

Inspirations Newsletter



Knopwood and Woodforde diaries

We offer many heirloom varieties, this is a short social history of two diarists from the same era.

Parson James Woodforde born 1740 died 1802, aged 62 and Chaplain Bobby Knopwood born 1761 died 1838 aged 77.

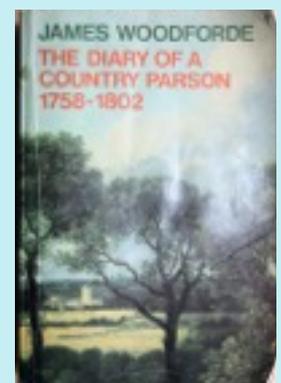
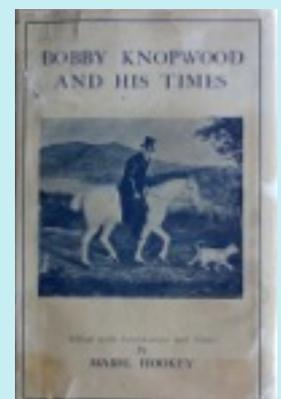
Both recorded, among other things, their food production and diets. Both were from England, but there the similarities end.

Woodforde had a comfortable lifestyle and ate well. Knopwood was one of the first settlers in Tasmania and had a challenging existence but did have a varied diet.

This newsletter will show that man can survive by adapting to different environments. Today we are living in a technology revolution and a changing climatic environment.

I hope this newsletter will be encouraging and positive showing that we will adapt.

On a related subject it has to be said that much harm was done to our indigenous brothers, we can't change that, it happened. Let's not do it again.



Background 1750s-1800s

Both diarists probably used very good gardening tools, had plenty of farmyard manure, and understood soils.

Parson Woodforde obtained his BA from New College Oxford in 1763. Chaplain Knopwood gained his MA from Caius College, Cambridge in 1784.



In England the industrial revolution was beginning, free trade a theory. There were punishments for 160 offences, slavery was accepted, death from disease common place, and high taxes.

France was Britain's enemy. However, food was cheap, mail coaches, turnpike roads, shipping far more efficient than we think it was. People travelled further and more often than we think.

Vegetable and fruit gardening for food production was normal and meals a social event for rich and poor alike.

Wealthy people could start eating at 2pm and have many courses sometimes until 2 o'clock in the morning with between eight and eighteen guests. The Royal Horticultural Society was formed in 1804.

"I had a pineapple after dinner, the first I ever saw or tasted"

In contrast in Tasmania, the industrial revolution was insignificant, the relationship between indigenous people and settlers complex and ultimately disastrous.

Punishments for convicts were lashings or death. Taxes were not as important.

France was still Britain's enemy. There were no roads, supplies by ship were erratic, and food production was a steep learning curve which only reached a turning point very slowly.

In hindsight they could have learnt a lot more about sustainable hunting and gathering from the Aborigines.

Wealth was not as important as the social status between convicts, settlers and the military. Meals were shared, and they tried to copy what they had known in Britain in this unfamiliar

environment rather than adapting to it. The climate was very different to Britain.

The Diarists

Parson Woodforde. 1740 to 1803.

These are a selection of entries relating to diet.

1764 Feb 20th. I have been busy all this day in planting my peas, beans and radishes and Spanish onions in my garden.

1766 Sept 29th I had a pineapple after dinner, the first I ever saw or tasted.

1769 Nov 13th For diner a couple of rabbits smothered in onions.



1770 April 18th (15 people for diner) boiled rump beef, ham, half a dozen fowls roasted saddle of mutton, two very rich puddings and a good sallet (*salad*) with a fine cucumber. (*N.B. cucumbers in April?*)

1770 Oct 12th Ham, three fowls boiled, a plumb pudding, a couple of ducks roasted, a roasted neck of pork, a plumb tart and apple tart, peas, apples, and nuts, hashed fowl, duck eggs and potatoes, white wine, red wine, beer, cider, coffee, and tea. (*N.B. this meal started at 4pm and went on until after midnight*).

1774 Sep 14th Kept busy in my garden with my barley, my harvest men dined here today, gave them roast beef and some plumb pudding, harvest all carried to the barn, eight acres.

1787 June 28th. We had peas for the first time out of our garden.



1781 June 8th A couple of ducks and some green peas, some artichokes. Peas the first gathered by me this year.

1782 June 18th A goose roasted and asparagus.

1785 Sep 15th Cold boiled beef, stuffed with parsley, some turnips, radishes and cauliflowers and four cucumbers.

1787 Feb 14th I sold two acres and a half of turnips, turnips are very cheap there being so many to sell as the weather is so fine.

1787 June 29th Sir William Jernegan sent me by Mr Custance a treatise on the plant called scarcity root. *N.B. the scarcity root was the Mangelwurzel and was so called owing to confusion of the German word Mangel meaning Want with the German word Mangold meaning beet, Wurzel maintained it's identity as root. The Mangelwurzel was first brought into notice in England in 1786 by Sir Richard Jebb, a distinguished doctor and scientist.*

1787 Aug 8th Began wheat shearing.

1788 Feb 29th A wild duck and a salad.

1788 June 11th A fine piece of fresh salmon with tench and eel, boiled hams and fowls, the best part of a rump of steak, stewed carrots and peas, a four quarter lamb roasted, cucumbers and mint sauce, a plum and currant pudding, two large dishes of strawberries and blanched almonds with raisins and apples. (18 people in number).

Ref: James Woodforde *The Diary of a Country Parson 1758 to 1802* by James Woodforde, selected and edited by John Beresford 1929

Bobby Knopwood. Diary entries from 1804 to 1808 and 1814 to 1817.

1804 Sunday Feb 12th (Fredrick Henry Bay) We see a great number of wild fowl and one emu. Quails, bronze-wing pigeons and parrots. The natives were much better supplied with fish and birds than those at Port Phillip. Ducks and teal and I think a woodcock... a party was sent onshore to get oysters.

1804 Friday Feb 17th. No rain for four months.

1804 Feb 20th (The new camp, founded by Collin's, named Hobart Town after Lord Hobart. A little cluster of tents situated in what is now Macquarie street). Excellent water (Hobart rivulet).

1804 Feb Sat 25th. Kangaroos were sighted, and a tiger cat killed two of Knopwoods fowls, which was a serious loss of food.

1804 Sun 26th Feb. The long awaited rain fell. Went a shooting and killed a pigeon.

1804 22nd April Visited settlers farms and looked for a garden and did much shooting.

1804 Tue 24th April. The Governor's gamekeeper brought in a large kangaroo, the first shot in the colony. Killed a native hen.



Easter Sunday. Royal marines and I ate Norfolk ham.

1804 30th Sep. Two men cut down scrub for Knopwood's new garden, a waste of time the soil was poor.

1804 Oct 1st (Civil and military dinner eight guests). Fish, saddle roast kangaroo, saddle roast kid, two fowls pillowed with rice and bacon. Roast pig (*rest missing*).

1804 Oct 10th Dined on emu, "Very excellent".

1804 Oct 14th a dish of peas, the first grown in the colony presented to the Governor from Mr Moore's garden.

At the end of this first year bush clearings were made, potatoes were planted and gardens were sown with seeds sent from England.

1805 Jan 2nd Knopwood's cottage is built and he has a vision for his own garden.

1805 April. Supplies sent earlier by ships, now in the stores such as pork, beef, flour, wheat, sugar were starting to run out and food getting scarce so rations were enforced.

1805 October. Pork going bad, only three weeks of flour left in the colony, emu and kangaroo plentiful.

1806 Late October. Emu now extinct, kangaroo meat getting scarce. Potatoes needed for seed, pork was pickled and for vegetables they were forced to eat native pig face (wild *Mesembryanthemum*) and seaweed. No flour or maize, and for social diners guests had to bring their own food, chicken pie was actually crow pie. They were on the edge of starvation.

Turning point one, adapting to the environment.

1806 November 28th Knopwood's garden had strawberries and green peas, a ship brought a cargo of flour.



1806 Dec 11th I went fishing, and had beans out of my garden, the first I dressed. Last year I was obliged to preserve all the seeds of the beans for sowing, they do not produce a good crop in general.

1806 Dec 25th. A Christmas diner of roast beef in 40 degrees heat emulating Christmas back in England!

1807 Jan 11th Harvested wheat, bad weather threatened but we got it in.

Turning point two, now they are learning to use the land.

1807 Sep 2nd. Setting potatoes today, wet and cold, I cut some asparagus, the first cut in the colony and the first bed in the settlement.

1807 Sep 12th Saturday. Employed all day in my garden, weather fine. Very happy with my barley harvest.



1808 January Wheat harvest, onions, cucumber (*probably the first in the colony*) very heavy crop of potatoes 270 lbs, a great quantity of potatoes in the colony. No more can be taken into storage.

1808 January 5th Mr Whitehead put in 2 tonnes of potatoes. (*stored?*)

1808 19th March. Knopwood had thirty acres which had to be broken up, chipped in and harvested by hand. Horses were scarce, ploughs unavailable so convicts did it, this was hard work.

1814. Knopwood's garden at "Cottage Green" was producing fruit, after a nursery of trees from stones brought from England had been sown, sent by friends. Cattle and sheep were now being bred.

Turning point three. They are cultivating land, harvesting and breeding stock.

1814 Sep 9th Lot of trouble in my garden, cows broke the fence and destroyed crops. Rain came and high tide covered part of the orchard and seedlings. This morning very wet, at home I put fruit stones that I got from England into a box. (*This would have been a disastrous set-back*)

1814 Oct 12th I set grass seed in my garden. (*N.B. asparagus seeds. He was very proud of his asparagus bed in his garden at Cottage Green*) I cut 92 heads of grass and sent them to Mr and Mrs Lord. We had the greatest dinner ever given in the settlement.

1815 March 10th Mr Humphrey's wheat stacks were set on fire by bushrangers. 3,000 bushels of wheat, barley and peas lost.

1816 Feb 15th The brigg is going to take up to Sydney 1,200 bushels of wheat and the same quantity for the Government, their crops, by the quantity of wind and rain have been destroyed and the potatoes.

We can truly be said to supply Sydney with wheat.

Turning point four, Tasmania can now supply Sydney, but they also made two mistakes.

1816 April Mr Graves has introduced sparrows, I had a rabbit - the first killed in the colony.

Ref: Bobby Knopwood and His Times. Edited with introduction and notes by Mabel Hookey, 1929.

Sow October

Peas, Massey, Green Feast, Onward, and our rarer cultivars Meteor, Purple Podded and Bounty. Carrots, radishes, cabbages, spring onions, kale, sweet turnips, and mangold (Mangelwurzel).



At end of month, after last frost and soil warms sow cucumber, pumpkins and zucchini, risk putting tomato seedlings out and sow corn.

Pause for a thought about Parson Woodforde and Bobby Knopwood in your garden this year.

**Enjoy your garden
wherever you may be.**

