

## The Diary of an Oxfordshire Rector

By H. MINN

**A**N anonymous 18th century diary of Oxfordshire interest was recently presented to the Bodleian Library<sup>1</sup> by Mrs. Kimber of Pangbourne.

There is no direct indication of the writer, but the persons, places and circumstances mentioned prove beyond all doubt that the diarist is the Rev. James Newton, rector of Newnham Courtney from 1744 to 1776. He matriculated at Christ Church in February, 1733, and took his B.A. from Corpus Christi College in 1736. He was the son of James Newton, 1664-1750, M.D. and botanist, who kept a private lunatic asylum at Islington. In his younger days James Newton senior made collections for a 'Herbal' which was published posthumously by his son under the title 'A Compleat Herbal of the late James Newton M.D. containing the Prints and English Names of several thousand Trees, Plants, Shrubs &c All curiously engraved on Copper Plates London 1752.8°. with a dedication to Earl Harcourt by James Newton Rector of Newnham in Oxfordshire.' The diarist records advertising this work at Bath and London.

The diary is a small 8vo vellum-bound book of 178 pages of which 21 record two visits to Bath, and 60 three visits to London. It covers only one year from 5 April, 1761-1 April, 1762. On the outer cover is '1761', which suggests that it is the survivor of a series. The extracts printed have been selected for their general interest, but there are also many concerning the diarist's activities in his parish and the farming of his glebe.

Old Lady day, 5 April, 1761. Self & Bullock went over the Glebe before Br. Preach'd one of my first Sermons. Prayd by Dame Well's Mother & sent Her Plumb Pudding & some Rabbit. Bullock displeased at my speaking to Him about leaving the Key in the Barn Door.

6 April. Two of Edmond's Men began hewing out the Timber. Bullock wanted to have more Wages. Begun removing Earth to the forepart of the House with the Dutch carts. Fastened the Puppy to the House.

Bullock is his foreman and manages the glebe. Later entries suggest that the diarist had moved into a new rectory and is engaged in adorning the house and laying out the grounds: hence the hewing wood and shifting earth and purchase of trees.

<sup>1</sup> Ref. MS. England misc. e 251.

H. MINN

7 April. Busy in getting things ready for my Bath journey. Part of a cold Rabbit for Din. Self got Greens & Radishes from my Lord's Garden.

9 April. Tythe Milk from the Upper Farm & Nineveh. [Both these farms are part of the Newnham estate.] Self & Giles set out after Br. for Bath.

He travels with his own horses via Abingdon and Farringdon and lays at Lechlade. Rising early he arrives at Cirencester for breakfast and attends morning prayer at the church where he sees 'a Woman I lik'd tollerable well for a Wife her name is Webb'. He lays the second night at Tetbury and reaches the Saracen's Head at Bath the next morning.

He is well acquainted with Bath for he writes 'I am thankful to thee O my God for bringing me once more safe to this Place I have so often frequented in my more juvenile Days & I hope innocently too', and finds accommodation at his old lodgings in Kings Mead Street, and puts his horses out to grass.

This Bath visit is entirely one of pleasure enhanced with a desire to find a suitable wife. He makes no use of the baths and seems to visit the Pump Room only for the company.

He first buys a new hat, for which he pays 17s., and then subscribes at the Rooms, one of the libraries and the Coffee House.

During his stay he usually attends morning prayer at the abbey or the chapel, after which the forenoon is spent in marketing and riding in the suburbs of Bath, Lincomb Spa being a favourite ride, and he sometimes breakfasts and dines there. His dissipations are very mild; he indulges in a small gamble at lottery, usually losing three or four shillings; and meeting Mr. Stonehouse (probably his neighbour at Radley), he makes a few bets with him; he attends one or two balls at the Rooms, but notes that he was home before 9 p.m.; he dines at the Florist Feast, and drinks tea at the Rooms being a general treat. One evening he 'meets Miss Payne at the Rooms & its possible She may become my Wife but God's will be done in this affair & all others'. Nothing, however, comes of it, for a few days later after much conversation with the lady he describes her 'as mighty shuff & mighty shy'.

May. He leaves Bath for Newnham on 6 May, obviously for the purpose of attending the archdeacon's visitation. The first few days after his arrival are spent in adjusting his tithe with the farmers. He kills his great boar and distributes part to his poor neighbours.

13 May. Br. at Oxford & Din'd at the Visitation. Tea at Cofe [Coffee house]. Spoke to Mr. Skinner (of C. C. Coll) in the Street to take care of my Church. Bullock sold ten Quarters of Wheat at Shillingford.

The next morning after 'Baptizing Dame Andrew's Child at Home. Press'd the Plumbs & tun'd the Wine', he sets out for Bath. On his way he attends morning prayer at Cirencester, but Miss Webb was not there.

## THE DIARY OF AN OXFORDSHIRE RECTOR

During this visit he does less riding and spends more time strolling with friends, often on the Parade with Major Pepys whose acquaintance he has made; goes to the Pump Room in his new surtut coat and shoe buckles, frequents the Rooms, where on one evening his luck changes and he wins £1 6s. at lottery.

He sometimes dines at the White Hart and takes a pint of port after it, on one occasion with the Earl of Salisbury and Partridge of Turnham Green. When dining at his lodgings he indulges largely in fish—mackerel, crab, lobster, shrimps and griggs [a small eel].

One of the first things he does after reaching Bath is to advertise his 'Herbal', a copy of which he has brought with him and which he shows with some pride to his friends particularly to Miss Clarke, a young lady to whom he shows marked attention.

4 June. M.P. [morning prayer] the Abby. Self Miss Clarke, Mr. Pemberton & Miss Mapletoft walk'd towards Weston & she did not care to go on because of an harmless Bull & Miss Clarke tore her Ruffle in getting under a Stile.

He walks with Miss Clarke on the Parade, but the evening before his departure from Bath he writes 'Set a pretty while by Miss Clarke as She was at Cards & sleard off without taking my leave of Her & its likely She was much displeased at my Behaviour'.

He returns to Newnham on 9 June, in time to dine on a fowl 'that had been kill'd by some Vermin its likely'.

10 June. Self Br. at my Lord Harcourts & he was much displeased at my Milking his Cows too soon [taking tythe milk] & for my talking to Stewart about the Churchyard & for my saying he had done everything to me except cutting my Throat wch last expression is palpably False & told him with a Malevolent Design to injure me & to render him my Enemy, but though I may have him for my Enemy I trust I shall have God for my Friend.—Went to the Locks & had a Jack from thence for Dinner.—John Taylor enter'd my Service after the rate of Six Pound a Year.

11 June. Self Br. at Oxford Cofe. Giles rode Lyon for the first time. Paid his Mother twenty Shillings for half his years Wages. Din'd at Mr. Austins. N.P. [noonday prayer] at C.C. Coll, engaged Mr. Skinner to supply my Absence. Heard part of an excellent Anthem at Christ Church & when it was over several went away O shamefull indeed. Some mischeivous Person cut down the Garden Beans at the King of Prussia's Head<sup>2</sup> may I never be guilty of such base Action, but rather study to do all good Will towards my Neighbour.

12 June. Self & Giles went to the Hay makers before Br. Molly begun washing. Self & Giles went to the Baldon Tailor with several things for Raperation. Duck for Dinner.

<sup>2</sup> This Inn still stands on Rose Hill (1946) but the sign was altered to the 'Allied Arms' in 1915.

## H. MINN

13 June. Settled Accounts with the Housekeeper. Bullock shot 8 Pidgeons at one Shoot & Self gave him one for his Wife & two were roasted for Din.

14 June. Ask'd [the Banns] two Couple, Preach'd a New Sermon. Boil Pidgeons for Din. Tapt a Vessel of Ale.

15 June. Self married two Couples & one of the Fellows was somewhat in Liquor.—Self & Giles Smith set out for London. Din'd at Nettlebed. Laid at my old Quarters this side Maidenhead & had Br & Cheese for Sup.

16 June. Much Rain before Self reach'd Hounslow to Br. Got to Mortimer Street before Din. Call'd on two People who had been about my Strand House. Left a Tenour [an advertisement] for my House.

During his stay in London, which is until 9 August, he resides with his sisters, Rock and Polly, who live together in Mortimer Street. Sister Rock is with little doubt the widow of the son of Mr. Rock, secretary to the 1st Viscount Harcourt, who appointed him one of his executors and guardian of his grandson (the 1st Earl, the Lord Harcourt of the diary). His widow appears in the diary as Mrs. Rock who is living in London with Mrs. Harcourt. This visit to London is primarily one of business. He owns a house and shop in the west end of the Strand and other property in Finsbury. The lease of the Strand house has lately fallen in and it being in a bad state he has to engage workmen to carry out the repairs and has also to find a new tenant. The tenants of the other property, being behind with their rents, he visits with mild threats unless they pay.

17 June. M.P. Berwick St. Chapple. Bought a Cheshire Cheese. Bespoke Brandy & Rum at Wenmans.

18 June. M.E.P. St. James'. Went to Blue Anchor Alley [in Finsbury] & call'd on Dame Pickering & Mr. Challiner but no Rent. N.P. St. Georges' Church. Rode to Chelsea without going through the Turnpike.

19 June. M.P. Cavendish Square.—Took a Bill to my Strand House & went over it & the Rain hath done some Damage to it.

20 June. M.E.P. St. Anne's. Strol'd about Covent Garden & bought Strawberries & Flowers.

21 June. M. & N. Prayer Harrow on the Hill. A young Woman displeas'd at my being in her Pew so Self left it. A little boy behaved very badly towards his Parents at the Ordinary. Two Women who came to the Inn were detected with two Tumblers.

22 June. M.E.P. St. James'. Went to see the Works at the New Bridge [i.e. Blackfriars Bridge, begun in 1760]. Called at the Strand House & got the Bill nail'd up. Br at Hungerford Market.

23 June. After Din: met much Company at Admiral Long's & also Mrs. Pedigrew the pretty Widow. [He is very intimate with the Admiral often dining with him and lends him one of his horses]. Treated Sister with a turbot for Din.

28 June. Br. & Din at Richmond. M. & N. Pr. Walkd into the Park, low liv'd Company at the Ordinary.

## THE DIARY OF AN OXFORDSHIRE RECTOR

30 June. M.P. Berwick St. Call'd on the Chemist. Bought Cheese in Newgate Street. Took up at the Bank three ten Pound Notes. Saw Mrs. Pedigrew at the Admirals.

*July.* He spends two days at Tunbridge Wells, where he visits Cousin Warren and gives her money, tea and sugar.

The affairs of his Strand house occupy a good deal of his time in over-looking the workmen, whom he treats to beer, and in interviewing prospective tenants. While engaged in this he often breakfasts at Hungerford Coffee House and dines by the river near York Place and strolls on York Place Walk, where on one occasion he sees 'A Cat thrown out of Window into the Thames got up the Spout & likely escap'd with her Life. Its natural for all living Creatures to struggle hard for Life & to desire the Prolongation of their Dayes'.

For a few days he is unwell and a little asthmatical, so goes to Mrs. Maw for a remedy for asthma and purchases some salts at Godfreys, but finally falls back on the old-fashioned remedy camomile tea and 'through the blessing of God I hope I shall be benefitted by it'.

As the repairs of his house proceed favourably, he is able to spend more time in recreation. This he takes mostly in riding often as far out as Harrow, Richmond, Greenwich and Vauxhall, but his favourite spot is Islington Wells [better known as Sadlers Wells]. He frequently breakfasts there at the Hut, and is well acquainted with the neighbourhood, for his father's house and asylum stood near Islington turnpike. In his visits to the Wells he makes the acquaintance of a young widow, to whom he shows much attention.

These rural rides bring out one rather amiable trait in the diarist's character. When he meets anyone in obvious distress or affliction he inquires as to the cause and if possible relieves it, and then proceeds to moralize on it and thank God it has not fallen to his lot.

14 July. 'Br. at Islington Wells & had some conversation with the Widow. Saw a poor man in a fit in the Road & stay'd with him till he got out of it & gave him a few Halfpence. To see a Fellow Creature in distress & not assist him would be extremely unkind & argue something base and ungenerous in Us. Can we see any One labouring under any Misfortune & not soften & mitigate it when we have it in our Power. Can we be an Idle Spectator of anyone at the near Approach of Death & not use our best Endeavour for his Recovery. I say if we can Woe be unto Us! for we may reasonably fear some heavy Calamity will soon fall upon us.'

One day returning from Islington he 'Bath'd at Peerless Poole<sup>3</sup> & one

<sup>3</sup> A full description, with two woodcuts, of this spacious swimming pool and fishing lake will be found in Hone, *Every Day Book*, vol. 1, pp. 970-6. The site is now Baldwin St., City Road, E.C.1.

H. MINN

of the old Waiters knew me. I knew this place in its infancy & have bath'd often here in my more younger days'.

Before leaving London he breakfasts with Lord Harcourt and sees 'some of my Lords new clothes', probably his robes for the approaching Coronation, but her Ladyship was shuff. He also calls on Mrs. Harcourt and Mrs. Rock.

5 August. Saw at the Haberdasher's Chapple in the morning one I liked for a wife, but could not find out what she was. [The next day he finds that she was a married woman.]

He leaves London on 9 August, laying at the Castle at Slough, breakfasts the next morning on his own tea at Nettlebed and reaches Newnham in good time for dinner off beans and bacon. He waits on Lady Harcourt with Mrs. Harcourt's compliments, and finds that his people have started harvest.

12 August. Br. at Oxford. Desird one of Corpus to acquaint Mr. Skinner with my arrival. Din'd at Mr. Lawrence's<sup>4</sup> & he talk'd of sleeping after Din. Sent Parcels to the New Inn at Newnham.

13 August. Sent John to the New Inn for the things from Oxford.—Bullock bought an old one Ey'd Horse of Palmer for £4.0.0.

14 August. Began brewing. Giles slear'd into the kitchen with some sweet Worts.

15 August. Br. at Cofe Oxford. N.P. Carfax. Took a turn in Christ Church Meadow with Giles. Bought 100 Sellery Plants. Gave an old man of Stoke 2d. Oh! that he was as full of Virtue as he is of years. Call'd on Mondays [printers & stationers] & the Watchmaker. Went to Lord Harcourt's with Mr. Parson's Lectures but her Ladyship was gone to the Bishop of Oxford.

16 August. Forgot to have my Prayers with me before Sermon. Read a Proclamation. A Duck for Din. The first time of John Taylor's wearing Livery.

17 August. Took in a Wheat Rick & began a New One. Palmer's Horse very untowardly. Bath'd. John watered the Sellery.

18 August. Carried Wheat. Beacon & Carrots & a Pudding for Dinner.—Paid John Taylor his wages & agreed with him for a whole year. Wrote to Sister Rock & the Cheesemonger.

19 August. Compos'd part of a Sermon. Giles Smith carried the House-keeper behind him to Oxford Race. Gave Molly Basset good advice but I fear not to much purpose. Had the Dog killed fearing he was Mad.

20 August. Br. at Cofe & din'd at the New Inn [St. Aldate's.] Went to the Race. Gave Giles a Chiscake & another Fellow one opposite the late Mr. Sweet's House [Medley Manor]. Giles took his brother up behind him but Self made his descend again.

21 August. Had Giles measured at Balden for a new livery. A roast Fowl & part of a Ham for Din. Bath in the River.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Lawrence was a prominent citizen, grocer, chandler and wine merchant, having a shop and warehouse in Cornmarket St. He was mayor of Oxford in 1759 and 1768. His wife was a niece of the diarist.



## THE DIARY OF AN OXFORDSHIRE RECTOR

23 August. Christian Barnes very abusive. Read a Brief for several Fires. Waited on Lady Harcourt & acquainted her about the dangerous Situation I was in from Fire from Barnes. Dame Cissel shew'd me a guinea Hens Nest.

24 August. Self took a Pewk of Camomile Tea. Howse hang'd the Puppy.

28 August. Paid Molly Basset her wages & stopt 3s. for an Apron she stol'd from the Housekeeper. Bath'd. The Watchmaker rectified the Clock & Edmond Baker the Case of it.

29 August. Married Mary Basset my Dairy Maid & John Hall.<sup>5</sup> Drawn from Casey's Kiln Lime & Bricks. The Garden Turnips how'd & the Asparagus Bed weeded. Bath'd after Dinner. Displeas'd with Bullock for selling a Sow & Piggs without orders.

1 September. The Bricklayer paving part of the Kitchen Court. The Pump Maker went away before he had completed the Pump.

2 September. Went with the Bricklayer to the Church Yard for an old Grave Stone to lay by the Pump & with much Difficulty he got it here & was busy about the Court & the Drain.

3 September. Br. at Oxford. M.P. at Carfax.—Left a Pattern at Mr. Austin's.<sup>6</sup> Old Brown had a deal of his Main gnawed off.

4 September. Call'd on Dame Lediard & gave her good Advice. Sent her some Pudding & Wine by her daughter & one of Field's Wenches & caught them afterwards at my Apple Tree.

5 September. The Bricklayer finished the Drains. Howse made Place for two Cows. Bullock began plowing the Crofts. Rung'd the Hogs. John washd the Bottles. Edmond Baker hung'd the Glass.

7 September. Wrote three Letters to different Persons who applied to me for my Strand House. Two Teams at Plow.

8 September. Edmond Baker Hung'd the Bow Room & put up some Pictures. Sanders set up the Marble Chimney Piece.

9 September. More Paper put up. The Gilt Leather laid in Order & some strips had been cut away by the Rogue the late John Pearce. John much displeased at Leicester's putting Dung in his Pocket. Gave the Ringers 2s. 6d. to drink for the safe arrival of the King's intended Consort.

10 September. Br. at Oxford. M.P. Carfax. Paid Mr. Skinner £8.8.0 [for serving his Church in his absence]. Call'd at Mr. Woods for a Pound of Glew. Had Giles about to buy him a Cap but did not.

11 September. With much difficulty the great Ceiling Picture in the Bow Room put up. A Chumb out of one of the Trees had like to have fell on my head but praised be God it did not.

12 September. Got up the great Ceiling Picture in the first Room. Bullock mov'd Household goods into the House in the Backside. Gave Mr. Braine orders about the Harvest Home Supper to Night.

13 September. Spoke to Nickols about Beck Clarke's taking Penance.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> This marriage is entered in the Newnham Parish Register on this date.

<sup>6</sup> Alderman John Austin was a mercer at No. 3, North Gate St. He was master of the Mercers Company, 1765, mayor of the city in 1742, 1761 and 1771.

<sup>7</sup> This penance had been inflicted in the Archdeacon's Court on 11 March. The diarist was merciful, for the erring woman, instead of performing it as usual barefooted, clad in a white sheet standing in the nave during service, acknowledges her guilt and craves pardon without the sheet and in the vestry in the presence of only the minister and churchwarden.

## H. MINN

14 September. John Tayler drove me to Oxford for the first time. Br. at Tom's Cofe.—Mr. Austin chosen Mayor.

He has purchased a landau and the next day is spent in overhauling it and having his horses, Wantage and Lyon, shod in preparation for his setting out for London. He arrives at Mortimer Street on the 17th and finds all his relatives in good health. This visit is for the purpose of seeing the coronation.

18 September. Sister Rock went with me to Westminster about taking Places for the Coronation. Met with the Mayor Ives & young Leake.<sup>8</sup>

He engages four places and a bedchamber to view the coronation procession for which he pays £7 7s. The evening before taking a stock of provisions with him he conducts his two sisters and Miss Bush (a daughter of his neighbour at Burcote, near Newnham) to Bridge Street where they occupy the chamber and he sits up all night. Unfortunately he gives no account of the procession. The next morning he visits Westminster, but is turned out 'because I would not pay 1s.'. He stays in London until 16 October, and his time is mostly taken up with taking his relatives and friends in his landau visiting and sightseeing. He renews his acquaintance with the young widow he met at Islington Wells and 'She lives with her Brother a hedge Schoolmaster near Morefields & She seemed pleas'd with my Company & invited me to drink Tea with Her'. He takes her in his landau to Don Saltero's Cofe at Chelsea,<sup>9</sup> shows her the Physic Garden and dines at Pinchbecks, where he sees the Dwarf, the King of Prussia and other figures in Wax 'very natural', conducts her home and drinks tea with her.

He goes to Spring Gardens where he sees 'the learned Canary Bird' and hears two men play several tunes on glasses about half full of water. 'At this performance Self conversed with a Lady in mourning & could have taken her for my Wife if she was willing to have me for her Husband'. He is very fascinated with the canary, and later takes his sister Rock and Mrs. Rock in his landau to see it. On this occasion the pole of his landau breaks. The roads must have been bad, for either the landau or the harness needs frequent repairs. On one night he is in danger of losing it altogether for a fire breaks out in a room over his sister's coach house and 'Had it continued burning a few minutes longer it might have got a head with dreadful consequences'.

With his two sisters he visits Kew Gardens, where at first they are refused admittance until he talked of giving the gardener 1s. Here they are vastly

<sup>8</sup> He calls Ald. Ives mayor, he having been twice mayor of Oxford. They were probably in London in attendance on the mayor, Thos. Munday, who was exercising his civic privilege of acting as butler at the forthcoming coronation feast. Ald. Austin's period of office did not begin until the end of the month.

<sup>9</sup> Don Saltero's Coffee House at Chelsea was also a Museum of Curiosities.



## THE DIARY OF AN OXFORDSHIRE RECTOR

entertained with the Chinese Pagoda and other sights. While strolling in Smithfield, with an eye to business, he discusses with a dealer as to sending his calves there for sale, but the dealer advises him to sell them locally.

Before leaving London he advertises his Herbal and makes some purchases for his home use, tea and coffee at Twinings [still in business in the Strand, 1946], a large quantity of hanging paper in Ludgate, some china in Swallow Street, a pair of buckskin gloves, a pair of pumps, a cap with silver tassels for Giles and, lastly, 15 gallons of Porter. The heavy articles, together with some pictures he has stored at his sister's, he packs for transport to Newnham by wagon.

His servants seem rather refractory at leaving London for on the eve of his departure he 'Administered the Whip to William & Giles'.

18 October. Prayed by Dame Andrews & Turner before Br. & sent the former some Wine.

19 October. Br. at my Lord's. John shot 3 pigeons. Boil pigeon & Beacon for Dinner. Winnow'd seven Quarters of Barley.

20 October. Lord Harcourt sent me a Letter about exchanging my Living for one of £400 a Year in Herefordshire. Read the News at the Golden Ball.<sup>10</sup>

21 October. Cut my Beard off before I set out for Oxford. M.P. St. Thomas Ch. Mrs. Treacher [wife of Ald. Treacher, brewer in St. Thomas Parish] went through the garden with me for the Church. Bought some things at Mr. Lawrence's & took a parcel to my Niece [Mrs. Lawrence] from her Mother. Bought some things from Mr. Austin.

23 October. Begun brewing.—Cut toe nails.

24 October. Br. at Cofe, Oxford. Bought of Mr. Lawrence two hundred lbs of Smyrna Plumbs, two Galls of Rum &c.

26 October. Begun brewing strong Beer.

27 October. Br. at Oxford. Had the Kettle mended. M.P. St. John's. Din'd with my Niece. Paid Parsons £3.3.0 in part of £6.6.0 paid for carriage of things from London. Met Lady Betty Harcourt [his Lordship's sister] near the Mile Stone.

29 October. This day is his Birthday and he moralizes at some length on his earthly pilgrimage and hope for the future.

30 October. Cut my Beard off before Br.—Treated two Labourers with a Quart of Ale. Prowled about & viewed the Ricks.

1 November. After Br. went to my Lord to return him thanks for his Letter.

3 November. Howes & Joe laid out the Ground for the Plantation towards the House.—Boil Beef & Udder for Din. & very tough. Slept after Tea wch. is a very bad Custom.

4 November. A little sort of hurricane blow'd some of the thatch off the Barley Ricks.

<sup>10</sup> This house still remains on the London Road near Nuneham.

## H. MINN

7 November. Br. at Cofe, Oxon. Bought some Meat of Collier & he put me off with a very sorry Udder. Bought Drabbe of Austin for a Lapell Coat. Had a bundle of Laths out of St. Giles.

For some days he suffers from toothache and a swollen face, to cure which he takes Pellitory of Spain, which he had purchased in London. This is not the common British Pellitory of the Wall, but the root of one of the pyrethrums, a native of Barbary.

12 November. John took the Housekeeper behind him to Oxford on old Brown [one of his horses]. Ornamented my Bed Chamber with Guns, Pistols &c.

14 November. Found myself pretty hody [well and in good spirits] & am thankful to Providence for this.

15 November. This being Newnham Feast Self preach'd on this Text. All is Vanity.

17 November. Took the Pictures out of the Case.—Tom wanted more pay but Self did not agree to it.

19 November. Began winnowing the Wheat & Christian refusd turning the Fan with Tom but at last complied rather than quit her Place.

20 November. Put up one of the Sows for pigging. Bullock fastened a Board on the Bulls horns. John dug up the Carrots in the Farm Garden & they were not good.

22 November. Self and John went about my old Garden & Orchard. The Sow pigged seven pigs & four were found dead. Giles wore his new livery for the first time.

23 November. The Bricklayer shot a hare in my premises & Self sent him with a Cock & Carrots to my Sister Rock. Self & Giles went with the materials for my surtout Coat to the Balden Taylor.—John went after a covey of Partridges but to no purpose.

24 November. Br. at Cofe, Oxford. The Oxford Bucks at the Cofe talk'd of young Stewart's [Charles Edward, the young Pretender's] bad behaviour.

26 November. Self & Giles went to Blackwood & I took three Quarters of an Acre & gave Nicholls orders to fell it.

28 November. Draw'd Mole [mould] towards the House for the Trees.

1 December. Self hung several Pictures up in the Bow Room. Took in part of a Bean Rick. Discharg'd two brace of Pistols & loaded them again. The ducks wings were cut & some fowl put up for fattening.

2 December. Lent Christian Barns a Bed & gave her Straw to lay under it.

3 December. Employed Dick Barns to keep the Cows & Sheep from the Turneps.

4 December. Walk't with Giles to Abingdon to buy a foul weather Coat for Dick Barns.

5 December. Gave goodman Brierly a Bottle of Ale & Dame Pearce & Nan Stevens Liver & Muggerum [the leaf fat from a pig he had killed]. Dock'd Charles Scissel 2s. 6d. for shoes his Wife cheated Giles off.

6 December. Lord Harcourt invited me to Dine but Self declined. Beat Dick Barns for not keeping the Cows.

## THE DIARY OF AN OXFORDSHIRE RECTOR

7 December. Br. at the Cofe Oxford.—Left an Order with Mr. Tagg for 148 Trees.

Tagg was an old-established market-gardener in Paradise Square and the neighbourhood. Hearne writes in 1725: 'Mr. Tag who rents Paradise Gardens & many other places about Oxford told me to-day that he pays to workmen £700 per an. He succeeded one Wrench the best Kitchen gardener in England to whom he had been servant & whose widow he married'. The business was still existing in 1771.

10 December. The house keeper wanted more sugar but went without it. Begun my great Plantation in the Crofts. Gave good advice to some of my Parishioners. Pease Soop & Sparib for Din.

11 December. Rode to Oxford for forty more trees to compleat my Plantation. Lord Harcourt & two more took a view of what was going forward in the Crofts.

12 December. Bullock sold Barly at Oxford & brought home forty Fruit Trees.

14 December. Planted the Trees in the new Orchard.—Gave Turner some Turnips & had a Tythe Pig from him.

15 December. Went to Abingdon after Winterbourn the Chimney Doctor.

16 December. Hung Pictures up in the Picture Closet. The Carpenter hung the Door at the bottom of the Stairs the wrong way. Hogs Ear for Din.

18 December. Paid the Game Keeper the Land Tax & Window Bill. Saw at the Balden Butcher's the Bull design'd for the Poor of the Parish.

19 December. Self married Edward Ball & Hannah Chandlers.

This marriage is recorded in the Parish Register on this date. The lady was the diarist's housekeeper and he has some trouble in finding one to take her place.

21 December. The Chimney Doctor was to have come but did not. Sent to the New Town<sup>11</sup> a Pig, two Fowls & a Chine to go by Coach for Mortimer St. pricked my finger while packing up the Basket. Pigs Pettitoes for Din.

22 December. Charles Sissel killed a Ram for the Poor of the Parish.—gave several of my Parishioners good advice but I fear not much to their profit.

23 December. Br. at Oxford Cofe. M.P. St. Mary's, sold Mr. Lawrence twelve lbs of Mutton Suet. Drank a dram of Rum at Mr. Austins. Enquired after a Housekeeper.

24 December. Distributed among the Poor of the Parish a whole Sheep—Charles Self & Giles went after Holly.

25 December. Christmas Day. Administered the Sacrament to the lame Woman at the New Town. Pretty much puzzled in adjusting my Sermon before I went to Church.—Slept before the fire & that was not right.

26 December. Gave 2s. 6d. for the Ringers of the mid-night Peal. Treated

<sup>11</sup> The New Town is the new village on the London Road. The old village was near the House and was removed by the 1st Viscount Harcourt.

## H. MINN

the Clerk with a Breakfast. Tapt a vessel of Ale & of Perkin [the washings after the best cyder is made].

29 December. Scissel carried Furze Faggots into the Cowhouse. Self & Giles went to Mr. Peedes & he paid his tythe. Met with the Arses but did not drive them home. Gave Bullock a pair of Breeches, John took the Plumbs out of the Tub.

30 December. Took Dame Macksey a Bottle of Ale & some Plumb-Pudding. Missed some of the Pudding at Home, and Christian was much displeased at my talking to her about it.

1 January, 1762. Self distributed one hundred of Furze Fagots among the Poor of the Parish.

2 January. Br. at James' Cofe, Oxford. Call'd on my Niece. Made enquiry after a Housekeeper. Bought a cinder sieve. Got a tything table.

5 January. The Horses were bled, the Sheep marked, ruddled & handled and the little Pigs cut. A Turkey killed for the use of the Family. Self tapt a vessel of Small Beer.

7 January. Lord Harcourt sent word that Bowly would come to me to settle accounts, but they were not for my Lord demanded £61 for rent due at Lady day which Self had already paid & very luckily I found my Lord's receipt.

8 January. Br. at the Great House & acquainted my Lord of his great mistake about the Rent, but he now demanded two Thousand Furze fagots out of those I cut in the Forewood wch seems a very unjust Demand.

12 January. After Br. set out for Wallingford din'd at the Lamb. The Landlord has dyed since I was there last & great part of the House hath been rebuilt. Set in a very comfortable little room by the Kitchen.

13 January. Spoke to the Blacksmith at Dorchester about some iron bars. Joe put the Harness in the Lumber Room because it had been damaged in the Coach by Vermin. Joe hung the Flitches in the Beacon Loft.

14 January. Christian bak'd Bread & a Pidgeon Pye & Self eat of it for Dinner.

15 January. Drawn Bushes for the Vineyard & Trowsing [rolling] in Comb Bottom. Busy in setting the small Beer Cellar in order.

17 January. After M.P. Self & Giles went to the New Town with Ale & Pidgeon Pye for Mackey & Quarterman.

18 January. Lent Christian old Brown [one of his horses] to go home. Casey paid two years Tythe. John Taylor got rusty & was for going home but thought better of it.

20 January. Buried a Child at Balden for Dr. Beacon. Giles & Scissel brought home the Arses. Many Mice were caught among the wheat in the Barn. Bullock draw'd a Quarter of Barley to Dorchester.

22 January. Draw'd Home another Load of Soap Ashes<sup>12</sup> from Oxford.—Agreed with the Stadham man to trench the Vineyard.

24 January. Read part of a Homely at E.P. & not many People there according to Custom.

25 January. Sent Dick Barns & Bett to School but their Dame did not care to have them because they were lowsey.

27 January. The Stadham man finished the Vineyard.

<sup>12</sup> The ashes from the burning of the harder woods, from which the lye was extracted in which the waste household fat was boiled to make soap. The ashes were obtained from the bakers' ovens.

## THE DIARY OF AN OXFORDSHIRE RECTOR

29 January. Br. at the Cofe Oxon. Dind with my Niece. A Woman at 'Noah's Arke'<sup>13</sup> offer'd her Service for an Housekeeper but was not accepted.

30 January. Mr. Yeatman came for a certificate of My dearest Brother Rock's Death.

31 January. Christien'd Scissel's Child & after N.P. walk'd about the Glebe before Din. Boil Pidgeons for Din. Not many People at N.P. the more the pity.

1 February. Joe shot a wild duck. Settl'd Accounts with the Balden Taylor. Read the News at the Golden Ball.

3 February. Br. at Oxford. Dind with my Niece. Paid for Soap Ashes. Order'd at Paradise several sorts of Trees & Flowering Shrubs. M.P. St. Tabbs.

4 February. Joe washed the trees with lime water. Buried Dame Baker.

5 February. Kingston began planting the Orchard & Vineyard. Bullock draw'd Hurdles from the Turnips. Saw a Hare in the Hanging Lands.

6 February. Bullock sold thirty quarters of Barley at Oxford, but came Home without a Goose. Gave a Burcoat man 1s. famous for a multitude of Children.

7 February. M.P. John gave Jimmy Smith a stroke with a stick in the Church for being saucy. A wild duck for Din.

10 February. Charles Scissel kill'd a very fat Sheep & cut it out. The old Turkey Cock was kill'd. Gave part of the Sheep away & some of it to Nickolls of Baldon also some Ale & an old Wig.

13 February. Br. at Oxford. Bought things of my Nephew Lawrence & of Mr. Tagg. Had Scissors ground. The Balden Butcher stole a College Crust out of Giles' Basket.

15-17 February. He visits Church Hackburn [Hagbourne] where he had evidently at one time resided, for he finds his old Landlord in good health.

19 February. Bullock at Plow. Gave some Mutton away to the Poor. The Hogs like to have devoured Turner's Cabbage in his Garden. Jack took a Basket to the New Town to go by the Coach to Mortimer St.

20 February. The Barly was winnow'd. The Hounds devoured a Hare on my Premises. The Coachman said he would not take the Basket if it did belong to my Lord Harcourt.

23 February. Paid the Gamekeeper some Tax Bills & the Poundage for  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre of Wood. Dame Allen din'd with me & paid half Tythe for her Lambs.

24 February. Br. at Oxford. M.P. St. Mary's. Paid Mr. Skinner, the Barber and Mr. Lawrence, forgot to be paid for the Mutton Fat.

On 25 February he sets out for London in his landau taking with him two hams, one old cock turkey and a hare. This visit to London is to settle up the affair of his Strand house. He pays the workmen who have been engaged on the repairs and decoration, pays the taxes due on the house and finally lets it to Mr. Skill for £50 for one year certain. He remains in London until 26 March, occupying his leisure in giving his sisters, Mrs. Rock and other friends airings in his carriage. On 11 March there was a heavy fall of

<sup>13</sup> He probably put up his horse at the Noah's Ark, which was a large posting inn situated at the north-east corner of Rose Lane and High St., now the fore-court of the Botanic Gardens.

## H. MINN

snow and his servants have to shovel it from before the house. Visiting his Finsbury tenants, who are still in arrears with their rent, he warns them what they may expect if they do not pay on Lady day. Among other business he calls at the bank and 'receives £2 6s. 8d. one years Interest of Blank Ticket making £78 Stock'. With a view to his home comforts he bespeaks brandy and rum at the London Punch House, 3 gallons of port from the 'Half Moon in Cheapside' and 24 lemons for 6d. Of one purchase he is rather proud, it is a large Cheshire cheese weighing 109 lbs., which he buys in Newgate Street for £2 5s. A supply of tea and coffee he obtains as before from Twinings.

On 24 March, after 'Washing his feet & cutting his toe nails' the evening before, he visits Lord Harcourt to excuse himself letting his Lordship all his thythes, and later in the day takes a farewell tea with Mrs. Rock at Mrs. Harcourt's. During this visit he succeeds in engaging a suitable housekeeper.

Early on 26 March he stows in his landau 4 live guinea hens and 4 powder pigeons, picks up his new housekeeper and starts for Newnham, leaving his heavier purchases to come by wagon.

On reaching home on the 27th he finds the landau damaged in the journey and thanks God for bringing him safe home.

28 March. After M.P. Self went to the New Town gave Dame Massey a bottle of Ale & Whyat one too. Fowl & Beacon for Din. Went a new Way to Church. Found some Ale in the Brew House & Christian, Giles & John were concerned in the Theft.

29 March. Howse killed a Porker. Self administered the Sacrament to John Whyat who is in a very bad Way as to his Body but not so as to his Soul I hope. A Haislet<sup>14</sup> for Din. The Pidgeons & Guinea Hens were let out.

30 March. Howse cut up the Porker & Self prayd by John Whyat & gave him and others some Pig Meat. Pork Stake for Din. Bullock deliverd in his Acts.

31 March. Br. at Oxford. Dind at my Nephew Lawrence & bought several things of Him & Joe brought them Home, with my famous Cheshire Cheese, the Housekeepers Boxes & Ten Bushel of Malt from Sandford.

1 April. Brewd ten Bushel of Malt. Pease Soop & roast Pork for Din. Drawd off 5 Gallons of Wine for Mortimer St. & Joe took that and the Pork with him at Night to the New Town to go by the Coach to-morrow.

4 April. Went to Church over Alder Hill gate & shewd my Housekeeper Christians Habitation, my Lord's House & my late Gardens & Orchard. Self forgot to give Notice of the Communion next Sunday but did at Evening Service. Perceived at Church my Sight was not so good as usual & should it quite fail me God's will be done.

<sup>14</sup> A dish prepared from small pieces of pig meat, the liver and offal of the pig roasted.