on Lady Bacon who is in Lodgings near the New-Chapel, Yarmouth – I stayed with her about half an hour –". (12/5/1790).

She and Sir Edmund had five children, three sons and two daughters, one of them bearing the conjoined names of Anne Frances. She died on 26 August 1813, and was buried at Raveningham. Her sister had 23 years left without her companionship.

John Custance and his wife Frances were newly married when

Woodforde first met them: "Mr and Mrs Custance are very agreeable People indeed, and both behaved exceedingly polite and civil to me". As Mrs. Hill finely says: "Benjamin West's portrait shows them hand in hand, surrounded by emblems of classical love – all the restraint and elegance of the Age of Reason is reflected in their posed figures, but nothing of their warmth and humanity".

John was born on 28 September 1749, and unlike his father and many of his descendants, he filled none of the principal county offices. His heart and his interest were in the affairs of his family and the estate which he so greatly beautified. At the time of his courtship of Frances he set about planning his "New Hall" with its surrounding gardens and park. He married Frances Beauchamp on 29 January 1778. She was the second daughter of Sir William Beauchamp-Proctor, and at the time of her marriage was living in Holles Street, a connecting way between the then Oxford Road and Cavendish Square in London. Her town upbringing was perhaps the reason why she could still be frightened when she and her sister met a loose cow when walking to the Parsonage so late as July 1801; but they were soon composed by drinking a glass of the Parson's port.

Her portrait shows her to have possessed a far from provincial elegance. Dressed in pale grey muslin, a rope of pearls hanging to her waist, her brown hair dressed high with feathers, as it may have appeared when she and Nancy Woodforde were attended by the "Friseur", she looks pensively out of Walton's painting. There is a fragile quality about her that makes it hard to believe that she bore eleven children, suffered a long illness and the tortures of eighteenth century medicine, and outlived her husband by 14 years. She had the gift of being cheerful in the most trying circumstances, and yet of feeling for the misfortunes of others. She liked fine needlework, fashionable clothes, current novels, and she adored her family. She died on 11 April 1836: "Sunday last, at Catton, in the 79th year of her age, Frances, the relict of John Custance Esq., and second daughter of the late Sir William Beauchamp-Proctor Bart." She and her husband lie in the same grave at Weston.

Anne and Frances had two brothers, Thomas (later Sir Thomas, the second baronet) and George, and one half-brother, William. Sir William Beauchamp their father had, on inheriting the Langley estate near Loddon in 1744, taken the arms and surname of his uncle, George Proctor. A nostalgic glimpse of Langley Park, as it was in Mrs. Custance's childhood, survives in a painting by Wootton. Her parents with their dogs and their carriage are set against the pastoral landscape of the park, while in the distance the house looms mistily. The house was lived in by the family (who later became known as Proctor-Beauchamp) until 1946, when the Norwich High School for Boys moved in and it became Langley School. Despite its present-day use, the elegant Palladian-style building retains its impressiveness when viewed from the surrounding parkland, particularly in daffodil time, when the grounds and house are opened to the public. The rooms are cared for and welcoming, perhaps because they are all in everyday use, and the magnificent library has recently been restored to its original splendour. The Saloon, now the Staff Common Room, is typically eighteenth century with its ornate plaster reliefs by Charles Stanley, based on allegorical scenes by William Taverner. Lingering in this room one visualises it complete with the elegant furniture of the period, and perhaps the shadowy figures of Anne and Frances Beauchamp. The Clermont Room, with its *Singerie* ceiling depicting "Music and Entertainment" painted by Andieu de Clermont in the 1750's, is still used as a music room, while instead of presiding over dinner parties and family gatherings, Sir William and his second wife Laetitia Johnson and Sir Thomas and Anne Proctor, Sir William's parents, look down on serried ranks of schoolboys in the dining room, no doubt all with hearty eighteenth century appetites.

NOTE: Additional information about the house may be gleaned from a leaflet given to visitors, which is inscribed: *Langley Hall – a Short Tour of the Main Rooms.* This says of the Clermont Room:

Andieu de Clermont, a French painter, decorated the interiors of a number of historic houses in England before returning to France in 1755. These included Syon House at Twickenham, Wilton House near Salisbury, and Kirtlington near Oxford, but unfortunately few examples of his work remain. Typical of his style are the elaborate floral designs and green monkeys (singeries). The theme of this ceiling is 'Music and Entertainment', and the figures at the corners represent the four seasons. It is interesting to note the ideal of feminine beauty fashionable at that time. At the turn of the century an attempt was made to put in a central pendant for gas-lighting, but this was unsuccessful and the centre panel was repainted.

WESTON FAMILIES – GOOCH AND BUSHELL

Today, the building which stands on the approximate site of James Woodforde's Parsonage is isolated. Between it and Weston Church is an expanse of fields, with no sign that there have been any human habitations there.

In the Parson's time the appearance of this part of Weston must have been very different. We read in the diary of a number of families whom we know lived in his vicinity. Woodforde always uses the word 'neighbour' in its primary meaning of "one who lives near or close to . . .". In every case in which we know enough about where the person designated as a neighbour actually lived, we find him keeping to this usage consistently enough to let us accept all those to whom he applies the term as certainly residing near his home.

In the case of the Gooch family we know that they lived close to the Parson:

> . . . Busy all the morning in my garden, having enlarged my Pleasure Ground a Trifle by taking in part of the small Field near Goochs House –
>
> *Diary, 4 January 1782*

On 1 March 1778 the diarist wrote:

> . . . Read Prayers & Preached this morning at Weston –
> Neighbour Gooch's Father was taken very ill to day
> and thought to be dying – I gave him Tent Wine and
> in the Afternoon went and saw him and read Prayers to him.
> He desired to have the Sacrament administered to him
> which I told him I would do it to Morrow Morning –
> Poor Gooch has been an invalid for many Years –
> His Pulse I thought was pretty regular, he had been convulsed
> in one of his Hands, but talked pretty cheerful & well –
> My Clerk's Wife Jane Smith got immensely drunk I hear to day

Next day, however, he learned that "Poor Neighbour Gooch" had died at 7 o'clock that morning. The form of words suggests that Woodforde considered both father and son as his neighbours, and it is natural to suppose them living together.

The Poor Law records of about this time, however, tell quite a different story, which was first revealed in an essay in Journal XVI, 2., entitled *The Poor Law at Weston.* The father, Thomas Gooch, was clearly a long term out-relief pauper. At the time of his death he had been receiving 3 shillings a week from the parish. Occasional articles of clothing were given him from the same source, which also paid his house-rent, amounting to £3 a year. This last piece of information certainly does not suggest that he shared a house with his son's family. He was born about 1710, and married Mary Bond at Weston in 1734. She had died in June 1775, and one year later the Overseer paid 8/7½d (about 43p. in our money) for a coffin, "for Goody Gooch", the money for which had been owing all that time. This, by the way, was regarded as about the ultimate in poverty. We might compare the lament of the old workman in Hardy's *Woodlanders,* after the unexpected death of his much younger master has left him alone in the world: "And now Robert Creedle will be nailed up in parish boards 'a b'lieve; and nobody will glutch down a sigh for he".

On the other hand John Gooch, regularly called "Neighbour Gooch" by the Parson, the extension of this term to include his father being probably a slip of the pen, was certainly a poor

man, but normally independent, although he needed the succour of charity to tide him over particularly bad times. We can say as much of many of the labouring families in the village.

He was without doubt the "John Son of Thomas & Mary Gooch" baptized at Weston on 28/2/1741-2, one of three babies christened there together. His marriage remains untraced, but he and his wife Anne had a number of children: Thomas (1764), Elizabeth (1766), John (1771), another Thomas in 1775, the elder brother having died; Mary (1776), Judith in 1778 and Edmund in 1782. The only one of these children of whom there is any further positive record in the registers is Judith, who died in February 1783 at the age of four. Woodforde says that "she was taken in a violent Fever all at once on the 18. Instant and continued worse and worse till Monday Morn and then poor Soul expired– She complained all the Time of nothing but a violent Pain in her Thigh". – *Diary 26/2/1783.*

John Gooch's holding was assessed for Poor Rate in 1777 at £20. This was exactly the same valuation as that of Weston Parsonage. No-one would for a moment suggest that the living standards of the two households were in the least compatible – but there is no rhyme or reason in Poor Law valuations. In the same year the Overseer's "Disbursements" column shows various cash payments made to John Gooch, amounting to £2. 1. 0, all headed "In Time of Need", which was the expression used to denote occasional as distinct from regular payments. The picture is that of a poor man with a large family who was rendered temporarily unable to provide for them by reason of illness or injury.

On 29/1/1782, in very cold weather, the diarist sent gifts of pork to his "poor Neighbours", whom he names as Gooch, Clarke, Downing, Norton and Nat Heavers. At different times he also sent the Gooch family turnips and apples.

In March 1785 one of the lurking perils that were among the ordinary hazards of life in the eighteenth century suddenly erupted. "Poor Neighbour Clarke's Wife and 4. Children"

went down with smallpox. The Gooch family must have lived very near to them, if they did not actually share their house, for they were felt to be in great danger and were all hastily inoculated by Dr. Thorne. Meanwhile Woodforde sent baskets of apples to each of his poor neighbours, "to make Apple Dumplins for poor Souls", as he very picturesquely put it. The strain of smallpox that had hit the Clarke family was a "good one", producing only a mild onset of the disease. The Gooches duly developed the symptoms provoked by inoculation. In the end they all recovered.

But no sooner had that scare subsided than John Gooch met with further misfortune. He lost "a valuable Cow by Death". On 25 May Woodforde drew up a petition for him and started the collection off with five shillings, and an additional half crown on behalf of Nancy. Altogether the appeal raised two guineas. John must have bought another cow with the proceeds, for two years later he paid the Parson a guinea for turnips purchased from him to feed the animal through the preceding winter. Woodforde at once gave him the money back.

There is an odd sort of anecdote recorded in the diary about Gooch. One night in November 1782, in company with Tom Thurston who then or later kept the *Hart* and was also the second of Woodforde's three parish clerks, he stopped Mr. Girling as the farmer rode back from Reepham. " ... One of them took hold of his Bridle and said to him your Mony Sir! but he knowing the Voice of one of them, he said, I did not know you, Sir, I did not design to affront you". Woodforde thought that they must have been "both very much in Liquor". If the escapade really involved an attempt at highway robbery and was not simply a drunken game, it was surely too clumsy and half-hearted to have met with success. Fortunately for them, the pair of amateurs gave up crime after this one feeble attempt.

The allusions to John Gooch and his family are few in the diary, and mostly of a very matter-of-fact nature, but they serve to place him in his right social niche in the village. Like many others he was on the borderline between the very smallest farmers and the workmen. In this latter aspect he did casual

work for those in the village who were well enough off to be able to employ labour. Sometimes the jobs he did for the Parson were unspecified, only the payments being recorded in the diary and in Woodforde's accounts. But at other times we are told what that money was spent on. On 15 February 1777 Woodforde paid Gooch a guinea for "Hedging & Ditching", after having lent him half a guinea in the previous month in advance of the work to be done. On 2 May Gooch was paid a further sum amounting to £2. 12. 6. for the same kind of labour.

It may be seen that, although some of the work he did required skill, he was really an odd-job man, and his place in the farming hierarchy of the village was correspondingly humble. He never attended the Parson's "Tithe Frolick", and in his lifetime there is no record of a tithe payment from him – or, for that matter, from anyone belonging to his family. This indicates that he must have been without land, or at least in possession of the very smallest amount necessary for the upkeep of such livestock as he possessed. The cow, already mentioned, would have been kept mainly for the purpose of providing the family with fresh milk and butter. But occasionally Gooch had a few piglets for sale, and those purchased from him by Woodforde were fattened up into the large, heavy animals we read about in the diary. He also sold joints of meat to the diarist from time to time. The consumption of meat at Weston Parsonage was large, as we all know. Woodforde's main purveyor at this time was Mr. Baker, but he also used to supplement what he received from this source with a certain amount extra, bought from various village people. Thus on 17 April 1789 he purchased from Gooch a leg of veal which at 3½d. a lb. cost him three shillings; and a calf's head for a shilling from "Nann Gooch". They were probably portions of a male calf, the offspring of Gooch's solitary cow.

But by the time of these latter purchases, John Gooch had not long to live. He just failed to see the year out and was buried on 28 December. He was close on 48 years old; and to learn this surprised Woodforde, who remarked in the diary that he thought the man had been older. He had "left a Wife and several Children but most of them out".

On the morning of the funeral a man whom Woodforde names as "Edwd. Gooch" appeared at the Parsonage and paid six shillings for tithe. The only previous reference to him in the diary is found in the entries for 27 and 28 January 1786 when, as a "Gardner", he was employed on the job of pruning the Parsonage trees, spent 5½ days on the job and was paid a total of eleven shillings for his work. Two shillings a day was a high wage for any sort of workman at the time.

When the 1790 tithe dinner came round a "Gooch" was listed among the guests for the first and, as it turned out, the only time. If this was Edward, there must have been some special reason for his presence, for the amount of his tithe bill certainly did not qualify him to attend. Another entry nearly a year later, for 16 October 1791, shows that six shillings, which was now paid again, was Edward's regular tithe contribution. While making this clear, the passage also adds some fresh information:

> . . . Recd. this Afternoon from Willm. Gooch for his Brother Edward (they leaving Weston) for Tithe due Michaelmas last, on land of Mr. Custance – 0:3:0

But who were these elusive brothers? They could not have been children of John Gooch. As we saw, he had no son named William, and although a confusion between "Edward" and "Edmund" might in other circumstances have arisen from an error in either the register or the diary we know this was not the case here, for the youngest son was a mere nine years old when the above passage was written. There is an entry in the old Weston register which reads: "William Son of John & Mary Gooch", baptized in April 1745. He was perhaps a cousin of "Neighbour Gooch"; unless indeed we assume that the name "John" given as that of the father was a mistake for "Thomas". This would then mean that John Gooch and William, and of course Edward, were brothers. But an entry for Edward, which would have settled the matter one way or another, is not to be found.

The best known of the Gooch family to readers of the diary must be Anne or "Nan" Gooch, John's wife, who helped out the Parsonage maidervants during the "Washing Week" which

took place once every five weeks. Woodforde was of course no longer keeping separate household accounts by this date, so anything not entered in the diary is lost. We do not know when Anne Gooch was first employed, or what wage she was given; but she would undoubtedly have had her dinner in the Parsonage kitchen for each day she was at work. Anne and her colleague Mary Heavers were the "Washerwomen" and the former continued her work after the death of her husband. In September 1791 Woodforde decided to buy for each of the women "a new stuff Gown". So overwhelmed was he by the contemplation of his own generosity that he noted this in the diary no fewer than three times. However, by 7 November he was writing angrily:

> . . . Rob^{t}. Downings Wife begun washing for me in the Room of Nan Gooch, who very shabbily left my House without any Notice and is gone from Weston –

That is the last we hear of any of the Gooch family. As Edward and William had already left, it is natural to suppose that Anne took her youngest children, those who were not yet "out", and moved in with her husband's relations, possibly acting as housekeeper for them.

*

When our Parson and his niece paid their first ever visit to the still uncompleted Weston House, on the occasion when Nancy "walked up to the top Rooms tho' the stair Case has no Rail to it yet, and looks dangerous", they were showed round the mansion by a man named Bushell, to whom Woodforde awarded a shilling. – *(Norfolk Diary III, 1 April 1781)*

I do not know whether he is to be identified with the William Bushell who appears once or twice in the diary and, although presumably not born at Weston, is represented with his family by some entries in the registers. From this latter source we learn that William and his wife Dinah had four children: another William, baptized 22/5/1768, "Diannah" 11/12/1770, Elizabeth 13/3/1774 and Mary on 13/5/1778.

There is one later reference each in the diary to the younger William ("We had some fresh Skaits brought to us this Morning by Will: Bushells Son who lives at little-Snoring near Wells – at 2^{d}. per lb.") and to Elizabeth who married Jeremiah Lillistone on 30 October 1797.

Mary, the youngest daughter, is shown by the data and her name in the burials register to be the subject of the following passage, written down on 13 March 1794:

> . . . at Noon took a Walk to Church and bu=
> ried a poor Girl of Will^{m} Bushell – aged 15. Years
> She had been an Idiot almost from her Cradle and
> being often out of doors, was in constant danger of
> being run over by Carriages or Horses, living on an
> open Green, called Oldham-Green – The poor
> Creature had been ill a twelve month before
> it died. – It must be a pleasure to her friends instead
> of grief that her removal from hence must be happy
> in a future state – and pray God grant it so to be

Dinah, though not in such a state of mental darkness as her sister, was perhaps not very quick on the uptake. She had three illegitimate children, each presumably by a different father. First came a child who was privately christened on 30/6/1783, and named "Keziah". Woodforde was sufficiently interested to inform his diary that this was the name of one of Job's three daughters. No doubt the mother was very young, but in this case the date of the baptismal record tells us nothing about her age, and its date must have been considerably later than that of her birth. On 1 February 1787 a second baby is mentioned:

> . . . I privately named a Child of Dinah Bushells
> this morning at my House by name Robert –
> The Mother brought the Child herself, though
> the Infant was only born the 18. of January and
> the Mother quite hearty and strong –

Dinah's third child was another girl, christened Honor on 14/1/1793. The father – Woodforde writes down his name as a matter of certainty – was James Pratt, old Mr. Cary's grandson, he who turned up drunk and insolent at the Parson's tithe feast

in 1791. I have no explanation of the fact that all these baptisms took place in his home. The account of Robert, who plainly had nothing amiss with him, makes it clear that the main reason for private christenings of the children of village people, serious illness which made it impossible for the ceremony to be deferred, was not present in his case. In that of Honor, on the other hand, perhaps it was; for she did not survive. Woodforde buried her on Easter Day.

And with that Dinah Bushell, and her family, slip back again into the oblivion which is the lot of ordinary people everywhere, except where some document like Woodforde's diary comes along to rescue them.

Very likely she left Weston, for her name does not appear in the burials register, although her parents are there: William Bushell (1820), aged 82, and Dinah Bushell (1825), aged 78. Keziah must have stayed in Weston and never married. She died in 1818, aged 34. The name of Job's third daughter – the eldest had the comparatively popular name Jemima – was Kerenhappuch. This too may be found in the Weston register, although it has nothing to do with Woodforde, and dates from long after his time. Kerenhappuch Parfitt, aged 19, was buried on 1 July 1849. (ed.)

PARSON WOODFORDE AND NANCY *(concluded)*

Other friends appeared on the horizon. Mr. Maynard, a neighbour cleric, took to calling often at the parsonage. He was a kindly soul and brought gossip with him, but his visits seemed to make little impression. His weakness was presently understood in the community. Mrs. Custance and Lady Bacon on crossing the field had run into Maynard "disguised in Liquor", and it turned out that he had been baptizing a child and had perhaps done too well by the refreshments offered. It behooved the parson to keep a friendly eye on him. When Maynard dropped in to tea one afternoon, it was evident that he was "rather bosky", and the parson wrote: "I did not ask him to drink anything besides tea, as I saw that he did not want anything else."

The Micklethwaites and the Branthwaites, two interrelated families, came to live in commodious houses, and were a bit slow, the parson thought, in returning his calls. But when he was asked to their excellent dinners, he was mollified, and the more so when he saw their carriages in front of his church on Sunday. These new people wore the kind of clothes and gave the kind of dinners that went with gentility, but the parson was not deceived and put them down as "strange and vulgar". Both families were obviously people who had made money in the last generation and were now going in for horses and hounds, branching out as gentlefolk. By and by Mr. Micklethwaite fell into a decline and died, but Mrs. Micklethwaite still came to church, played cards, and was seen at parties, until she too at length went into a decline. When the Micklethwaite effects were sold the parson bought two pieces. As for Mr. Branthwaite, he left Taverham along with his horses, his hounds and his carriages. "It is reported," wrote the parson, "that he lived too fast." That may well have been. It was no uncommon story, that of the family who won means in two or three hard-working generations and dissipated them in the first leisurely one.

But there were always new people. The Corboulds took Hungate Lodge where the Micklethwaites had flourished. Mr. Corbould was a clergyman without a living and with some income, a type apparently common in Norfolk at this time, the son of a retired hatter in Norwich. The Corboulds did themselves well at Hungate Lodge, and the parson had to admit the good taste of their furnishings, and had nothing to say against the cooking. But he did have his prejudices against those in retail trade, was amused at the elderly Mr. Corbould (he had had many a hat from him) who came to visit his son, and would complain when he lost a shilling at quadrille.

It was in such social observation that the parson was at his best.

What is disappointing is that he had so little interest in the world just beyond his doorstep. Fields and hedges, slopes and woods were to him places where hares might be coursed. He had no eyes for the swaying of the grass in the wind or the colours of the

fields. True he was not more blind in that respect than most of his contemporaries.

We must put it down to his credit that he marked the seasons, as country clergymen today; he noticed primroses in mid-January and at the end of November, and the first swallows in April. The coming on of vegetation in the spring he watched with pleasure; he had much less to say about the fall of the year. On 25 November 1795 he observed the presence of blackbirds and thrushes, and six days later wrote: "There was a fine Thrush singing in one of our plantations almost all the Day, as if Spring." That thrush was surely the predecessor of Thomas Hardy's thrush, who sang in late autumn with such zest as if he had some hidden joy of which others were unaware.

It was coming on autumn for the parson, and there were few hidden joys. He had come to that part of the road where one proceeded slowly, where there were rough surfaces ahead and an uphill grade. Before retiring he would take rhubarb; he was conscious of what he called the flying gout. That his meals and his port – he had been fond of port since the Oxford days – had anything to do with his pain he had no wish to guess. "Living too low won't at all agree with my gouty Constitution and past fifty-four years of Age." He took seven glasses of port and felt better; the pain in his great toe later was unpleasant, but was evidence that in other respects he was in good health. He was far from that, as the attentive reader cannot but notice.

In the winter of 1795 he was absent from his duty in Weston church from mid-January to nearly the end of March. That summer he went to Somerset in June and did not return till 5 November. Even his easy routine was proving too much for him.

He took the step of employing a curate to carry the services, at first only for six months. His own income from the living would continue for life, and Mr. Corbould was glad of the thirty pounds a year. For some time Corbould did well enough, but at length became careless; moreover he had a way of going out to parties on Saturday night, which to Mr. Woodforde was unbecoming in a clergyman.

Once freed from conducting his services, Mr. Woodforde was seldom at Weston church. His health, he thought, did not permit it. What is more surprising is that, while he wrote with becoming sadness of giving up his work, he betrayed little of that uneasiness about the absence of accustomed routine common among those that retire.

If the parson was failing, his niece was showing, had indeed long been showing, signs of boredom. As far back as 1789, when she was about thirty-two, her uncle had set down: "Nancy very discontented of late, and runs out against living in such a dull place", and the entries in the diary continue to indicate her unhappiness. Was Nancy weary of her single state? The answer is not as easy as that. As a young woman she had suffered from the King's Evil; that is, scrofula, and had perhaps early given up the hope of marriage.

It is more probable that the slowing up of the social pace in her circle was unwelcome. She liked company and the merry-go-round of parties. There were still invitations and dinners, but the parsonage crowd was getting older and less disposed to gaiety. It is possible, too, that Nancy was a little spoiled by her many jaunts to Somersetshire and forgot that if she were in Somerset all the time that county might have proved as dull as Norfolk.

Her dissatisfaction may have been deeper. On one of her excursions to Somerset, Nancy had been told by her plain-spoken cousin, Fan, that she was like Nann Stride, "an old Woman who goes about in errands." Nancy may have had a touch of that nervous restlessness that is too lightly assumed to be a modern infirmity. In the round of household duties there was nothing to look forward to, no end towards which to set one's days.

Who, indeed, would blame her? Her artist brother wrote glowingly of what he was accomplishing in London and of his hopes, and she was giving up her best years to an ageing and querulous man.

But if she was often low in her mind, if she seemed to her uncle

sometimes saucy or sulky, it was by no means always so. Her capacity for sympathy was not exhausted, and the parson drew upon it more than he realized. Mr. Woodforde was past the age when he delighted to give her presents and he had not many good words for her. But once, on New Year's Day 1796, when he turned over to her the annual ten pounds due her, he added ten shillings, as he had not done for years. She had happened to please him that day.

The years brought changes among the villagers. With apprehension the parson marked the illness of his old parish clerk, James Smith, who had been with him since the first Sunday at Weston. Mr. Woodforde would go to visit him and leave a shilling. In his time he had had his troubles with James; the clerk had been a "shocking Hand" at leading the singing; upon one occasion he had been guilty of digging a grave too short for the coffin, and the burial service had been interrupted. "I gave it to James," Mr. Woodforde had recorded at the time. But that was long ago, and now the clerk was going fast to his last home, and an old relationship was coming to an end. The parson continued to send the clerk money and food. It was when he was away in Somerset that he learned of his death.

The servants had not been changed for a long time. Ben Leggett still went to Norwich and did the buying and selling for the household. Betty Dade had been head female servant for years and a dependable one; when the parson and Nancy had been away in Somerset, Betty had taken things into her own hands and had discharged a servant for the customary foible among female servants. The matter had been "very well managed by Betty," the parson remarked, and he gave her a new gown. He could not be so enthusiastic about Briton, still his personal servant, who would come home "muzzed" and be discharged, but would manage to stay on nevertheless.

It was only near the end of the diary that the equinamity of the servant quarters was seriously disturbed. When the steady-going Betty Dade fell ill and was not easily cured, Nancy suspected a love affair with Ben, and that he had been neglecting her. "I hope," wrote Mr. Woodforde with a suspicion

he should not have allowed himself, "he hath not been too intimate with her."

Betty could guess that there would soon be a change at the parsonage. She had once been engaged to a farmer's son who had died, and had remained on friendly terms with the farmer and his wife. But she was now thirty-six and may have thought it best to choose the least of evils among husbands and secure a home of her own. The parson was unsure what was happening to Betty. Only death would curb his curiosity about those around him. Now he heard that Ben had scolded Betty for accepting Tom Leggett, his cousin, now that Betty had accepted Ben, and again that Betty was going to marry Tom. Unless some antiquarian searches among parish records we shall hardly learn at what decision Betty arrived.

We have come to the parson's last years. In novels those years are often pictured as graced by serenity. The hero looks out upon life with detachment, his tongue utters wisdom, he is surrounded by troops of friends. It is seldom that way in diaries. In those accounts it is likely to be the least heroic phase of life, a phase which the kindly reader hurries over.

Mr. Woodforde's last years, from the time he was fifty-seven till his death at sixty-three, were not his best. In 1797, when the parson was fifty-seven, he was so sick that his brother and sister-in-law were summoned from Somerset. According to his own account, as he wrote it afterwards, he had been quite senseless. He recovered, but he was not what he had been. He had fainting spells; he had to be supported coming downstairs; he lay awake almost all night or so he thought, as old men will think. But he always felt better after dinner or when he drank some brandy. He could no longer take any part in the life of the community, but he still kept tab on what went on in the church. His natural force was abating, but his interest in his world had not waned.

Yet his mind was chiefly concerned with his illness. Like many old men he began to suffer from fear. Death he did not mention, but he drew a hand with a long pointed finger on the page of his diary opposite the comment on his health, "My Spirits or the

Vis Vitae almost extinguished." That was only ten months before his death.

He did not seem to be preparing himself for another world, as might have been expected. His parishioners he had watched fade slowly towards their end and had comforted them with the hope of a future life. That comfort, if his diary is to be trusted, he did not now seek for himself. No doubt he believed sincerely enough in the next world, but he was a sick man; it took an act of imagination to envisage the hereafter, and he was too ill for such effort. He had nothing to fall back upon but thoughts of himself.

He expected increasing attention and sympathy from Nancy and even resented her occasional goings-out. She continued to be "pert" and "saucy" and "sulky"; he now called her "Miss Woodforde", and wrote: "A. M. W. when she came Downstairs never asked me how I did or took the least Notice of my being so lame or anything else." No doubt Nancy with all her helpfulness found it hard to respond to constant calls for sympathy. She avoided church a good deal, and her uncle, eager to learn who had been present, was inclined to find fault with her about that. Twice he delayed giving her the ten pounds that was due her at the New Year.

But Nancy was not so dependent upon him as hitherto. With surprise the reader learns that Nancy had come into more than a thousand pounds and was investing it carefully. Only in the old-fashioned novels does the heroine fare so well. It was again a pleasure for Nancy to buy things, for the Custances had come back from Bath. Mrs. Custance had given her a Camperdown bonnet, and Nancy bought for herself a "picknick Bonnett' which drew praise from her appreciative friend at Weston House, who had seen nothing like it in Norwich. Nancy had her mantua-maker, now one in London, make up for her a blue and white muslin gown.

The old days occasionally impinged upon the present. The Custances would ask Nancy over for a meal, but guests there were fewer. Mr. Custance was often over to see the parson, and the two would compare symptoms. The Squire was far from well and had ceased drinking port. The Custance young people

dropped in frequently at Weston parsonage. The Townshends and the Bacons remembered old acquaintance by occasional calls or inquiries. Mrs. Bodham was still living at Mattishall, the last of the old clerical set with whom the parsonage had exchanged dinners, and Nancy kept in touch with her. Mr. Maynard was still about, but to the parson he looked weather-beaten and old. That Mr. Jeans who had cut such a figure and given so many dinners, was reported to be in the King's Bench prison, and we may guess that Mr. Woodforde was not saddened by that mystery of Providence. It was indeed a memory of earlier days when Betsy Davie appeared for a moment on the scene. Mrs. Shrimpton was her name now, and the Shrimptons lived in a genteel way in Suffolk. Mr. Shrimpton, to be sure, was a Dissenter, but the parson noted nevertheless that the Shrimptons came in a "genteel Whiskey", that is, a kind of small carriage then fashionable, and that they had a servant in attendance. If Nancy was pleased to see Betsy again, her uncle does not mention it, nor what had become of Mrs. Davie.

In the summer of 1802, the parson was in bad shape. His legs and thighs were swollen as if from dropsy and a weak heart. On 17 October he set down his last entry in the diary: "Very weak this morning, scarce able to put on my Cloaths and with great difficulty get downstairs with help. Mr. Dade read prayers and preached this morning at Weston church. Nancy at church. Mr. and Mrs. Custance and Lady Bacon at church. Dinner to-day, roast beef, etc." His last entry was of Weston church, of the Custances, of Nancy and of roast beef.

The following New Year's Day (1803) he died. Nancy, uprooted in mid-life, journeyed to London to visit her artist brother and then went to live out her days in Somerset, becoming known to a wide connection as Great-Aunt Anne. We can imagine that she forgot her uncle's weaknesses and was always ready to talk of his virtues to such grand-nieces and grand-nephews as would listen. She died at Castle Cary in 1830 and was buried in the old home village of Ansford. She could not have guessed that her uncle had made her a minor immortal,

but she would have enjoyed being a character in a book and would have deemed it "a very sensible thing."

With a Woodforde sense of the proprieties she had had a monument to her uncle put up in Weston church and you may see it there to this day. She need not have done so. The parson had set down on paper a record that will outlast even the fabric of Weston Church.

NOTES AND QUERIES

Curious

Mrs. Irene Fleming writes:

> This word continues to produce controversial references (Journal Vol. XVII, No. 4, p. 42). Couldn't it also carry the meaning of "unusual"? Marvell's poem, *The Garden* (1681), admittedly a hundred years earlier, has "the Nectaren and curious Peach", which surely implies something out of the ordinary – odd; and the *Concise O.E.D.* has this meaning too.

The book containing the Christie Catalogues is prefaced: "a reprint of the original catalogues of one year's curious production of the Chelsea Porcelain Manufacturory . . .". These lots of porcelain contained a wide variation of styles, definitely not "odd" but certainly "well-made". The solution, if there can be one, might be found in the altering use of words through the centuries. For example, 'wainscot' and 'deal' began as trade terms and then, when adopted by the general public, the meaning expanded. Thus, when reading such words in the diaries, one has to consider which way Woodforde is using the word; probably not as a trade term.

Tea and Coffee

Mrs. Fleming has obtained the following information from an expert in Oriental and English porcelain:

> You did not use the same cups for both drinks: sets of 12 coffee cups with handles, 12 tea bowls and 12 saucers were

sold. The saucers were used with both coffee cups and tea bowls, which is why there was no indentation on the saucer. It is thought that the English were the first to put handles on tea bowls.

The very great reduction in the tax on tea after 1794 resulted in an enormous increase in tea imports and tea drinking, so that by 1800 the imports trebled those of 1782, and by 1841 had doubled again. The cheapness of tea as a drink in the first half of the nineteenth century made the potteries increase the size of cups and put on handles.

Tea in the eighteenth century was probably drunk from a bowl in the Chinese manner, holding the bowl near the rim with thumb and first finger, so that with practice it was possible to drink hot tea from a bowl. Coffee cups always had handles, so there was no problem there. Some of the potteries were still making tea bowls well into the nineteenth century. There are interesting examples in the galleries of English China in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

New College and Its Fellowships

I have received a letter from a correspondent requesting information about the system whereby Scholars on the Foundation at Winchester were selected to become Fellows of New College, Oxford. This subject has already been aired more than once in the pages of the Journal; but for the benefit of members who may be interested in James Woodforde's Oxford career and perhaps joined the Society after the Journals concerned had all appeared, I am adding a brief note which I hope will satisfy enquirers.

At the Winchester Election, which in Woodforde's time nearly always took place in the first week of September and occupied two days, boys in the Sixth form and part of the Fifth were examined and placed in order, not so much of merit as of the amount of influence which their families possessed, on the "Roll ad Oxon." Each year's Roll was valid for only a limited period, and ran from the time of one Election to a date seven weeks before the next. From this list vacancies occurring

through death or resignation within the allotted time were filled. The intake of the especially favoured "Founder's Kin" candidates was so regulated that two of them were presented each year, and given the first two places on the Roll, this making their acceptance at Oxford virtually certain. For the others, whether or not they got in was purely a matter of luck. Woodforde was seventh on the Roll in a year in which there were eight vacancies. Had there been only six he would have stayed at Oriel, where he had already been enrolled by his father; and, of course, would never have been rector of Weston Longville.

Arriving at Oxford, the "Founder's Kin" entrants became Fellows at once. The rest were called Scholars, and had to wait until two probationary years were up before being formally granted their Fellowships, two years to the day after they had been accepted by the College. It was not the case, as Dr. Hargreaves-Mawdsley appears to have thought, that there were two lists, one for Fellows and one for Scholars, and that a vacancy in the ranks of the former was filled up from the latter. The system did not work like that at all, since the Scholars were from the moment of their acceptance regarded as already Fellows in embryo, the two years' probation being seen as a simple formality. The list written down in the diary by Woodforde in 1759, just after he had become a Scholar, which covers the full complement of 70 and includes his own name and that of other Scholars, is headed *Index nominorum socium Novi Collegii,* or "List of names of Fellows . . .". The real importance of the formally granted distinction was that its possession allowed the Fellow to take part in the annual share-out of the College profits. When Woodforde was registered in the College records as a Fellow, on 21 July 1761, his name was accompanied by those of the three other people who had been admitted as Scholars with him. It hardly needs saying that there was no single vacancy occurring at the time, let alone four.

R. L. Winstanley

*

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