

# THE PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY

SUMMER 2016

NEWSLETTER No. 106

## AGM and FROLIC 2016 – SOUTHWOLD

At the time of writing, there are still some places available for the Frolic at Southwold on September 23-25th. A Booking Form was enclosed with the Spring mailing, but if you need information please email Martin Brayne on [editor@parsonwoodforde.org.uk](mailto:editor@parsonwoodforde.org.uk), or ring him on 01663 750354.

As well as our coach-excursion to Yarmouth on Saturday 24th September, there will be time to explore Southwold itself. We might emulate James Woodforde and Nephew Bill (“the Captain”) who searched for “curious Pebbles” on the beach on 4th April 1786.

Alternatively, about a mile south of Southwold town centre is its port and the river Blyth. Crossing the river via the footbridge, you come to the pretty seaside village of Walberswick, associated with the Glasgow architect and artist Charles Rennie Mackintosh. In 1917 he was arrested on suspicion of being a German spy; he had a strange accent and was drawing the coastline!

All Society members are invited to attend the AGM, whether they are registered for the Frolic or not. It will take place on Friday evening, 23rd September, at the Swan Hotel, Southwold.

## GONE TO THE CONTINENT

Our Chairman and Journal Editor, Martin Brayne, has a new book out, to be published on 4th July. It is entitled *Gone to the Continent: the British in Calais, 1760-1860*. A flyer for it is enclosed. We expect it to be as absorbing as Martin’s previous books, *The Greatest Storm*, and *Harry Peckham’s Tour*.

## WESTON RECTORY

A new book from Shire Publications, who produce attractive handbooks about our heritage, is named *Parsonages*, a portmanteau term which includes rectories and vicarages. It describes Parson Woodforde’s house as “part old and thatched, part new and tiled. His

roofs disturbed him: a woodpecker pulled out the thatch, and he lay awake in storms for fear of the tiles." The book is by Dr Kate Tiller, and it costs £8.99.

Meanwhile the current "Old Rectory" in Weston, the scene of a memorable Frolic lunch in June 2010, is in the process of being sold. It was built in 1842, but in a Georgian style, replacing Woodforde's Rectory. It has eight bedrooms, a separate coach house cottage, and five acres of grounds which include Woodforde's ponds. The house has been the home of member Mrs Alison Pearson and the Stevenson family, but they are now moving nearer to Norwich which will be more convenient for them. They believe that the potential buyers will be great custodians of this special home.

### **CASTLE CARY ROUND HOUSE**

Those who know Castle Cary will remember the unusual Round House in the Market Place, the tiny overnight lock-up for drunkards and minor criminals, built in 1779. It is now licensed for weddings! At only 7 ft across, your wedding-party will have to be very select – the Town Council says "Couples looking to inject an element of humour in their special day will revel in the 'dramatic irony' this building provides". Indeed.

### **A NEW WARDEN**

The Warden of New College, Oxford, Sir Curtis Price, is about to retire. His successor will be Miles Young, Chairman and CEO of the communications group, Oglivy & Mather. One of his predecessors was Woodforde's near-contemporary John Oglander, who became Warden in 1768 despite Woodforde not voting for him.

We wish Warden Young as long a tenure as Warden Oglander, who held his post for 25 years.

### **MORE ABOUT OUR NEW WEBSITE MANAGER**

In the last newsletter, we briefly introduced Tim Wheeler, who has replaced Cassie Tillett as the manager of the Parson Woodforde website. He is based in Bromley, south-east London. His main activity is working as an independent IT tutor, often with retired people in their own homes. He also provides web development and IT support

services to local businesses. Tim “met” Cassie online as part of the Home Tutor Network, and has worked with her on several of her websites; when she decided to concentrate on other aspects of her business, it was a natural choice for her to transfer her web portfolio to Tim.

Tim tells me that he had not previously heard of Parson Woodforde, but now hopes to learn something about him from the website!

## **A LONDON YEAR**

A member of the Society recommends a book he is enjoying, “A London Year” by Travis Elborough and Nick Renninson. It is sub-titled “365 Days of City Life in Diaries, Journals and Letters”. Contributions from some two hundred people over five centuries are included, including three entries from James Woodforde, made when visiting London going to or returning from Somerset. Contributors range from Pepys to Michael Palin. It is a well-produced hard-back, with some illustrations. It is published by Frances Lincoln Ltd, and sold by Bibliophile Books at £11.00.

## **THE LIFE OF NAPOLEON**

I have recently finished reading “The Life of Napoleon” by Sir Walter Scott. It was published in 1827, only a few years after Napoleon’s death in 1821, and created a storm of controversy in Europe. Woodforde’s Diary makes only one reference to Napoleon: “General Buonoparte from Egypt, being lately returned to France, hath overturned all the late French-Proceedings and is now at the head of every thing going on in France.” [Nov.23rd, 1799] This refers to the *coup* of 18-19th *Brumaire*, when Napoleon overthrew the Directory. In Scott’s vivid account, the Deputies were threatened with bayonets and muskets, and jumped from the windows of the Orangerie: “thus terminated the last democratic assembly of France.”

## **TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS AGO ...**

In June 1766, a theatre-troupe visited Castle Cary and stayed for a month, putting on several shows in the Court House. During that time James Woodforde went to the theatre three times. His third visit was as part of a big family party which included “Brother Heighes & his little

Boy Billy” (who was 8 years old). They saw *The Provoked Husband or A Journey to London*, adapted by Colley Cibber from Vanbrugh, but “The Company was greatly disturbed at the Play, by the Noise of an insolent, saucy Mobb in the outside of the Play-House.”

*Many thanks to contributors:* Martin Brayne; Ann Elliott; Beryl Griffiths; Rev Brian Pateman; Anna Stevenson; Tim Wheeler.

---

**Society’s website: [www.parsonwoodforde.org.uk](http://www.parsonwoodforde.org.uk)**

---