PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY

Quarterly Journal

BERRY HALL, EAST TUDDENHAM, NORFOLK
(Home of the Rev. T. R. du Quesne, 1760-93)

VOL. XXIV, NO. 1 SPRING 1991

What happened with *service à la française* . . . was that, once the soup had been taken away and the covers removed from the fish and entrée dishes, "every man helps the dish before him, and offers some of it to his neighbour . . . If he wishes for anything else, he must ask across the table, or send a servant for it — a very troublesome custom." . . .

Service *à la française* also played havoc with conversation. Oliver Goldsmith had already found it matter for satire in the 1760s, when he wrote of a gentleman embarking at dinner on a good story about "a farmer of my parish, who used to sup upon wild ducks and flummery; so this farmer - 'Doctor Marrowfat', cries his lordship, interrupting him, 'give me leave to drink your health' - so being fond of wild ducks and flummery - 'Doctor', adds a gentleman who sate next to him, 'let me advise to a wing of this turkey' - so this farmer being fond - 'Hob, nob, Doctor, which do you choose, white or red?' - so being fond of wild ducks and flummery - 'Take care of your hand, Sir, it may dip in the gravy'." Later, it was, "Excellent, the very thing; let me recommend the pig, do but taste the bacon; never eat a better thing in my life . . ."

- *Reay Tannahill: Food in History. Penguin Books (revised ed. 1988) 301-2.*

flummery = "A kind of food made by coagulation of wheatmeal or oatmeal"
(J) - *Shorter O.E.D.*

Issued to Members of the Parson Woodforde Society

Chairman
G. H. Bunting
Priddles Hill House
Hadspen
CASTLE CARY
Somerset

Editor
R. L. Winstanley
6 Corville Road
HALESOWEN
West Midlands

Secretary and Newsletter Editor
Mrs P. Stanley
76 Spencer Street
NORWICH
Norfolk

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

As one of the attractions promised in the programme for this year's Frolick is a visit to lovely, exquisite Berry Hall – I do envy those who will be seeing it for the first time – it occurred to me that it would be very appropriate to have as our cover-illustration the portrait of the Rev. Thomas du Quesne, that favourite with readers among our Parson's friends. It used to hang in the Assembly Rooms in Norwich, then disappeared from sight and has now, I am told, turned up in *Strangers' Hall.* However, application to the Castle Hill Museum elicited the news that it possessed neither a photograph of this portrait nor one of the house. This latter I was able to procure from another source. But no photograph can ever convey the delight which awaits the enthusiast for eighteenth century life and civilization upon actually visiting it.

As always, I am greatly indebted for help in the making up of this number of the Journal, from many different quarters.

My grateful thanks are due to Sir Aubrey Trotman-Dickenson, Bt., Principal of the University College of Wales, Cardiff, who kindly provided me with the family information which went into a second essay on Samuel Trotman, the young man who did not like New College or, seemingly, any other part of the University system of his time.

Martin Brayne has become one of the stalwarts of our Journal, to be relied upon for work of great interest and high quality. *Pyramids of Pleasure* will remind us once again that eighteenth century meals could be veritable works of art, products of both ingenuity and loving care, rather than the occasions of mindless gormandizing that the ignorant still suppose them to have been. On the same topic, Mrs Jenny Alderson gave me the quotation for this issue.

Everyone who reads at all and has an interest in literature and history knows the *DNB (Dictionary of National Biography).* Its enormous tally of volumes – perhaps, like the Rollright Stones, no-one is ever able to count them! – remains a most impressive achievement, even though the interpretative method of many of its contributors must strike us as outdated, and the late Victorian printing and binding are as ugly as anything produced in those unaesthetic times. The *DNB* keeps up to date by

publishing supplements at regular intervals. Now, however, a new project has been launched, that of a special supplement, *From the Beginning to 1985*, intended to contain everyone missed out of the original volumes. Woodforde, of course, has an excellent claim to be included, since at the time of its publication he was totally unknown except to the *Castle Cary Visitor* and its handful of readers. Now, and not least because of the efforts made by the Parson Woodforde Society, he is a very famous man indeed. I have been asked to provide a note on him (600 words, no more and no less!), and have already written it. As this is very much of an Oxford venture, I am honoured by the distinction.

R. L. WINSTANLEY
Editor

MR J. L. CHALCRAFT

We have heard with regret of the death of Mr J. L. Chalcraft of Norwich. Many of our members will recollect meeting him at some of the earlier "Gatherings". He was a Founder Member of the Parson Woodforde Society.

Corrigenda for Journal XXIII, 4

p. 6 f/n	For "1989" read *1980*
p. 13 f/n line 1	For "Briton" read *Bruton*
pp. 47/48	The top line on each page was missed out. These should read, respectively:
p. 47	*service, little is known about those who*
p. 48	*the letter could be released. We find Wood-*

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

It has been suggested on a number of occasions that your Society should revisit Oxford for the Frolic and AGM. We were last there in 1975, centred upon New College. Members will be pleased to learn that a provisional booking has now been made for 1992. A departure from our normal May date is necessary since facilities are available only during the long vacation. The chosen week-end is 25-27 September and with this early notice you will have plenty of time to make your arrangements.

I am pleased to report that I have succeeded in obtaining a further supply of the hard-back book *Woodforde at Oxford* edited by Dr W. N. Hargreaves-Mawdsley. This volume, indispensible to all Woodforde enthusiasts, contains all the diary entries written while Woodforde was at Oxford, from 1759 until 1776, including the period when he paid visits there from 1763 to 1773. It is available to members at the special price of £8.50, postage and packing included. If you want a copy, please write to me.

It was with great surprise that I learned from our bankers, with whom we have enjoyed free services for many years, that charges are now proposed. A check revealed that this was likely to amount to a considerable sum per annum and negotiations failed to elicit any concession. With reluctance, your committee decided to close the existing account and transfer our business to another bank. This has now been done and we shall continue to enjoy free services. You will find with this issue of the Journal a new form of standing order mandate. If you already pay your subscription by this method, or would like to do so, please complete the form and hand it to your local branch. You will note that the first payment does not become due until January 1st 1992. Will overseas members using this method please note that the annual subscription is £15.

Finally, may I remind members that *Norfolk Diary I* is being reprinted. If you have not already done so, please notify me if you would like to acquire a copy. *Woodforde Papers and Diaries* is also available.

G. H. BUNTING
Chairman

THE CASE OF SAMUEL CLARKE

At the age of 29 Clementina Sobieski Woodforde, the diarist's eldest sister, married as his second wife Dr Richard Clarke, a prosperous, successful physician who was well-known for his inoculation treatment of smallpox, in which he followed the method perfected by Dr Thomas Dimsdale.

Richard Clarke was not a Somerset man but a migrant from another part of the country. He was born in 1714 or 1715, presumably at Epsom, Surrey, where Sobieski's grandfather was vicar, and where she was born. His association with the Woodfordes was very close, and he probably settled in the Cary neighbourhood soon after her father was presented with his two livings. Clarke's first wife was the younger half-sister of Sobieski's mother. I have always wondered whether this relationship might have been close enough to come within the prohibited terms of the "Tables of Affinity", which used to be displayed prominently in churches. But no objection could have been raised, and the marriage took place at Ansford on 9 April 1754. It was the first to be recorded in the new book of certificates made obligatory by Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act, which became law on Lady Day of that year.

It looks like the carefully arranged match of two people no longer in their first youth, he being about 40 and she 29. Samuel provided his daughter with a dowry worth £700, a considerable sum in the money values of the time, but as was common at that epoch he did not pay it over to her. Instead it was treated as a long term loan for which he allowed her 5% interest. Her receipts are to be seen in Samuel's account book, signed in a firm hand by his daughter. Clearly disliking both her baptismal names, she put herself down as "Sophy Clarke". The dowry was not paid over until after his death in 1771.

From what little we know about the diarist's "Sister Clarke", she appears to have been a strong-minded, determined woman, always wanted to be in the right, liked hearing her own praises sung. These last two character judgements came from her brother. Of course, family piety always prevented him from saying just what he thought about those members of his family whom he did not much care for – except, of course, Uncle Tom, whom he scarcely regarded as family at all. But we can see that his feelings towards Sobieski did not contain

much brotherly affection, and he obviously regarded her as rather a tiresome woman.

Her marriage to Richard Clarke produced four children: Jane (1754), Samuel (1757), Anna Maria (1759) and Sophia (1761). The eldest and youngest were perfectly normal women. Both married cousins: Jane married Frank Woodforde and became the mistress of Ansford Parsonage for nearly 60 years. Sophia eloped with Robert White. Like her sister she had a large family, but the weakness of the White stock laid them low. All but one died as children or young adults.

The other two were anything but normal. Anna Maria, or Anne, or Nancy, as she was variously called, was a mental defective, a condition recognised when she was hardly more than a baby. In adult life she was never at home but was boarded somewhere in Ansford with a Betty Lancashire. She died in 1794, aged 35.

Samuel was altogether a more complicated person. Today his abnormality, which manifested itself in quite early childhood, would have no doubt been spotted, diagnosed and commented upon. While not suggesting that the people of Woodforde's time were less observant, they were undoubtedly less versed in the intricacies of aberrant behaviour, so Sam went undetected for a long time. Or, if there could have been any doubt, he was given the benefit of that doubt.

On 1 January 1769 Woodforde wrote:

> . . . my ring which I had lost was unaccountably found in little Sam Clarke's Breeches, he knowing nothing of it - I gave him - 0 - 1 - 0

Of course this could just have been an accident. If I were not unwilling to stop for a digression, I could relate a tale of Boots the chemist, a branch post office and a packet of razor blades, the point being that if I had been detected with the blades no-one would have believed that I had not acquired them dishonestly. But with Sam, a similar incident occurred a few years later, which makes it highly unlikely that the words "he knowing nothing of it" could have been accurate.

I do not think that the term "kleptomania" is much used today. No doubt the pundits of psychiatry have found others by which to express the condition. *Shorter O.E.D.* defines it as "An

irresistible tendency to theft in persons who are well-to-do, a supposed form of insanity". In many, perhaps most cases, the objects are not wanted or valued for themselves, and the pilferer does not know what to do with them. A large proportion of the shoplifting cases that come before the courts are of this kind.

In the 1770s Dr Clarke, who had not long before built his "New Hospital" in what is now Tucker's Lane, not far from Ansford Parsonage, had a sequence of strokes that transformed him into a suffering travesty of his former self. The change in tone perceptible in the diary, from great respect to a sort of patronising pity, reflects the doctor's rapid deterioration. The scene in which Woodforde, already retired for the night, hears knocking at the front door and goes down to find Dr Clarke there, clearly not knowing where he was or what he was doing, is one of the most vivid in the whole diary. This was on 23 July 1773. But for some time before, he had been doing strange and unaccountable things. At a cock fight at Ansford Inn with his son Richard, he caused a disturbance. He insisted on taking Sam to Horsington, telling no-one where he was going, and the pair were away several hours. Sam never appears to have done any work, throughout his life, but at one time the doctor seemed to want him fixed up in a job:

> . . . I then went
> to M^{r}. Paggetts the Clothier & asked him if it would
> be agreeable to him to take an Apprentice as D^{r}.
> Clarke desired me to ask him on his Son Sam's Account
> but M^{r}. Paggett does not chuse it, having refused many –
> — *Ansford Diary V, 2/2/1773*

It seems an odd trade for the son of a rich and successful physician, and may be simply one more revelation of the doctor's mental state.

Then Woodforde left Somerset and for a time we hear little Ansford news. In 1779 Nancy at last journeyed to Norfolk to start her new life with the Parson. She was chaperoned by "Sister Clarke" and Sam, who stayed on for an extended visit. They arrived at 8 in the evening of 12 October "in the London Machine from the West greatly fatigued by being up all last Night – They drank some Tea immediately and soon decamped to bed – They slept at the Kings Head". Next day they all went

off to Weston, "The Ladies & Sam in a Chaise & I on horseback."

From his point of view it could hardly be called either a happy or a comfortable visit. Sobieski was 15 years older than himself, and it is unlikely that he ever had much in common with a sister who, during his childhood, must have seemed already an adult. Her taking the side of uncle Tom in the great dispute over the living of Ansford and being pleased to marry her eldest daughter to the interloping Frank had done her little good in his eyes. Now, as a guest in his house, he found much to disapprove of. She "had Words" with Nancy, and always had to be in the right. She annoyed him by demanding the return of £50 which he was holding for her, at a time when payment would have been inconvenient to him.

With Sam also he showed some irritation. Sam annoyed him by arguing in favour of the Methodists, always a sore point with him. The generation gap was yawning at the Parsonage, and some of his avuncular witticisms did not go down well with the young man. "Poor Sam cant take a joke", he wrote after one such occasion. And when Sam appeared actually to be turning up his nose at the food on the table, it was really too much of a good thing:

> We were very quere after Dinner to day, having but a plain Dinner, viz. some hash Mutton, a plain Sewet Pudding and a couple of Rabbits rosted - Sam made me rather angry at Dinner when I asked Sister Clarke if she would have the Outside of the Pudding or the first Cut of it, upon which Sam said, I hope you will not, Madam, for you know that I always give the outside to the Dogs -

So far, nothing that he did or said on this visit, at least what was reported, can be called incompatible with mental health, but near the end of his stay at the Parsonage Sam revealed himself in his true colours. Three successive entries give a vivid picture of a crisis in the kitchen:

> April - 2
> Sam lost his Purse this Afternoon in which was a Guinea and some Silver, supposed to be lost within Doors but could no where be found to Day -

April - 3
No Tidings of Sams Purse or Mony at all to day, but my Servants are suspected as Sam says he is certain that he dropped it in my Kitchen - I cannot think they are guilty -

April - 4
A guinea and one of the Rings of Sam's Purse were found by my little Maid Betty this morning among the Ashes in the Kitchen Grate - Sam in taking out his Handkerchief out [sic] of his Coat Pocket (where he always kept his Purse) must take the Purse out with it, and standing by the Fire, might fall into the Fire - both Guinea & Ring quite Black -
The Servants were very glad the above was found as they were very uneasy on being suspected.

We see here Woodforde trying to hit on a rational explanation for the incident, in which no-one was inculpated. He had no doubt forgotten the way that objects had been mysteriously lost and found, years ago in Sam's childhood. But we must remember them, and the clear likelihood that he threw the purse into the fire himself.

We can understand why the servants were so worried, because such an occurrence affected all servants precisely where they were most vulnerable. Their jobs depended entirely on the goodwill of their employer. If they left one servant's place, they had little chance of finding another without a "character" or reference which alone would induce another master to admit them into his household. To be dismissed on suspicion of theft, even if no criminal charge were brought against them, was enough to debar them from ever finding a situation.

We can find a handy confirmtion of this in the abominable story told by J. J. Rousseau in his *Confessions*. During his vagrant and disorganised early career in youth, Rousseau had a number of quite menial jobs. Among these was a place, "non pas tout à fait en qualité de favori, mais en qualité de laquais". (Not quite in the role of a favourite, but in that of a lackey.) He was at this time about 18. The mistress of the house was a kindly, rich old lady, Mme. de Vercellis, who died not long after Rousseau entered her service. As a result, he says, the running of the house fell into a temporary confusion, under cover of which he seized the opportunity to steal a piece of ribbon,

rose-coloured and silver, not valuable and "already old". He says he took little care to hide it, so that the theft was soon detected. Taxed with this, Rousseau lost his head and pinned the blame on to a young girl named Marion, the cook in the house. She denied the charge firmly, but said nothing against Rousseau, except that she exhorted him to tell the truth, and when he continued to swear that she had given him the ribbon, said only: "Ah, Rousseau, I thought you were a man of character. You have made me very unhappy, but I would not like to be in your place". In the end they were both dismissed. Rousseau adds: "I do not know what became of that victim of my calumny, but it would not have been likely that she found it easy to obtain a new place". Rousseau had the grace to admit that his conscience tormented him about this for the rest of his life. And in the light of it, we can see why the Parsonage servants were so agitated when Sam Clarke's purse went missing.

All in all, I am sure that Woodforde saw the departure of his visitors with some relief, although he proclaimed that they were all "low at parting" - but he always said that on such occasions. He gave Sam a not wildly generous present, nothing but "my little book of Maps - Atlas Minimis"; and did not take the trouble to escort mother and son to Norwich, but sent Will Coleman in his place. Sobieski's "very long" and "very civil" thank you letter did not arrive until six weeks later, and the Parson had already written to his Sister Pounsett and "upbraided M^{rs}. Clarke for not writing".

And with that, for many years the two Clarkes practically disappear from the diary, except for the record of odd meetings when he was back in Somerset, and a few references to them in the letters of other relations. The first rather ominous allusion to Sam comes in 1788 when the 13-year old Jenny Pounsett wrote on behalf of her mother ("it was a pretty, sensible, well-wrote Letter of hers.") to give him all the local news, ending with the words: "All our other Friends in the Country we hear are well except poor Sam: Clarke and he is rather better". This could of course refer to a purely physical illness; but three years later Melliora, writing to Nancy, gave a list of people who were either dead or very ill. It ends with: "Sister Clarke but poorly and her Son as strange as ever".

In this year, 1791, Anne Gulliver, of Castle Cary, gave birth to an illegitimate baby, the "reputed father" being given as Samuel Clarke. There can be scarcely any doubt that this was our Samuel, the Parson's nephew. There were other Clarkes about in Cary and Ansford at the time but no other example of a Samuel Clarke. If the man had come from another parish, it would have been very much in the interest of Cary to publish the man's place of domicile, since it would then have been the responsibility of the other parish to chase him for maintenance. I have mentioned this case elsewhere* as a possible example of a false name being given and the wrong man charged under the Bastardy Laws. There could be no more convenient scapegoat than a man known to be "strange" - an euphemism of the time to cover all kinds of mental disturbance.

In October 1793 Woodforde and Nancy were passing through London on their way back from one of the long Somerset holidays. One of his London friends was a Mr Goujon, or Gudgeon, of Newgate Street, a shopkeeper recently married to a Somerset girl, Mary Pope, who came from a family in the diarist's circle of acquaintance. On 20 October uncle and niece were invited to a party at the Goujons. Present were the host's father, his wife's sister "Miss Sally Pope", his partner Mr Baker, and young Tom Woodforde, Frank's eldest son, a schoolboy at the Charterhouse. The next day:

> . . . Before Tea this Evening I walked by myself
> To M[r]. Goujons and by appointment he went
> with me to Hackney, in one of the Hackney Coaches,
> where my Sister Clarke and her Son live, and
> there I saw both of them - my Sister looked
> better than I expected to see her, but her son
> much emaciated tho' perfectly sensible much
> confused at first sight, & very poorly dressed in
> an old great Coat, pressed me to stay longer -
> Sister Clarke came to us, being sent for, to our Inn
> and drank Tea with us there - and then we went
> with her to see her Son, he was shut up in a
> Room quite dark, excepting a very small fire,
> about 6. o'clock in the Evening - He recollected
> me immediately - we stayed about 10. minutes

* See *Amorous Career of George Davidge or Scenes of Village Life* in *Journal XIX, 2, 43/4.*

with him & my Sister - and then returned back
to Town - Hackney is about 3. Miles from Town.
For our Tea at Hackney - I p^{d}. ab^{t}. 0 : 2 : 6
For the Fare back to London - I p^{d}. 0 : 2 : 0

Two years later, on 27 June 1795, on the forward journey in what was to be his last trip to the West country, he repeated the experience:

We breakfasted, supped & slept again at the Angel -
After breakfast we walked to M^{r}. Goujon's, and
after staying there some time, M^{rs}. Goujon, myself
and Nancy got into one of the Hackney Stages and
went to Hackney to see my Sister Clarke & Son Sam.
After staying with them about an Hour we returned
back to Town, as we went - Was very sorry to see my
Sister Clarke look so bad & so decrepid - her Son
near the same, talked very sensibly but dressed very shabby -
For some refreshment at Hackney & Coach Hire, p^{d}. 0 : 3 : 0

I do not know how others will judge these two passages, but to me they reveal embarrassment. In both he stresses that Samuel behaved "sensibly", as though he had half expected him to be raving. The first time he can only bear ten minutes of it, but sticks it out for an hour on the 1795 visit. Plainly both visits were made against his will, unpleasant tasks to be carried out as quickly as possible and then forgotten in favour of pleasanter things. Letters from Somerset must have reached him, outlining the fate of his sister and nephew, and perhaps directly asking him to call on them when he was in London.

So much we can deduce, or guess. But otherwise we know nothing. Obviously Samuel was mad. As we shall see, his confinement in the dark was part of the accepted treatment for insanity.

Beyond this, we have nothing but a series of unanswered questions. Clearly the unfortunate Clarkes were living in poverty. Sobieski had been well-provided for by her late husband, and two of her daughters had married well. Had Sam run through her money before going mad, and was she a living example of the self-sacrificing mother love that lets itself be ruined for the sake of her child?

There are three more allusions to Sobieski in what is left of the diary after 1795. The first is dated 24/3/1798, and says tersely: ". . . Bidewells People brought our Newspapers and a Letter from my Brother John concerning my Sister Clarke. No other News whatever from Somersett or elsewhere". On 27/4/1799 he had "a Letter from my Sister Clarke respecting Family Concerns . . .". Last of all, on 25 May of this year, the diarist wrote: "Miss Woodforde had a Letter this Evening from M^rs. Baker of London late Miss Hussey mostly concerning my note answering my Sister Clarke's Letter to me late received".

In his time the Parson had done a lot for his relations, some of them at least. But he clearly felt no sense of brotherly obligation towards his Sister Clarke. Although she was living in poverty, he did nothing to help her. The unanswered letter may even have contained a plea for assistance, which he was plainly unwilling to give.

I have no idea what became of Samuel. I once checked the registers of Hackney, to see if he had died and been buried in that parish; but there was no trace of him, although I took the search to a date well past the time he was likely to have lived.

Sobieski on the other hand did get back to her home. We do not know when or how. But it was in the churchyard at Ansford that she was buried on 3 August 1821. The register shows that she was resident there at the time of her death. She was 96, and the longest-lived of all the Woodfordes.

*

NOTE

If, knowing our diarist, we should never expect him to have been other than decently reticent about the insanity that afflicted a member of his family, others who practised his craft were less discreet and restrained.

James Boswell's brother John, three years younger than himself, was assailed by fits of mental disturbance from the age of 19. In 1774, when he was 21 and a lieutenant in the army, he was "now seized with a return of delirium so as to be confined in his room at Mr Weir's the printers". This happened on 9 December, and two days later:

> Between five and six I went to Mr Weir's. John was somewhat calmer. The maid told him that his brother was there and wanted to see him. Upon which I went up to his room, accompanied by Mr Weir, an apprentice of Mr Weir's, and Alexander Macduff, a Guard soldier who was there as a keeper. John had on his nightgown and nightcap with a hat above it, and he waved a poker in his hand, singing some strange articulate [sic] sounds like Portuguese or some foreign language to the tune of *Nancy Dawson*, and ending always with "Damn my heart". He cried, "Come on", and uttered wild sounds. I was seized with a kind of tremor . . .

Boswell was shocked that his father showed no feeling for his younger son, and "seemed to have no other concern than to be free of trouble by him, and of a kind of reproach, as he called it, from having a relation in such a state". The attitude was very common and not unknown even today. It will be recalled that the Bodhams never apparently breathed a word to Woodforde about the presence not very far away of their illustrious but mentally unstable relative William Cowper.

John Boswell was later kept under restraint in Newcastle, where his brother used to visit him in the course of his journeys between Edinburgh and London. He appears eventually to have recovered his sanity.

But, a reader may well enquire upon perusing the passage from Boswell's Journal quoted above, what and who was Nancy Dawson? The editor does not enlighten us. Woodforde, however, does just that. We have had often enough occasion to comment that other diarists so many times lead us straight back to our Parson.

Nancy Dawson (1730-67) was an actress and dancer who became famous through dancing the hornpipe in a production of *The Beggars' Opera* in November 1759. On 2 December 1761 Woodforde records the purchase of what I take was sheet music: "For Nancy Dawsons Hornpipe 0. 0. 1½. For Nancy Dawsons Song 0. 0. 1½". Shorter O.E.D. says that the hornpipe was "associated with the merrymaking of sailors". We know that, of course; but the nautical attribution of the dance is very ancient and the word was noted from 1485. It appears also on another page of this issue.

THE FIRST FROLICK (1968)

It has occurred to me that our members may find it interesting to compare this year's outing to the Woodfordean haunts soon to take place, and an account of which will of course appear in our next issue, with the first ever "Gathering" of the Society, at a time when it had been in existence no more than a few months. Looking back from the standpoint of 23 years, I think the main impression must be of a remarkable continuity. The general plan of the Frolicks, as they were to be maintained year by year, was already formed, and the enthusiasm and participation of so many among the membership already alive and flourishing in the infant Society. Indeed, if there were more than 60 present, this must have represented almost the whole strength of the Society as at that time. *[ed. note]*

THE FIRST EXPEDITION
of the PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY
to WESTON and DISTRICT
July 6th 1968

Mrs Margaret Pickering of Norwich

The Society's first Norfolk expedition was a great success, and a most satisfying occasion. Well over 60 members attended, among them descendants of "Nephew Bill", the Custance family, and the Donnes, and our Convenor, Canon L. R. Wilson, without whom the Society would still be only a happy thought. With us, too, one could not help feeling, was a benevolent ghost, commenting almost audibly at every turn.

At Weston Church: Now prodigious Neat, owing to the Exertions of the Churchwardens, Mrs Clutsom and Mr Coughtrey, and their helpers - the rector, Mr Wynne Roach, gave various details of its history and the diarist's incumbency. The mediaeval screen, the Georgian box pews, the brass to Elizabeth Rookwood (d. 1533), wife of Firmin Rookwood, who rebuilt the Old Hall, the Communion plate, the Custance register, the fair copy he made in 1801 of what constituted the first residential census - all these and more must have been familiar to Parson Woodforde. And while he would, perhaps, have looked twice at his portrait by Nephew Sam, presented by

the late Mr Charles Clutsom and now hanging at the west end of the church, he could doubtless have recalled the day when the sketch from which it was painted was made in 1785. But the murals - the newly-discovered one on the south wall is of thirteenth century date, the Jesse vine on the north wall about 50 years later - were still "lost" in his day.

What an entry he would have made in the diary if they had come to light when he was there. And how touched he would have been to see a member of the Custance family lay flowers today on the grave of his beloved Squire and his wife, and Miss Wendy Woodforde place roses from Mr du Quesne's one-time garden on the stone that marks his own in the chancel, beneath the tablet erected to his memory by Nancy and Bill.

How many times the old Hart - or "Heart" as Parson Woodforde often wrote it - appears in the diary. Over 30 years old when he knew it, it was still an inn until recently; but is now a private house, over which members were shown by its owner, Miss Stella Bradshaw.

We then went on to Weston Old Hall, of which portions belong to the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries - the murals discovered a few years later belonging to the latter period. Later, it became the home of the Custance family* and now belongs to Mr and Mrs Peter Sayer, who allowed us to roam over house and grounds, while Mrs Sayer and Canon Wilson gave particulars of its history.

The "New Hall", into which the Custances moved in August 1781, was pulled down about 40 years ago, but stables and coach-house were left, and were converted into a charming house in 1952 by the late Mr Charles Clutsom. Here we looked at the site of the vanished house, by courtesy of Mr Benson, its present owner, and were also able to see a photograph of it, while Mrs Clutsom and Canon Wilson talked to us of both houses.

---

* No member of the Custance family lived at Weston Old Hall. Hambleton, the squire's father, had plans for the building of a new house (abandoned after his death in 1757) and "a substantial part" of the Old Hall was pulled down for the purpose of providing building materials for it; further demolition occurred later, which is mentioned by Woodforde. In his time the Old Hall was a farmhouse. - See Note 6 to *L. H. M. Hill: The Custances and their Family Circle, edited and annotated by Thomas Custance. Supplement No. 8 to Journal, 1989. [ed.]*

We then went on to Mrs Clutsom's "New House", *Weston Covert*, for an excellent buffet luncheon and "much pleasant chatter", mainly of Woodforde matters. More members availed themselves of the opportunity to secure a copy of Miss Peck's Weston Map. And we were delighted to learn that a new edition of the 5-volume diary had been published that day by the Clarendon Press.

Far too soon it was time to set out again (I wonder what the diarist would have thought of our Horseless Chaises!). Passing the rectory that replaced Parson Woodforde's thatched one about 1840, though his pond and wall are still there, our next stop was at Hockering Rectory, with its memories of the Howes and the catches of fish from its pond.

Already overdue - for, as usual on such expeditions, everyone wanted to linger longer than was practicable - we next made for Mattishall Church, where Mr Smith, rector for 22 years, who died within 4 months of the diarist, is buried, as are Mr Bodham and his wife Anne, née Donne, who survived him for 50 years, and others mentioned in the diary. Here the rector, Dr Thorne, gave a most interesting talk: recalling, too, that it was in this church that Archbishop Parker married Mary Harleston, the wife who inadvertently provoked Queen Elizabeth I's famous salutation.

South Green, the one-time home of the Bodhams, is now Mattishall Hall. Here Miss Mary Barham Johnson, a connection of Anne Donne's, expanded her notes on South Green and the Bodhams which are to be found in Journal I, 2, and recalled the wedding visit the diarist paid them, recording merely that the bride was "very elegantly dressed". It is to niece Nancy that we are indebted for the information that the dress was of pink brocade edged with ermine, and that the bride also wore a gauze apron with two flounces, white shoes with silver buckles and a gauze cap with painted ribbons. These last, Miss Barham Johnson told me, were made at Coventry and had country scenes, etc. painted on them.

At *East Tuddenham Church* we were met by the vicar, Mr Hodgson, and saw among other interesting items the thirteenth century stone figure of Sir Edmund de Berry with his heart in his hands; Mr du Quesne's monument; and a register in the latter's handwriting, which contains an account of the

"altercations, objections, evasions, reluctance", etc. connected with his fight to keep his tithe. Then on to *Berries Hall*, once Mr du Quesne's rectory, where its owners, Mr and Mrs Meynell, allowed us to explore the delightful house and gardens; and I thought of the "altercations" in which Mr du Quesne would have indulged on learning that North Sea Gas pipes are scheduled to cross within sight of them. I can imagine what the diarist would have said, too!

Then back, via France Green, to Weston Village Hall, where we partook of a welcome Dish of Tea, generously provided by Mrs Clutsom and some members of the Weston W.I., with more "pleasant chatter", and many "thank you's" to all who had done so much to give us such a wonderful day, not least our Convenor whose labours, before and during the expedition, kept him busy indeed.

Even the weather, if colder than we liked in the morning, was fine and dry. And all would echo the diarist's comment upon another occasion: in 1791 - "We spent a very agreeable Day indeed".

- Reprinted from Journal I, 3, autumn 1986.

PYRAMIDS OF PLEASURE: EATING AND DINING IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ENGLAND; AN EXHIBITION AT FAIRFAX HOUSE, YORK - 1 JULY TO 31 OCTOBER 1990

Members of our Society visiting York during the period of this exhibition could surely not have resisted being attracted to Fairfax House. Without doubt the finest eighteenth century residence in the City, the former town house of Viscount Fairfax of Gilling was home to the second of a series of exhibitions devoted to various aspects of "Polite Society" at that time. Situated on Castlegate and designed by John Carr, also the architect of such distinguished buildings as the Assize Courts and the Female Prison, Fairfax House has been splendidly renovated by its present owners the York Civic Trust. After having been part of a cinema and then a dance hall and suffering not only neglect but the crude decoration of its fine interior

plasterwork and woodwork, it is once again a fitting receptacle for its superb collection of period furniture. It was the Civic Trust too who were responsible for *Pyramids of Pleasure*, an exhibition devoted to eating and dining in the eighteenth century. It was a delight.

The success of the exhibition revolved around the entirely felicitous decision to centre it upon a particular dinner-party held to celebrate both the completion of the house and the Viscount's birthday. At the entrance to the dining room we were informed that

> The time is 4.00 pm, April 15th, 1763. The setting, the dining room on the ground floor. The footman, Joseph Sturdy, has brought in warm French rolls from the kitchen. He quickly wraps them up in the napkins by the side of each plate and proceeds upstairs to the saloon where, in firm clear voice, he announces: "The dinner is served, my Lord . . ."

Many readers, bearing in mind that this is York, notorious for such excesses in the area of historical reconstruction as the Yorvik Centre, will be understandably sceptical. Here, however, we were spared the kitchen smells and insofar as our disbelief was suspended it was thanks to the combination of impressive scholarship and technical virtuosity.

The problems faced by anyone attempting such an enterprise as this will be readily understood by members of our Society who are by now well aware of the difficulties involved in the interpretation of eighteenth century eating habits. Despite the fact that Woodforde's diary groans under the weight of recorded dinners, it tells us tantalisingly little about how those meals were eaten – who ate what, who sat next to whom, who carved this or served that? Those who accuse the diarist of banality in his quotidian preoccupations fail to recognise how much he took for granted and left unsaid. He did, of course, invariably record, at least in part, the bill of fare; but no such record exists of the Viscount's party and it was necessary to use a variety of sources in an attempt to reconstruct it.

Surviving records indicate that the produce of the Gilling estate's fishponds, pigeon cotes and woodlands were regularly transported the eighteen miles to York by one Matthew Robinson "with the basket". Lists of produce bought by the housekeeper Anne Pyatt also helped in the task of deducing

what was eaten. An invoice for sweetmeats and other desserts and glass and structures to display them shows that no less than 15 guineas were paid to the City chef William Baker who, incidentally, employed a French confectioner resident in York to supply the sweetmeats. The cellar accounts indicate that the diners – there were probably about 18 of them – consumed 34 bottles of wine and at least 48 pints of ale; assisted, surely, by their servants?

As to the preparation and presentation of the meal there is evidence that the Viscount's cook, Martha Brown, was familiar with the standard recipe books of the day by Elizabeth Smith, Hannah Glasse* and Elizabeth Raffald. Of particular importance, however, was another part of the family archive, part-pharmacopoeia, part-recipe book: the Arcana Fairfaxiana Manuscripta. The exhibition is accompanied by an informatively written and beautifully illustrated booklet including a number of these recipes of which an example might give the flavour:

To make Puffes.

Take a Poringer full of chese curds and brake into them ffower Egges, then put to them a handfull of wheate flower some Nutmegge, and make them up into a little Roues and set into the oven upon a paper being well rubbed with butter, and serve them up with butter and Suger.

In all the meal consisted of 64 dishes presented in three courses. In terms of Woodforde's experience, therefore, it must have been somewhat similar to that which he received as the guest of the Bishop of Norwich and his lady, Mrs Bagot, on 4 September 1783 when the twenty diners "had two Courses of 20. Dishes each Course, and a Desert after of 20. Dishes". It is, of course, reference to such a large variety of food being served at eighteenth century meals that is responsible for the misapprehension that everyone must have eaten a great deal. In fact it would not have been practical to sample everything and such was certainly not expected. The custom, which became known as *à la Français*, was, of course, to confine your attention to that which was placed adjacent to you. Beyond that it

* This was the lady who prefaced her description of a recipe for hare with the wise intimation: "First catch your hare".

was very much a question of catching a footman's eye, the chances of doing so being much improved by a pre-prandial bribe! The practice of taking along your own servant seems to have been quite acceptable especially if it helped to improve a fundamentally rather inefficient system. According to one Thomas Cosnet, whose *Footman's Directory* was published in 1825 after he had been in service for 50 years, a suitable guest/servant ratio in modest households was 1 : 4.

The hazards inherent in this method of service are well illustrated in the publication accompanying the exhibition by an anecdote not unrelated to that of the curate's egg. Apparently, Archbishop Markham (1777-1807) invited to a grand dinner at Bishopthorpe a young man who was about to be examined for priest's orders. As it happened, the young divine was placed opposite a dish of small game birds (ruffs and reeves) which was very popular in Yorkshire at that time. Seasoned diners waited their turn to pounce but as they did so the young cleric, too modest to disturb the dignitaries seated elsewhere at the table, made his unrelenting way through the dish in front of him. When eventually the alarm was raised it was too late, the birds had vanished and with them all possibility of preferment in Yorkshire for the young man.

The first course with which the exhibition dining table was laid consisted of boiled meats, fish and soup. The last would be served by the host, the tureen being replaced towards the end of the course by a spectacular "remove" dish designed to maintain interest and serve as a "conversation piece" during the lengthy period of time it took to remove the first course dishes and replace them with those of the second course. A peacock pie, decorated with the head and feather tails of the bird, but probably not containing its stringy, rather indigestible meat, was provided for this purpose. It will be remembered that at the dinner-party held by the newly-inaugurated Dr Bagot the *pièce de résistance* was more definitely inedible if none the less impressive:

> A most beautiful Artificial Garden in the Center of the Table remained at Dinner and afterwards, it was one of the prettiest things I ever saw, about a Yard long, and about 18. Inches wide, in the middle of which was a high round Temple supported

on round Pillars, the Pillars were wreathed round
with artificial Flowers - on one side was a Shepherdess
on the other a Shepherd - several handsome Urns
decorated with artificial Flowers also &c. &c.

— *4/9/1783*

At least one supposes this to have been inedible but the Fairfax House exhibition includes two virtually identical temples, based on rotundas at Stowe and in the gardens of Gilling Castle, and made of sugar!

The second course itself, displayed on a sideboard during the exhibition, concentrated on roasted meats, including a green goose and a dish with which Woodforde was certainly very familiar in his Oxford days: roast pigeons with asparagus. We were informed that even such small birds as pigeons would have been larded, thin strips of bacon being stitched into the meat using a long silver stiletto-shaped needle.

It appears that it was this course that was most likely to include a suggestion of the French *nouvelle cuisine*, a ragoût of vegetables and sweetbreads, for example. This "frenchification" of the English table seems to have been a case of fashion running ahead of taste, Woodforde's disapproval being by no means uncommon. One feels sure that he would have greatly preferred the Viscount's dinner to that to which he was treated at Honingham Hall on 28 August 1783:

There was two Courses at Dinner besides the Desert
Each Course nine Dishes - but most of the things
spoiled by being so frenchified in dressing -
I dined on some fryed Soals, some stewed Beef with
Caper Sauce and some Hare rosted but very insipid -

At the end of the second course a further remove dish would have been introduced. The English custom was to regenerate the meal by linking the courses in some way. The dish chosen to perform this task was a mock boar's head: a sponge pudding in the shape of a boar's head, coated with chocolate and decorated with the Viscount's arms. Up to this point everything has been served on silver with the cutlery placed face down on the table to display the engraved armorials and avoid an embarrassing tangle of upturned tines and lace cuffs. The dessert course would have been served on porcelain and, in the knowledge was the Viscount was purchasing china at that

time, porcelain from the Nanking cargo was used for this stage of the meal.

And so to the pyramids of pleasure, the heaps of candied fruit, marzipan shapes and *Manus Christi* (small spheres of sugar paste coated in gold leaf) which formed the climax of the dinner. Thanks to the assistance of the Rowntree Mackintosh trials team and the York and Malton branch of the Sugarcraft Guild, this part of the exhibition was especially attractive, not to say mouth-watering. As well as the sweetmeats in the centrally located épergne, there were tureens of peaches and morello cherries steeped in brandy, dishes of prunelloes, meringues and macaroons and, as an aid to digestion, bowls of pistachio nuts and liquorice!

Finally, before the ladies retire and the serious drinking of "toasts" begins, we might remind ourselves that Parson Woodforde, who generally ate at less fashionable tables than that of the Right Hon. Lord Viscount Fairfax, was not himself unacquainted with the pyramids of pleasure. One wonders whether in his later, more retired years he ever turned back to the earlier volumes of the diary and read again - and with what emotion? - such entries as that for 20 April 1774:

> We had a very elegant Dinner - the first Course
> was part of a large Cod, a Chine of Mutton,
> some Soup, a Chicken Pye, Pudding & Roots &c. -
> Second Course Pidgeons & Asparagus, a Fillett
> of Veal with Mushrooms & high Sauce with it -
> rosted Sweat-breads, hot Lobster, Apricot Tart,
> & in the Middle a Pyramid of Syllabubs and Jellies
> We had a Desert of Fruit after Dinner and Ma=
> =deira, White Port & red to drink as Wine
> We were all very cheerful and merry . . .

TROTMAN ONCE MORE!

In the Journal issue for spring 1979 (XII, 1) there appeared a very good essay by Mr F. H. Erith on the subject of the Oglander family - Woodforde's friend John Oglander was Warden of New College from 1768 to his death in January 1794. To this I contributed an appendix dealing with college discipline, there being a widespread but wholly mistaken belief that this had no

existence in the time of the diarist. The source was the archives of New College, which I was intensively studying at the time. Additional details then were published in the number immediately following (XII, 2).

These pieces largely concerned two undergraduates, Samuel Trotman and John Grattan, who got into trouble with the college authorities through long and persistent absenteeism. If the question were asked - did eighteenth century colleges enforce residence, the answer is: yes and no. Once a student had taken his first degree, he could absent himself for as long as he chose to stay away. As we know, Woodforde went down in 1763 and for the next ten years returned to Oxford only for short spells, in order to carry out one or other of the academic exercises required for the taking of his M.A. Before graduation, the position was quite different. The "Warden and Thirteen" senior Fellows who ran the administrative affairs of New College were prepared to hand out some very drastic penalties for infringement of the rules in this respect, Grattan at one point being sentenced to virtual imprisonment within the college walls for *two years.*

Recently I used some of this material as the basis of an article which was published in *Oxford*, the periodical of the Oxford Society (XLII, 2, December 1990). To my delight, I received an unexpeced bonus, in the form of an extremely kind and informative letter from an actual member of the Trotman family. His letter was accompanied by a finely detailed family tree. With the aid of these, it is now possible to make our delinquent collegian, hitherto scarcely more than a name attached to a list of misdeeds, into a figure of some depth, by restoring him to a real family and giving him a place in it. We can also discover what became of him in the end.

The Trotmans were a wealthy landowning family in Oxfordshire, related to the Fiennes, viscounts Saye and Sele. Indeed, after the viscountcy had become extinct, Pitt offered to revive the title for the benefit of our Trotman's brother; but the honour was declined. It was through the Fiennes pedigree that Samuel was able to claim the status of "Founder's Kin" at Winchester.

His father, also Samuel, b. 1723/4, was a clergyman. In the appendix already mentioned, I had him down as "the incum-

bent of Finmere, Bucks." This was an error of Dr Hargreaves-Mawdesley, editor of *Woodforde at Oxford*. In fact, the family seems to have been exclusively associated with Oxfordshire. Samuel senior was vicar of Syston and rector of Newton Purcell.

This last detail should make the good Woodfordean prick up his ears at once, since it was in the church there that James Woodforde began his clerical career. He was admitted to Minor Orders on 29 May 1763. Evidently Mr Trotman resided at Syston and had to make what arrangements he could for his other benefice. At the time his regular assistant was George James Sale, that unfortunate friend of the diarist who was so grievously disappointed in his attempts to become Warden of either Winchester or New College. In this year he had become a Proctor, and could not spare the time every Sunday to ride over to Newton Purcell, up near the border of Buckinghamshire and 20 miles from Oxford. So he handed over the task to the young James Woodforde, who went there for the first time on 5 June: "At eleven o'clock went to my Church, and read Prayers and preached my first Sermon" in the morning, doing the same in the afternoon.

He seems to have met the nominal incumbent only once, on 17 July. Trotman senior was, so far as Newton Purcell was concerned, a "squarson"; i.e., one who was both parson and squire. Woodforde writes: "M^{r}. Trotman (the Squire) was at Church, and the first time I saw him in Church, or any where else, since I served Newton". Perhaps he had gone expressly to keep an eye on the inexperienced young man, and find out how he was shaping. Altogether Woodforde made six visits there. (He said it was eight; but on one of the Sundays he swapped churches with another man, and on another Sale took the service himself. The diarist was, however, paid four guineas, his first earnings in the Anglican church.)

Samuel Trotman the elder, b. 1723/4, married Mary, daughter to Thomas Newnham of Butler's Marston. They had three children, two sons and a daughter; Samuel being the elder son.

He was born on 10 November 1751 at Butler's Marston, his mother's home, and admitted as a Scholar on the Winchester Foundation in 1765. He was, perhaps, not very bright

academically, or perhaps he was lazy and unwilling to work, for the Long Rolls show him occupying a place near the bottom of his various classes, until his penultimate year, 1768, when he suddenly shot up to second place in the senior or upper part of the fifth class, only to drop next year to an undistinguished place in the sixth. But that, of course, made not the slightest difference to his placing on the Oxford Roll, where as one of the two "Founder's Kin" leavers for that year he was listed first. Grattan, the other, was placed second.

As his inglorious career at New College has already been covered by the appendix to Mr Erith's essay, to which the curious reader is referred, no more than a brief recapitulation is needed here.

On 3 July 1773 Trotman was called to attend a disciplinary meeting and sentenced to stay within the precincts of the college for fourteen days. He was not to leave the University for a year. He was given as an imposition the task of translating Locke's *Essay on Government* into Latin at the rate of six pages a week; and "if the above Book shall not find employment for the whole Term of his confinement that he then in the same proportion translate Quinctilian's [sic] *Institutes* till the said Term is completed".

In June 1774 the Warden and Thirteen refused him permission to supplicate for his degree. This was withheld for a year, "& that his future conduct must determine whether it shall at that time be granted, a series of irregularity & disobedience having counselled the Warden & Officers to this resolution". In October he was sentenced to remain in college for a month, and required to read aloud, at the next meeting of the whole college, "such Form of Submisssion as shall by the Warden & Officers be prescribed to him".

Scattered references to Samuel Trotman occur from time to time in the diary. On 4 July 1774 Woodforde recounts that "some Rogues", now caught and in prison, had got into New College some time before and stolen articles belonging to various Fellows, among whom was Trotman who had lost "some Shirts". Then on 15 December came the famous disputed election over the benefice of Weston Longville. The diarist records without comment that both Trotman and Grattan voted for his antagonist Mr Hooke. For that matter, so

did most of the younger Fellows, and it was his own contemporaries who brought him home and so determined the course the rest of his life would take.

But six months before this, something had taken place that, both for its intrinsic interest and for the light it throws on our Mr Trotman, justifies our ignoring chronology and dealing with the event in some detail.

On 3 June Woodforde had gone with a party of friends to Abingdon, to the theatre. He saw Addison's *Cato*, a political play about which Johnson said of its first performance: "The Whigs applauded every time Liberty was mentioned, as a satire on the Tories; and the Tories echoed every clap to show that the satire was unfelt". On the bill also was, for the "Entertainment", another popular piece, *The Padlock* by Isaac Bickerstaffe. Let the diarist now take up the narrative:

> . . . It was Woods Company of Players who were some time back in Castle-Cary in Somersetshire – I went up into the Dressing Room, and saw M^{r}. Wood, Miss Wood, M^{r}. and M^{rs}. Morris & M^{r}. Browning, all who I remembered at Cary – They did not perform very extraordinary, but tolerable enough – It is reported that Trotman of our College pays his Addresses to Miss Wood & is engaged to her – Miss Wood is very pretty but pokes a good deal – There were two Gownsmen at the Play in the Boxes with two noted Ladies of Pleasure, a Miss Allen & a Lady who goes by the name of Miss Burford – A M^{r}. Brown also of Queens Coll: was very much in Liquor at the Play & exposed himself much –

A raffish scene indeed, and it sounds as though the kind of people who would have been Trotman's boon companions were there in force. Abingdon itself, near enough to be easily reached from Oxford, but a place where the Proctors had no jurisdiction, may have had a particularly bad reputation at the time for what Burns called "houghmagandie". Indeed, in Woodforde's own case, what appears to have been the solitary backsliding in an otherwise blameless career took place in that very town.

Trotman's latest démarche had made his intentions clear. Not for him the academic life, or the quiet career of a country

Parson. In that celibate community, only the Warden was permitted to marry, and for a Fellow to contract matrimony meant the immediate rescinding of his Fellowship, which became void even without the need to provide a formal resignation. And to marry an actress must have appeared, not only to New College but to the vast majority of people in his class, as the most frightful kind of mésalliance. By this more than anything else Trotman was cutting himself adrift from the kind of society into which he was born.

Early in 1775, not long perhaps after recording his anti-Woodforde vote, he disappeared, and William of Wykeham's ancient foundation knew him no more. On 30 April the Warden and Thirteen met to discuss his case. No doubt with much solemn shaking of heads and tut-tutting, the seniors made an order, instructing the Dean of Arts to write and inform him that, unless he was back in the college within twenty days of the date on the letter, he would be expelled.

But Trotman had no intention of ever coming back, and at once sent in his resignation. The Warden and Thirteen made one last try, just a week later, on 7 April. They decided to see if a compromise would work. They would refuse to accept the resignation and then, if only Trotman were to show a proper submission and explain the reasons for his late conduct, they were prepared, as it were, to let bygones be bygones. This order, with its amusing contractions, was cited in the Oglander appendix. Woodforde was present, and here is his account:

> . . . There was a Meeting of the 13. this morning in the Audit House concerning M^{r}. Trotman of this College, who sent his Resignation to the College –
> It was agreed to send him one more Letter before his Resignation will be accepted –

Trotman, however, was quite adamant, and not to be moved. It is unlikely that he even took the trouble to answer the College letter. As a note about him in Warden Sewell's register puts it: "He was averse from college life".

If we are searching for reasons to explain Trotman's conduct, a clue may perhaps be found in the circumstances of his family. Few people who ruin themselves do so in the full knowledge of what their reckless behaviour implies; and Trotman must have

all along been sustained by the comforting illusion that he would never have to work for his living. He held the reversion of a family estate, Shelswell, at present in the possession of his uncle.

This uncle, Fiennes Trotman, was quite an important man. He was High Sheriff of Oxfordshire (1759), and Woodforde has two allusions to him. He was unmarried and childless; almost, one might say, the prototype of the benevolent rich uncle who makes the hero's fortunes in so many eighteenth century and Victorian novels.

But all was not well between Samuel and his uncle. If there was one action more than another calculated to infuriate the responsible elders of a landed family, it was the wastage of its resources by improvident heirs. Samuel was, as the family history records, "addicted to gambling". Probably in order to pay off pressing debts, he began to raise money on his expectations from Shelswell. This would be by means of the notorious "post-obit bonds", at exorbitant rates of interest, so familiar to anyone who studies the murkier financial transactions of the eighteenth century.

Now in 1775, the year in which, as we have seen, Trotman severed his tie with New College, Fiennes Trotman inherited from a cousin, another Samuel Trotman, two more family estates, Syston and Bucknell. In the ordinary course of events, all three would have come to our Samuel. But the uncle was so incensed by his actions that, in defiance of the rule of primogeniture, he disinherited him, and made over the reversion of the properties to his other nephew, and namesake, Fiennes Trotman, Samuel's younger brother. It was he who inherited when the uncle died in 1783. From the family point of view it was a wise move, because Samuel was clearly the sort of person who would have contrived to run through whatever fortune he might have acquired. But for him it was total, unmitigated disaster.

In the essay written for *Oxford* and already mentioned, I permitted myself a modest flight of fancy:

> Perhaps real life stories are less satisfying than fiction, for one cannot adjust them to fit the whims of either writer or reader, supplying a happy or sad ending at will. Trotman had certainly cut himself off from any sort of career in the church. We know

> nothing else about him, not even if he married Miss Wood. If he were a character in a novel, we could sketch out a career of disaster for him . . . We could give him nineteen children, a dead-end job, like that of a village schoolmaster, and a taste for drink. Perhaps he ended up as one of those ghastly, self-pitying, dreary bores who cannot stop lamenting their wasted lives and missed opportunities.

When I wrote those words, I knew nothing about Trotman beyond what was to be gleaned from my two sources, New College and Woodforde, neither of whom mention him after 1775. As a guess, not really meant to be taken seriously, I do not think it was a bad one.

But what do we know now of the rest of Mr Trotman's story? First, he did marry Miss Wood, although not immediately. The register of St Bartholomew the Great, in London, records that Samuel Trotman married Marcia Wood in 1778.

But how, disinherited, did he manage to live? Landed families used often enough to rescue their bankrupt and disgraced members by giving them just enough to live on, provided that they lived as far away as possible. Later they exiled them even farther by shipping them out to the colonies.

Young Charles Dickens, at thirteen or so, left school to become the office boy in the lawyers' firm of Ellis and Blackmore. A remittance man of this kind used to come to the office to receive his pittance. Elderly and battered by life, he was a one-time Yorkshire squire, named Newman Knott. He would talk to the boy, saying pathetically: "Newman Knott had his horses and hounds, once". Dickens stored him away in his memory, and eventually turned him into "Newman Noggs", in *Nicholas Nickleby*. It is likely enough that our Mr Trotman met just such a melancholy fate.

All the same, I was wrong about the children. Samuel Trotman died in 1804, in poverty and without issue.

A NOTE: "M^{R}. WOODS COMPANY OF PLAYERS"

For a researcher, the worst state of affairs is when the available primary source material is not present in sufficient quantity to allow it to support theories or speculations. The next worst is

when reliable evidence is to hand, but parts of it fail to agree with, or even directly contradict, other parts. If we revert to the old comparison of historical research to the fitting together of jigsaw puzzles, the task becomes something like trying to make a single picture out of portions of two different puzzles.

When Parson Woodforde went to the theatre in Abingdon, on 3 June 1774, he tells us that he went into the actors' dressing room to greet some of them. At no other time in any visit to the theatre did he apparently do this; and he did it then only because he already knew them, saying that he had met them in Castle Cary "some time back".

To find out what he meant by this vague term, we have to go to the diary and work back through it to the year 1770. Now this is very interesting, because 1770 was the year of that unusually brilliant season, in which the Parson certainly had his fill of theatrical entertainment, seeing nine performances – two plays a night, as well as songs, dances and the like – in just over three weeks. This season was dealt with in an article, *High Jinks at Castle Cary* (*Journal XI, 2*). The point made there is that the actors were very likely to have been members of the Salisbury Company of Comedians, a superior troupe which had its own purpose-built theatre and toured only in the summer months. Further investigation showed that there was an actor named Wood associated with this company. While it is beyond question that the "M^{r}. Wood" whom the diarist met at Abingdon in 1774 was the actor he had seen at Cary four years previously, his daughter being present on both occasions (in 1770 there had been a "M^{rs}. Wood" also, but she had presumably retired or perhaps died in the meantime), we cannot be absolutely sure that he was also the player known to belong to the Salisbury troupe; the name is too common. At the same time, other Salisbury actors were certainly at Cary in 1770.

However, by the time he is seen on the boards in Abingdon, Mr Wood was clearly not a member of the Salisbury company. It was too far from their usual itinerary. I think it is unlikely that Abingdon had a "real" theatre. Woodforde does not tell us where *Cato* and *The Padlock* were staged, but my guess is that it would have been in some makeshift building like the "Court House" at Cary. We may also note this: when recounting that he greeted the Woods and others, he says he met them in "the

Dressing Room", and the use of the singular here conjures up a scene like that in Hogarth's picture *Strolling Players Dressing in a Barn.*

Woodforde also calls the troupe "Mr. Woods". In the index to the *Oxford and Somerset* volume he is listed as "actor-Manager", and although that term may not chronologically be quite right, it probably gives a true enough description of his status in the company. If he had left the Salisbury players, he took some of the troupe along with him, for "Mr. and Mrs. Morris" and "Mr. Browning" had acted with him at Cary. We have, then, a series of strong probabilities that Wood was a former Salisbury player who had set up his own company and was in 1775 touring with them. More we cannot say.

Miss Wood, too, poses something of a problem. Marcia Wood was married to Samuel Trotman on 8 June 1778 at the London church of St Bartholomew the Great. It was the parish where she resided, Trotman living in the parish of Uxbridge, Middlesex. The Trotman family tree gives her age as 19. The ages of the principals were not required in marriage certificates, but she is listed as a minor. The wedding was by licence, "with the consent of John Wood the natural and lawful father of the said Marcia Wood".

But if she was 19 when she married Trotman, she could have been no more than 15 when she became engaged to him, which is unusual, to say the least, although this perhaps explains why the engagement was so protracted.

We might now take another look at what she was doing at Cary, four years before. On Wednesday, 30 May 1770, Woodforde was at the Court House theatre. The performance was staged "for the Benefit of Mr. and Mrs. Wood, Miss Wood and Mr. Gay (four of the Players)". Two evenings later there was another benefit performance when, in addition to the dramatic fare provided, there was "a Hornpipe by Miss Wood and a Liliputian Dance by Mr. Benson, very droll". At that time, she was 11 years old.

But there was nothing at all strange in this. Child performers were very popular attractions in theatres. At about the same age Master Betty, "the Infant Roscius", took the role of Hamlet, of all the parts in the world, to rapturous applause, although

like most child prodigies he failed to make the transition to acting fame as an adult and lapsed into obscurity.

The vogue for child actors and singers and dancers survived to the time of the Victorian stage, which was in many ways little different from that of the eighteenth century. I have been reading an excellent book, *The Invisible Woman* by Claire Tomalin, a life of Ellen Ternan, the great love of Dickens' later years. "Nelly" herself was apparently no great shakes as an actress and indeed left the boards at the first opportunity, but her mother, who had made her first appearances by being carried on to the stage as a baby, and her eldest sister Fanny (she finally became the second wife of Anthony Trollope's brother, and a novelist herself) were much more successful. The latter was indeed a notable child performer. She was billed as reciting such famous set pieces as Collins' *Ode to the Passions*. Dickens knew this poem well, had beyond doubt heard it many times in his own youth at the theatre, and his description of it in *Great Expectations* gives us a good idea of the way it would have been declaimed on the stage:

> . . . rather late in the evening, M^r^. Wopsle gave us Collins' Ode, and threw his blood-stain'd sword in thunder down, with such effect, that a waiter came in and said, "The Commercials underneath sent up their compliments, and it wasn't the Tumblers' Arms".

BOOK REVIEW

Roy Porter: Health for Sale. Quackery in England 1660-1850. Manchester University Press (1989)

To our membership, this book is likely to be considered less interesting than *In Sickness and in Health*, reviewed in the Journal for spring 1990, only to the extent that it contains no mention of James Woodforde. In all other respects it should find favour with the discriminating reader. It is lively, informed and well written, one of those books – there are not too many of them about, unfortunately – that both divert and instruct.

Indeed, a superficial book-fancier might well enjoy it for its entertainment value alone. The relentless war between the "regular" physicians and the "quacks", and the insults, often

expressed in the most picturesque and vivid terms, that they so liberally threw at one another, are highly risible in themselves. But Dr Porter is writing serious history, and he analyses not only the contending medical factions but also the clients, the sick or nervous or valetudinarian public for whose custom they were fighting. He has also many interesting things to say about the economic factors which conditioned the medical profession during the era of his survey, and the kind of society in which both doctors and quacks flourished.

Near the outset of his book, the author warns against the simplistic but still very common view that the difference between the two was between the recognised, qualified practitioner and the "ill-bred, uneducated, ignorant, inept impostor". Some of the so-called quacks possessed qualifications which were as good as those of the orthodox medical men: "in a world where academic honours could legitimately be purchased, possession of a medical degree cannot itself be taken as proof positive of competence", and many of the quacks had years of solid practical experience behind them.

Again, although the high status doctors were always accusing the quacks of pushing rash, foolhardy and dangerous "cures", in fact they shared a common fund of knowledge - and, it might be said, a common fund of ignorance also - and the worst that could be said of most quack remedies is that they were "pilfered . . . from regular practice". The quacks themselves returned the charge of recklessness to the doctors, and pilloried their recourse as a matter of routine to very dangerous substances - for example, mercury. Looked at in this way, the whole subject of quacks and quackery will appear very much more complex than it seemed to be at first sight.

Nor is the picture complete without bringing in the customer who patronised doctor and quack alike. The commonest contemporary view, and one taken over by many historians down to our own day, was of a simple balance of knaves and fools. According to this, the public were stupid and gullible, ready to believe any nonsense which might offer the possibility of a cure. In reality, there is much to be said for them. They lived in a dangerous world full of mysterious disease-processes, of which they had no understanding at all, and were justifiably willing to put their faith in anyone who claimed to understand

them. "Early modern" people were in any case far less healthy than ourselves, and if they were frightened of illness, it is hard to deny that they had every reason to be scared. Many went to the quack only after long experience of orthodox medicine which had done them no good at all.

Another view of what was in its time dismissed as quackery is that it was the founder of what is today called "alternative medicine", skills such as homeopathy that flourished in the nineteenth century, and all the controversial practices of our day.

But what was a quack, exactly? In spite of all we can say to rehabilitate the quack doctors and medicaments of the past, the word had a deeply pejorative sense. Although most used, as here, to denote a purveyor of fake medicine, it was current also in other contexts, and writers would attack quacks and quackery in politics, religion and business. "Contemporary intellectuals", Dr Porter says, "bristling with disdain for the masses, viewed this absurdity *de haut en bas* with a certain resignation; it was a cameo in the perennial human comedy".

In Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* (1755) the word is given three definitions, all very dismissive:

1. A boastful pretender to arts which he does not understand.
2. A vain and boastful pretender to physic, one who proclaims his own medical abilities in public places.
3. An artful tricking practitioner in physic.

The second definition reveals the centuries-old link with the mountebank, the conjurer, who with his assistant the "zany" or "Merry Andrew", was a public entertainer as well as a seller of cures. There were still plenty of these about in the eighteenth century, and they make occasional appearances in Woodforde, although unfortunately he never tells us what their actual performances consisted of. Dr Katerfelto who was so rude to our Parson when he was exhibiting at the *Rampant Horse* inn, Norwich, was one of this traditional kind. He had talking black cats, and other impostures to deceive the public, although he was also a medical quack, since he put on sale a "cure" for influenza. At the other end of the scale were the imposingly dignified quacks with their purchased degrees and fund of

pseudo-scientific jargon, who claimed to rival the doctors. The most successful of both kinds did very well out of quackery.

It can hardly be denied, then, that the quack was an integral part of the society in which he lived; or, as one might say, upon which he preyed. He cannot simply be dismissed as "a product of psychological aberration, a monster of mass delusion". So says Dr Porter, and adds that we must look at them as we look at the "regular" doctors and see them both in terms of "the total demand for medical aid and the aggregate supply of healers within the economy as a whole". So, if you were rich enough, you called in a fashionable and expensive doctor. At the bottom of the social ladder, Johnson's friend Robert Levet treated people so poor that they could pay him with nothing but a glass of gin. Between these extremes there was a great mass of "ordinary people" who might buy an occasional potion from a quack doctor, in the same spirit in which customers buy patent medicines today, as a supplement to regular medical services and not to supersede them.

Another factor which favoured the proliferation of quacks was the weakness of the social mechanisms by which they might have been controlled. The Barber-Surgeons Company, founded in 1540, and the Society of Apothecaries, 1617, were granted royal privileges to admit only duly qualified operators, who were given exclusive rights to practise in the capital. The Royal College of Physicians had sweeping powers of appointment, supervision and prosecution, in its own court, of unlicensed practitioners. These attempts at regulation broke down, partly because they soon became the property of "self-regulating cliques"; partly because the British monarchy was not strong enough to give them the authority they possessed in France and Germany; partly also because in the era of *laissez-faire* such regulation was highly unpopular. The courts showed the medical institutions no sympathy. As for the public, there is evidence that it disliked the medical oligarchy much more than it disapproved of the quacks. The result was the creation of a wholly free market in medicine.

Dr Porter makes an interesting point:

> Georgian England is often represented as the apogee of privilege, patronage and jobbery . . . Victorians, in particular, liked to think they had destroyed "old corruption" in medicine

> no less than in government, thanks to their new-broom reforming liberalism, replacing it with the career open to the talents. But the dichotomy between the two centuries, and the heroic story of reformers, are equally phony – indeed, in some ways, the mirror opposite of the truth. In medicine, at least, it is the eighteenth century, not the nineteenth, that presents relatively open practice in which regulation was lax and multiple paths to practice were available . . . The eighteenth century saw few obstacles in the way of medical entrepreneurship.

It is also argued that the medical establishment did not enjoy the immense prestige it has in our time when, faced with its tremendous authority, patients have become passive. In the eighteenth century, literate people are often shown to have exercised "acute vigilance in ministering to their illnesses". Dissatisfied with their treatment, feeling that they were getting no better, they would "often sack the regular practitioner and send for the empiric". This state of affairs provided a fertile breeding-ground for all types of medical quackery. And in a community where the rich called the tune, and even the most famous physician had to be deferential to his wealthy patients, he would by his servility, as Dr Porter observes, become a kind of quack himself.

Although public opinion was ostensibly against quackery, it by no means always agreed with the Royal College of Physicians, about what constituted a quack. In the pages of the *Gentleman's Magazine* the contributors, while firmly hostile to all charlatanism, did not automatically disapprove of unlicensed practitioners. Such characters as "Sally Mapp, the bone setter" were praised.

The feeling, perceptible in Woodforde's diary, that an intelligent layman could safely doctor himself if only he were given the facts to work on, led both to the dislike of the mystifications and obscurities shown by the possessors of medical secrets, and to a demand for more openness. To satisfy this, booksellers' shops were full of medical works, ranging from penny pamphlets to large expensive volumes, as well as popular journals like the *Athenian Mercury*, which acted as exchanges of medical knowledge. But it was no use reading about medicines unless one were able to buy them. William Buchan's *Domestic Medicine* (1st edition 1769, and thereafter

reprinted for almost a century) printed a long list of remedies which he thought well adapted to home use. These include several Woodfordean cures, including rhubarb, camphor, Glauber's salts and "Turner's Cerate". It was often held that the spread of this sort of knowledge would spell the end of the line for the quacks, who depended for their appeal upon popular ignorance. Yet one could argue that the reverse of this was true; that it was medically alerted laymen, made anxious about their health and the duties of health care, who were most likely to spend money on the quacks. One of these, named John Badger, advertised his "Albion or the Cordial Antidote" as

> A noble and Generous Medicine, confirmed by the Experience of above Twenty Years private practice, and now publish'd at the Request of several Persons for a General Good, that every one may be his own Physician at an Easie and Cheap Rate.

All this has to be seen in its relation to a society in which, down so far as the middle class, standards of life were improving, and more people had money to spare. Goods were bought in, ready-made, where they had been produced at home, and more services were rendered by professionals rather than, as formerly, by members of the household. A feeling that health was something money could buy combined with the availability of drugs of all kinds – in 1784 the *Coventry Mercury* informed its readers that over one hundred different medicines could be bought at the local bookseller's – to produce that typical eighteenth century phenomenon, the "malade imaginaire". In the seventeenth century hypochondriasis had been classed as an organic disorder of the lower abdomen, caused by having too little of the chondria or black bile, a notion that belonged to the doctrine of humours. It now became a morbid mental state, characterized by anxiety about one's health, a meaning it still retains. All these things worked together to create a state of affairs where, in the words of Dr Porter, "Georgian England was becoming a medicated society, drunk on self-drugging". In addition, many of the drugs were habit-forming and induced addiction.

Having analysed the society in which quacks swarmed and at least some of them flourished mightily, Dr Porter then goes on to consider, in two separate chapters, 'The Career of Quackery'

and 'The Culture of Quackery'. Plainly there were rich pickings to be made here, but it was essentially a precarious sort of trade. There was, as we have seen, a built-in prejudice against quacks, and the common charge was that they were cheats who lived by fooling a credulous public. He quotes from the diary of Thomas Turner the Sussex grocer (9/7/1760) His wife, this diarist says:

> . . . walks to Whitesmith to see a mountebank perform certain wonders, who has a stage built there and comes once a week to cozen a parcel of poor deluded creatures out of their money, he selling packets which are to cure people of more distempers than they ever had in their lives for one shilling each, by which he takes sometimes £8 or £9 at a day.

Five years ago, he says, she had visited a mountebank in the same place, and bought a packet of powders costing 12d.

To counter this prejudice, the better-known quacks sought the patronage of the powerful. A notice in the *Morning Post* for 16/9/1781, almost certainly inserted by the quack himself, states that "Mr Katterfelto was honoured this week with the Duke of Montagu, Lords Cholmondeley, Abergavenny and Ashby, General Johnson, Sir J. Stepney, and several other ladies and gentlemen of distinction". If you were a very lucky quack, you might catch the notice of the king himself, like Joshua Ward, who set the dislocated thumb of George II - the royal doctors had put it down to gout - and gained thereby various privileges, among which was the right to drive his coach-and-six through St James' Park, and freedom from inspection of his medicines by the Royal College of Physicians.

Even more coruscating was the career of John Taylor, or "Chevalier Taylor", by which title he was known. Born in Norwich in 1703, originally an itinerant oculist, he became ophthalmic specialist to the king, and in addition travelled about Europe, and beyond, for thirty years, operating on the eyes of the great. He wrote his autobiography in three volumes, on the title page of which he dubbed himself "Ophthalmiator Pontifical Imperial and Royal", adding for good measure that he had not only "been personally known to every sovereign in all Europe, without exception", but also that he was "personally known to every man of distinguished character now

living or has lived in Europe, in the present age, in every science, and in every part of useful knowledge".* Among these was Dr Johnson, who however pronounced Taylor the most ignorant man he had ever met; "but sprightly". Although doubt has been cast on some of his asseverations, such as his claim to have travelled in Persia, he must be accounted a brilliant success in his own field and reckoned by many to be a skilful operator. For cataract, instead of following the traditional method of "couching": i.e., the depression and displacement of the lens, he took it out altogether. But, as any medical student will tell you, it is impossible to see in that condition without the aid of special glasses. Most of Taylor's fame was derived from the correction of strabismus, or squinting. It is to be hoped that none of his patients suffered the fate of Shaw's father who, operated on by the famous Dublin eye-surgeon Sir William Wilde, father of Oscar Wilde, had his squint so violently corrected that for the rest of his life he squinted in the opposite direction!

Another quack who deserves the attention of the connoisseur of oddities was Theodor Myersbach. Many of the most famous quacks were German, which gave their critics the opportunity of ridiculing their heavy foreign accent. Myersbach called himself an "urologist". He asked for a sample of urine, and by looking at it was able not only to diagnose the patient's disorder and physical condition but tell a lot about his character as well. This was too good an opportunity for his detractors to resist; and they obligingly sent along flasks full of the urine of various kinds of animal, for the sake of hearing the nonsense he talked about it. The *Gazetteer* (a newspaper) for 26/8/1776 printed a highly farcical account of one such incident. The journalist, armed with "the urine of a young gelding", pretended that he was asking advice on behalf of his wife. If we can believe him, the following exchange took place:

Patient: What do you think is her complaint, Doctor?

Doctor: It be, Sir, – it be a disorder in her womb – her womb – her – her womb be somewhat affected – she have a pain across her loins – she be very bad – I do see she be very bad.

* Bach and Handel were patients of Taylor, who attended them as an eye-specialist. His ministrations probably did more harm than good, and both went blind.

Patient: The water seems very clear, Doctor.

Doctor: Ah! Ah! It look so to you; but I do see - I do see a slime upon her kidneys she be very sick at the stomach - she have a pain in her head, and in her limbs - Has she had many children?

Patient: Two, Doctor.

Doctor: Her pains in labour be very bad - do they not?

Patient: Why, Doctor, I think all women say labour pains be very bad. I cannot speak from experience.

Doctor: No! No! No - your wife's temper be much affected by her disorder - it make her very peevish - very fretful - passionate - every little thing - (here he paused, and gazed once more on the gelding's urine, and turning round, cried) Every little thing, I see, puts her into a passion - Does it not?

Patient: Why, Doctor, she is as most women are, not always in the best humour.

Doctor: Ah! Ah! There you do see - I did say so; she has had this complaint these three years - I do perceive dat - and she always be coughing.

A little of this sort of thing ought to have been enough to see Myersbach off; but he survived it all. Like the "Chevalier", he knew the great value of having distinguished and influential patients, and was indeed accused of exploiting aristocratic female hypochondriacs: ("Lady Hysteria, Lady Credulous, Lady Innoffensive [sic], Lady Widow-Weed, the Hon. Miss Pregnant and many others"). He was alleged to charge half a guinea for a consultation, medicines being an extra. But if, as was stated, he saw two hundred patients a day, he must also have had "lower class customers" whose payments were less.

The book ends with a short "Conclusion", in which the author lists what the book has done, and what it had not attempted to do. It had not "ventured a continuous chronological account of irregular medicine, nor... delved into the prosopography of the quacks, or their business history, or the pharmacological and therapeutic aspects of their activities". It had, on the other hand "aimed to demystify the subject, disentangling the realities of irregular medicine from the verbal, ideological and moralising smokescreens behind which it had often been

hidden". It examines the conditions in which the quacks lived and went about their business, the possibly very real contributions that some of them made to the development of medical practice, and the fact that when this happened the quacks ceased to be quacks. It also considers, and in detail, the part played by advertising and publicity in making the quacks and their wares available to a wider public. And, in spite of the mutual enmity existing between the quacks and the orthodox physicians, "there was far greater convergence between the activities and attitudes of regular doctors and quacks than either side commonly allowed" or historians have perceived.

Thus Dr Porter, writing with authority upon his own work. This reviewer, taking the standpoint of a general reader, would add only that the book is a very fine read. It is lively throughout its length, and its sketches of various quacks and their methods are extremely funny. The wonderfully named remedies that they foisted on the public are a joy in themselves. Valno's *Vegetable Syrup*: Saffield's *Cordial Elixir*, at 2 shillings a half-pint: Kennedy's *Lisbon Diet Drink*, a specific against venereal disease; patients were advised to take two *bottles* a day: *Universal Scorbutick Pills* and *Great Stomach Pill*, this last to help "that noble part" all these may be revelled in, in the happy knowledge that we do not have to swallow any of them.

Of course, an enquirer of 200-300 years into the future may well echo that sentiment with regard to some of our contemporaries' most vaunted remedies. But that is another story.

A WORD ABOUT MR DU QUESNE

Among the attractions to be laid on for the benefit of members who attend this year's "Frolick" is a visit to beautiful Berry Hall. It is fitting then, that the present issue of the Journal should mention its occupier in the eighteenth century, who was perhaps the closest of James Woodforde's Norfolk friends, the only one of them indeed who actually visited his Somerset relations and made friends with them too. It so happens that most of the references to him are in early numbers of the Journal, which members who joined the Society recently will not have had the opportunity of seeing; and the long note about

him in our edition of the diary is in *Norfolk I*, the volume which has been out of print for some years, although plans for republishing it are on foot. I hope, therefore, that this note will refresh some memories, and bring to other members some hitherto unknown information.

The du Quesne family held a hereditary marquisate, and our friend's great-grandfather Gabriel, the first Marquis du Quesne, was an admiral in the French navy. But the family were Huguenots, French Protestants, and when Louis XIV revoked the edict of Nantes which had allowed them liberty of worship, many of them left the country. Mr du Quesne's father, who took British nationality at the end of the seventeenth century, was by all accounts miserably poor. But he did manage to make an advantageous marriage, which produced for his son wealth and a very comfortable life.

The mother of Mr du Quesne was Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Roger Bradshaigh, 2nd baronet, of Haigh in Lancashire, from whom the parson's second Christian name was derived. When du Quesne's father met and married her *en secondes noces* she was a widow, Mrs Job Yates. She was related to the rich, powerful Townshend family of East Anglia. Mr du Quesne's immediate patron was Charles Townshend of Honingham Hall, who makes occasional appearances in the diary. He was raised to the peerage as Baron Baynings in 1797. The way in which Mr du Quesne was advanced in life affords us a vivid glimpse of the patronage system and the way it worked.

He did, of course, have to show some return, and Woodforde noted on one occasion how he had to dance attendance on the Townshends, adapting his movements to suit theirs. But no doubt he felt that the prosperity they had showered on him made it worth while to put himself out for them.

The friendship of the two clerics lasted for 17 years, and they seem never to have had a quarrel, although Woodforde at times shows a rather unsympathetic attitude to his friend. Mr du Quesne's long letter in 1789, all about the horrors of his journey to St David's and his sufferings when he got there, elicited no more than the somewhat unfeeling comment that Mr du Quesne "talks of nothing but his own fatigues &c." A second letter was not mentioned at all. (Both are printed in full

in *Journal XIX, 4. Mr du Quesne at St David's.* They are very amusing, but doubtless not intended to be so.)

The two friends must have had something, perhaps a good deal, in common, but were really quite different in temperament and character. Mr du Quesne did not live with a companion of his own social class, but was the kind of man who treated his servants as friends. When his old servant Robin England died of "the Fever that prevails so much in Norfolk now", in 1781 –"four days before he had driven his master's chaise to Norwich and back, with M^{r}. Priest and Wife in it –", Woodforde reported that his friend was "very low, and sorely vexed for his poor Man Robin, adding: "I am really sorry to see Du Quesne so very much dejected". Robin's wife and son also worked for him.

On 19 February 1791 Mr du Quesne wrote out a long and complex Will in his own hand. Although our Secretary informs me that an earlier version exists, it would have been invalidated by the 1791 document which, with its two later codicils, was finally proved. His old servant's widow, Elizabeth or Betty England, was given a very prominent part in it. She was left very well provided for with an annuity for life of £50, later raised to £60, and a great variety of goods, furniture, kitchen utensils and food items, as well as livestock and farm produce; a horse and cart of her own choice, a cow, pigs and poultry; coombs of wheat, barley, oats and pease. To this was added half of whatever stock there was of port, rum, brandy, shrub, white wine, porter, "Geneva" and other liquors. An obligation was laid upon the executor, "Charles Townshend snr", to ensure that "she should live in her helpless state comfortably and reasonably". More was left to her in a codicil drawn up six months after the original Will. She was to have the bath stove in the garden chamber "if she wanted it", the rector's dog *Boxer*, "& any little article which she may wish to have which I have forgot to specify & which my executor may think proper to gratify in". A second codicil stipulated that she was to have curtains, "a servant's garret bedstead", and a clock, to be exchanged for another if the bequeathed timepiece was too large to go in the legatee's house. Even after that, a third codicil states, charmingly,: "If Betty should not be satisfied with the annuity which I have left her or it would not be thought suffi-

cient by the executor or in general I desire him to add to it". All these provisions were to have immediate effect, whereas the other legatees, and there were a great many of them, had to wait twelve months before their legacies were handed over or paid.

Certainly Mr du Quesne tells us a great deal about his character, in his Will, as well as affording us an invaluable sight of the furnishings of a wealthy, upper class home of that day. By comparison, James Woodforde's is quite devoid of interest, and tells us hardly anything except that he was not the kind of man to derive any pleasure from the contemplation of his own mortality by lingering over the disposition of his worldly goods, something we know already. Of course, Mr du Quesne had a lot more to leave.

If we search the Will for any clue as to his relations with Parson Woodforde, there is not much it has to tell us. Mr du Quesne spread himself in his directions about his burial, in the chancel of East Tuddenham church, provided, he adds considerately, if there was room and it would not harm the wall. He specified the kind of wall tablet that was to be provided, about which the diarist afterwards wrote dismissively. He appointed Woodforde to be one of the pall-bearers at his funeral. The others were Mr Priest of Reepham, Mr Smith the vicar of Mattishall, and Mr Bodham.

Mr du Quesne was clearly a hale and hearty man, and it was long before his age caught up with him. In 1793 he was 75 years old. In February of that year Woodforde reported that he was "got finely": that is, recovered from an illness. But on 2 May he was complaining of being "terribly shook about in his Chaise", and blamed the bad roads. The diarist showed more censoriousness than real sympathy:

> Mr. Du Quesne is very far advanced in Years but he will not own it - He is by no means fit to drive a single Horse Chaise - His servant Man that came along with him, was afraid that he would overturn coming along - he cannot see the ruts dis= =tinctly, he will not however wear Spectacles at all He cannot bear to appear old, but must be as young in any thing as the youngest Person -

On 13 May he was "very poorly" and on the sixteenth "very indifferent". He lingered on for a few more months and died on 15 September. Woodforde never carried out his duty as a pall-bearer at the funeral since he was in Somerset at the time, and read the news in the Bath paper eleven days later. In his diary he wrote: "It is a very great Loss to us, but I hope to him, Gain."

A portrait of Thomas Roger du Quesne was painted by John Theodore Heins (1732-71) in 1750. It formerly hung in the Assembly House in Norwich, from which it then disappeared: but has quite recently been put on display in the Strangers Hall in the city.

NOTES AND QUERIES

Who knows?

Mrs Margery Brett (née Wigg) writes to say that her mother's family lived and had land in Cringleford, near Norwich, in the eighteenth century The property was mortgaged to Mr John Press in 1765 and on his death transferred to the squire of Weston Longville, Mr John Custance.

Mrs Brett wonders how these gentlemen became involved in these transactions.

Court Book References

General Court Baron held 18 July 1758	Edward Wigg admitted to 83. 328 by the Will of his cousin John Smyth of Wymondham, gent.
General Court Baron held 21 July 1767	Edward Wigg of Cringleford, gent., had mortgaged his property 15 Aug to John Press of Norwich, gent., for £615
General Court Baron held 16 May 1783	John Custance, executor of John Press, acknowledged repayment of the mortgage on 23 November 1780
	Edward Wigg, now of Beckham, had mortgaged his property to Robert Duck of Norwich, doctor of Physic, for £1127

The half-closed case

Dr David Case confirms, with copy, July 1969 as the publication date (*East Anglian Magazine*) of David Duval's article on Woodforde (*Journal XXIII, 1, Spring 1990*).

Has Mr Robert Atkins similar evidence for his reference of December 1953 (*no. 2, vol. XIII East Anglian Magazine*) for the same article?

Miss Mary Barham Johnson writes:

A vindication of Woodforde as a sincere parson

I was so revolted by the recent "Woodforde Carnival" in Norwich - our Parson cartooned as a sort of Falstaff, a fat gourmand, advertising the 'Woodforde Restaurant' - that I felt forcibly urged to vindicate him, especially to our younger members, by extracting from the diary every evidence of his Christian faith, and his attitude to his profession.

As I am a parson's daughter, and grew up in a small village where my father was rector, and am old enough to know what village life and church life was before 1914, I think I can understand him better than some of the authors of articles in our Journals.

Some misconceptions are due to the alteration of the meaning of words; for example, "duty", as he uses it in the phrase "did the duty of a Clergy man", was, and still is, a conveniently short way of referring to all that a minister has to do - the duties of the profession - with no hint of their being done unwillingly or merely put up with. The word "merry" indicates a state of mild intoxication, not so far gone as "disguised" which means extremely drunk. The word "indifferent" does not mean lack of interest, but lack of health; not very well. As I could speak the language of my parents, and the local dialect, before the twentieth century was born, I feel that I am justified in trying to put before my juniors, as most of you must be, extracts which seem to me to reveal his mind and soul, isolated from other interests which were of course also part of his character, and which you enjoy according to your personal interests.

What is a curate?

A modern dictionary defines the word as "an assistant" to a rector. But in Woodforde's day, especially in the country, it

meant a clergyman in charge of a parish as deputy for his rector.

One of Woodforde's rectors, Mr Cheese of Babcary, was an example of the non-resident pluralist, owning several livings, taking his tithes and paying the curate a very small stipend.

As for the previous incumbent, Mr Hite, the diarist records that at his death he was said to be worth £3000. Woodforde's salary of £27 a year must have appeared sadly small in comparison.

Woodforde used the phrase "Curate of Cary" in the sense that we now use the word *curator*, one who is in charge or cares for his parish.

The ceremony of beating the bounds which he describes as taking place at Weston, was to fix the traditional boundaries of the parish of which he had the "care of souls".

To care for someone in another parish would be poaching. When his maid Molly was ill at her home in Mattishall, he asked the rector, Mr Smith, to visit her. Woodforde sent her things by her sister; he did not visit her himself. When he did visit an old woman in Mattishall, he takes care to inform us that she was a Weston woman now living with her married daughter, to whom Weston parish made an annual payment from the Poor Rate which he usually sent her.

A curacy could be held by a deacon as long as he employed a priest to officiate for him on sacrament Sundays. Woodforde's first visit to Mattishall church was to do that for Mr Donne who was then a curate in charge while still a deacon. He did the same for Mr Bodham who was curate of Brandon Parma.

When Woodforde's cousin Tom acquired the patronage of Ansford for his son Frank, he put in Mr Dalton, who was said to be related to the Woodforde family, to hold it until Frank's ordination. He thus passed over James, who as acting curate to his late father had to endure the indignity of inducting the "holder". So do not blame him too much for his bitterness.

Information and queries to Mrs Ann Elliott, The Green Corner, Deopham Green, Wymondham, Norfolk NR18 9AP.

PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY
COMMITTEE 1990

The Rev. Canon Leslie Rule Wilson	President
G. H. Bunting	Chairman
Mrs M. Matthews	Vice-Chairman
R. L. Winstanley	Editor
Mrs P. Stanley	Secretary and News Letter Editor

Dr D. Case
Miss B. S. Custance
Dr N. Custance
H. G. Powys Greenwood
J. E. Holmes
Mrs J. Souter

Annual membership subscription £7.50
(overseas members £15.00)

CASTLE CARY PRESS, SOMERSET