

Professor Peter Sabor  
Director of the Burney Centre  
McGill University  
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Dear Peter,

I'm writing to let you know how helpful it was for me to hold the McGill-ASECS Fellowship at the Burney Centre from 26 May to 14 June, 2008.

Despite having done much preliminary work on Frances Burney's journals and letters for 1789 at the New York Public Library in 2006-07, I arrived at the Burney Centre with many unanswered questions. I was not sure how to organize the 67 files that composed my volume at that point; I was not certain how to include the fragments and discarded pages that Laura Kopp had sent me; I had questions about the formatting and editorial marking-up of the finished product. I suspected that I had missed at least a few documents from 1789, partly because the cataloguing system at the NYPL is not very precise, and partly because many of the Court Journal documents have not been dated except within a range, such as [1786-91]. I also had a number of indecipherable words and names, which no amount of scrutiny would make intelligible.

At the Burney Centre, I was able to answer many of these questions. I found two letters that were previously unknown to me, and after a diligent search for any others, I believe I have everything that can positively be dated to 1789. I am better able to judge whether undated items can also be placed in 1789. After talking with you, Stewart Cooke, and Lorna Clark, I understand how finished documents will be placed, formatted, and edited for the book. I was able to place some 30 discarded pages having to do with Burney's visit in 1789 to the home of George Cambridge in Twickenham, which ended any hopes she might have had of receiving a proposal of marriage from him. By drawing on the considerable files of the Burney Centre, I was able to decipher many of the illegible names, not by staring at the handwriting through a magnifying glass but by reading through contemporary sources to see whom she might have been referring to. I used the Burney Centre's access to the Burney collection of 18<sup>th</sup>-century newspapers and other databases to solve several puzzling allusions. On the whole, my draft of the text is much stronger at this point than it was prior to May 26.

I also enjoyed my stay in Montreal and the collegiality of everyone associated with the Burney Centre and the McGill University Library. Thank you for awarding me the McGill-ASECS Fellowship.

Sincerely yours,

Geoffrey Sill