

## **May Meeting:**

We began with our Annual General Meeting, where reports were given and members of the committee elected. This was then followed by a very interesting talk by Nigel about the Wesleyan Countess, Margaret de Manneville – although, since her husband, Count Comte Leonard Thomas de Mandeville, was a poor French emigrant and not the wealthy aristocrat Margaret thought, “Countess” may be a bit grand. They had a daughter, Caroline, but the marriage was not a very happy one. There were religious differences – Margaret was CofE with Wesleyan connections, whilst Leonard was Roman Catholic; and Leonard and his mother-in-law did not get on – indeed at one point she had Leonard deported, and on another occasion had him arrested as a French spy!

There were a series of abductions of baby Caroline, both by Leonard and by Margaret and her mother. This resulted in the two Mannevilles being involved in a custody battle, which was to have implications for family law for decades. This is the second time the village has been involved in a landmark case – the other was Ryland v Fletcher - quite an achievement for such a small place!

Margaret had close connections with the Methodist Church in the village and was a founder member of the Sunday School there. She also owned land around Knowsley Road, and may even have owned the Duke William itself. When she died in 1843, she left £200 to the Sunday School, quite a sum for those times.