

# Burney Letter

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## Bath 2-5<sup>th</sup> July 2005

By Bill Fraser

The Bath festivities actually started the day before we had planned. Forty-five miles from Bath, near Stonehenge, some of us met for lunch at Wilbury Park, the eighteenth-century house of Fulke Greville (mentor of the twenty-year-old Charles Burney), now the home of Miranda Lady Iveagh who had expressed an interest in the Society's work. It was a delightful and revealing visit with delicious food; we were given a very personal appreciation of this elegant and beautifully light house with our hostess as guide.

And then in the evening, by sheer coincidence, we embarked on Charles Burney's "Musical Journeys" with the Paragon Singers at the Holburne Museum. We were reminded of his extraordinary venture at much personal risk and discomfort. The tale of his adventures was illustrated with delightfully sung music. Somehow, all those who attended managed to find their way up Lansdown Terrace to Bill Fraser's place for supper.

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*Attendees at the Bath festivities tossing petals on the sarcophagus. Photo Courtesy of The Bath Chronicle.*

## Chawton House Library: Collections and Activities

By Helen Scott

Chawton House Library is a specialist library and study centre dedicated to the study and promotion of women's writing in English from 1600 to 1830. Situated in the village of Chawton, near Alton in Hampshire, UK, Chawton House itself is a grade II\* listed Elizabethan manor house which accommodates the library collections and facilities, and related events and activities.

The Library's main collection began life as the private collection of Sandy Lerner, an American entrepreneur, who was inspired to begin collecting the works of early women writers by her deep interest in Jane Austen, and consequently, in Austen's literary predecessors and

contemporaries. Her collection of books having become considerable in size and importance, she founded Chawton House Library as an independent charity, and generously donated her entire collection to the charity to form the core of the library. Via their charitable foundation, the Bosack Kruger Foundation, Sandy Lerner and her husband Leonard Bosack also provided the vast majority of the funding needed to restore Chawton House itself. Built in the 1580s by the Knight family, the house's long history includes being owned at one time by Edward Austen Knight, Jane Austen's brother, who was adopted by their distant cousins the Knights in 1783. In 1809, Edward moved his mother and two sisters, Cassandra and Jane, into a cottage

in Chawton village, which is how Jane Austen came to be living in Chawton during the most productive years of her literary career. Chawton House has always remained in the possession of the Knight family (the Library has a long-term lease from Richard Knight, the current owner), but by the 1980s, the house and its estate had unfortunately fallen into a state of considerable disrepair. A huge restoration project began in the 1990s to bring the house back to its former glory and to prepare the building for its new role as home to the Library, which opened in July 2003.

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## Bath 2005

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Perhaps it was as well that the serious business did not start until Sunday afternoon. We gathered in brilliant sunshine at St. Swithin's Walcot in the North Garden, around the newly restored tomb of Frances Burney (Mme d'Arblay) and her son Alexander, with its informative plaque. There was an air of expectation and liveliness, a sense of embarking on a new venture. The tomb's refurbishment has been elegantly executed by Nimbus Conservation, a company which has recently been involved in the restoration of St. Paul's Cathedral.

The President of the Society marked the conclusion of our project, hailing Fanny Burney as a lady of great significance and challenging the City of Bath to recognize her contribution and her love of the City. (This appreciation was offered by the City's Mayor, Councillor Peter Metcalfe, in his welcome at the Holburne the following day.) At the conclusion of Paula Stepankowsky's speech, the prominent poet U.A. Fanthorpe read a eulogy specially composed for the occasion (*see inset*). Her poem was moving in its heartfelt resonance and sensitive insight into Burney's tumultuous and often difficult life, and also accorded recognition to her amazing achievements. We were then ready to celebrate, with a spontaneous scattering of rose petals and our President's placing of a bouquet of white roses on the tomb. All this has been admirably recorded by the *Bath Chronicle*.

It is worth pointing out that our celebration is, for St. Swithin's, only the beginning of a major project of refurbishment which will include the creation of a path through the garden by the tomb, the renewal of the railings, and also the possibility of work on the monuments. They need all our support.

And so to the Abbey with the bells ringing for our special Evensong. The Abbey was at its most glorious with the sunshine streaming through the wide perpendicular windows to highlight the intricate magnificence of the fan vaulting. Nimbus Conservation were key restorers of this great church. We were welcomed by the organ playing a fugue written by Charles Burney; all the main items of music were by composers associated with him. A detailed description of their relationship accompanied the service sheet. After an appropriate introduction by family descendant Charles Burney, the choir entered singing the introit "God's tender mercy" by Handel. The highlight of the service was the ineffably glorious performance of "The Heavens are telling" from Haydn's *Creation*, marked by the effortless rendering of those exhilarating harmonies by the choir's "matchless maidens" (as described by the BBC). The service gave us a beautiful space to reflect on Frances Burney and her life, emphasised by special prayers. We are especially grateful to the Rector, the Rev. Edward Mason for making us so welcome and to the Director of Music, Dr. Peter King, for responding with such a musical treat.

A short walk brought us to Abbey Church House where, in a room with an elaborate Jacobean fireplace, we indulged in a delicious tea prepared for us by Rosemary Summerfield. It was only a brief respite for many before embarking on Maggie Jameson's special Fanny Burney walk. We started at No. 14 South Parade overlooking the River Avon, the place where Fanny had stayed with Mrs Thrale in 1780, and then we were introduced to many of the places they visited. We also saw Queen Square where Fanny stayed with Mrs Ord in 1791. It was on this occasion that Fanny, surveying the magnificent developments of the previous eleven years, christened Bath "a City of Palaces." From there, continually intrigued by our guide's knowledge of detail, we visited the

Herschel Museum at 19 New King Street, which has a fascinating display of material relating to the Astronomer family of Herschels and includes Fanny's signature in a Visitors Book dating from her Court days at Windsor. By coincidence, the house was occupied by Esther Burney when she moved from Larkhall Place in 1825 to be near her daughter Maria, who lived in Queen Square. Finally, we visited the d'Arblays last Bath home on their return from France, at 23 Great Stanhope Street where they occupied the top two floors until the general's death in May 1818 (his memorial is in the gallery at St Swithin's).

Our day ended with a convivial supper at the Abbey Hotel, although some decided they still had the energy to sample the city's hostelries.

*Bill Fraser co-organized Bath 2005.*

### Burney Letter

The semi-annual newsletter of the Burney Society, which includes members in Canada, Great Britain, the United States and elsewhere.

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### *Burney Book Wins Award in Italy*

The Accademia dei Lincei has awarded First Prize for a work of literary criticism published in 2004 to Francesca Saggini's *La messinscena dell'Identità*, which includes several chapters on Burney and her drama. The Accademia is a very old Italian institution, which counts amongst its former members Galileo Galilei. It is a prestigious acknowledgement and a well-timed welcome to the birth of the Burney Studies in Italy. The Award ceremony was held on 16 June 2005.

We hope to have further details of the awards ceremony, held on 16 June 2005 in a future issue of the newsletter.

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# Burneys in Bath 2005

**By Kate Chisholm**

After the rose-petals, scones-and-cream and sunset walk of Sunday came the real meat of the “Burneys in Bath 2005” gathering. An esteemed group of speakers assembled to address us at the Holburne Museum, appropriately drawn from both North America and the United Kingdom for this 4 July, Independence Day, celebration of the life and work of Frances Burney (1752–1840).

Our chosen theme was “Fanny Burney and Her Circle,” intended to portray Burney within the setting of her illustrious family – James, the sailor, Hetty, the brilliant musician, Susan, Charlotte and Sarah Harriet, the talented writers, Edward Francisco, her cousin, the artist with as keenly observant an eye as Fanny herself – and also within the wider world of Johnson, Garrick, Mrs. Thrale and the Bluestockings. Professor Peter Sabor, Director of the Burney Project at McGill University, launched our day with a fascinating study of Frances Burney and Dr. Johnson.

They met in St Martin’s Street when Dr. Johnson arrived for one of Dr. Burney’s Sunday-evening concerts but their friendship really began under the auspices of Hester Thrale, and at Streatham Park. Peter’s talk, entitled “United in One Performance,” imagined Johnson and Burney in a sketch by Edward Francisco, crowded together on a sofa in the drawing-room at Streatham. No such portrait exists, but Frances in her journal wrote, “Poor Johnson often said we should make a pretty pair for a frontispiece for a magazine.”

It’s an intriguing viewpoint from which to look at Burney – not so demure and retiring as some might think. Through her friendship with Johnson we see her cheeky sense of humour at its most free. As evidence, Peter (with the assistance of Karin Fernald and Kate Chisholm) gave a lively rendering of the bawdy verse composed by Johnson, Hester Thrale and Fanny and first

published by Joyce Hemlow. It is, concluded Peter, intriguingly the only example we now have of Johnson and Burney “united in one performance.”

Gordon Turnbull of the Yale Boswell Project gave us a complementary picture of Frances’s relations with Johnson’s biographer, James Boswell. Dr. Turnbull sought to show us a rather different view of Burney by depicting three of her encounters with Boswell: at Streatham in 1779 just after she had published *Evelina*; in 1789 at Windsor when Boswell was seeking anecdotes of the “Gay Sam,” the “Agreeable Sam” whom Fanny had come to know through the Thrales; and in the 1790s, after Boswell had published the *Life of Johnson*.

The first two occasions are well known; it is the last meeting, over breakfast, which provides new insights into Frances Burney. She had been distressed by parts of Boswell’s book, which from her more circumspect perspective on public self-presentation gave too much away of the intimate Johnson, the man who could be rude and boorish when in company. She felt, too, that by providing us with such a detailed portrait of Johnson, Boswell had in some way betrayed their friendship. She approached that final meeting, therefore, ready to presume the worst about him.

But in the end Fanny was won over by Boswell. She writes in her journals that he soon “conquered me” and “forced me to change my resentment against his treachery” and we “became good friends.” This, declared Dr. Turnbull, says as much about Burney as it does about Boswell.

It shows how self-absorbed she could be, and also how susceptible to flattery.

## **The Short-sighted Eyewitness, or Nobody’s Listening (for Bill Fraser)**

All the rest, musicians. They sang, they played  
With fierce five-fingered accuracy, with flair,  
A clutch of song-birds. She alone  
Shuddered at public appearance, knew herself  
Endowed with awkwardness,

Who alone heard the eccentric cadenzas of speech,  
Stored, treasured, rushed to write them down  
In that best of friends, the uncritical secretive  
Diary Nobody. *I have nothing to fear from Nobody,  
Since secrets sacred to friendship, Nobody  
Will not reveal.*

Her private ear that heard so much great talk,  
The Doctor’s gruff tenderness, Garrick’s staggering voices,  
Mad King *What! What!*, Napoleon, Brussels at Waterloo-time,  
She was there, she was always there, saying nothing,  
Scribbling down from that faultless memory

(That faultless memory  
Of the boy with the ear,\* who trapped the *Miserere*  
In the Sistine Chapel, the Pope’s own choir  
- embargoed on pain of excommunication -  
Noting it all. Mozart and Burney,  
Hearing, transcribing. A gift for perfection).

Innocent brave young heroines,  
Raffish women, uncouth cits,  
She fixed them in the novels, handed them on  
To her lucky heirs, Jane, Mary, George . . .  
Here, now, in Walcot churchyard,  
As the people strut and primp and shout overhead,  
Her dead hand reaches easily for her pen  
As her successors’ hands for their laptops -

So much living material!

### **U.A. Fanthorpe.**

*\*The boy with the ear is Mozart who, like Fanny Burney, had the special gift of hearing and remembering exactly.*

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## Burneys in Bath 2005

### Continued from p. 3

Dr. Turnbull's talk raised the intriguing question of whether Fanny ever considered joining the gaggle of writers who produced biographies of Johnson shortly after his death. If so, what would such a *Life* have been like? A Woman's Dr Johnson?

Earlier, as a counterbalance to seeing Burney against a backdrop of male achievers, Lorna Clark tried to situate her within the context in which she spent most of her time in a gendered age, in the company of other women. Female accomplishments in the period are often ignored, partly due to a lack of material. Fortunately, the Burney women were "notably not silent;" they left ample records behind which can shed light on the life of women of the day.

The century after Frances Burney's birth was a fertile era for women writers, who ranged over a variety of genres. Frances herself displayed versatility in her own career, but her prolific and varied output was matched by other women writers in the family. Creative talent was shown in the "engaging and delightful" letters of her siblings, Esther, Susan and Charlotte, and the novels of her half-sister, Sarah Harriet. One niece, Marianne Francis, was a prodigy of learning and another, Charlotte Barrett, was the editor of Frances' own papers. Two great-nieces published their own letters or journals; there were translations, reviews, literary criticism, guidebooks, novels, poetry and plays, didactic fiction and non-fiction, produced in abundance over the course of six generations of Burney women. Dr. Clark examined some of these works in detail, including some charming (though earnest) children's stories, a genre which was the natural outgrowth of a woman's role of giving moral guidance to the young.

But, as Hester Davenport reminded us, in her engaging talk on the Masquerade, Burney's writing was never solemn (with the exception of the dreary *Memoirs of Doctor Burney* that she produced when she was an elderly widow). Frances, of course, has left us with several vivid accounts of masquerades in her novels, in *Evelina* and *Cecilia*, and also in her journals.

Hester gave us colourful insight into these affairs, with some vivid illustrations of nights at the Pantheon and Ranelagh Gardens (by Rowlandson and Cruikshank) and a recording of music on the *vielle*, the complicated stringed hurdy-gurdy instrument played by a wheel with which Esther Burney created such a stir when she entered the ballroom on their first masquerade, playing it with great skill.

Nothing, however, could match Hester's *coup de théâtre* when she pulled out from beneath her lecture notes a glittering Venetian mask, which she donned, talking to us thereafter "in disguise." We would never have guessed.

Fanny, although so shy and reluctant to perform herself, loved the theatre; some might argue that her novels are a sequence of dramatic scenes strung together. She was, of course, the author of several plays (as was so clearly demonstrated by the 2003 Burney

conference in Montreal). In Bath we were delighted to welcome Tara Ghoshal Wallace, whose 1984 edition of *A Busy Day* initiated this appreciation of FB as a dramatist, and her talk was chaired by Alan Coveney, who directed the first-known public performance of *A Busy Day*.

He came across a copy of Dr. Ghoshal Wallace's edition in a bookshop, bought it, read it, and was convinced that the comedy would make an entertaining production. He was right. The performances in an upstairs pub theatre in Bristol were a sell-out and ensured that some years later the play was staged in the West End, starring Ian Kelly (who was also in Alan Coveney's original production), along with Sara Crowe and Stephanie Beacham.

Dr. Ghoshal Wallace introduced us to a very different aspect of Burney's work – her interest in and commitment to ideas of political justice and social reform. *A Busy Day*, for example, is not just a social satire. Frances is also pointing up the way that the new colonies are beginning to influence and shape eighteenth-century society. Eliza Watts has just returned from the East Indies, where she has acquired a polish, an accomplishment, an education, and an understanding of society quite lacking in her sister, Polly, from whom she was separated at birth (in yet another of those convoluted family relationships of which FB is so fond). Eliza has a black servant; when she arrives in England she is shocked by the way her servant is treated.

Eliza herself is an example of how society is being changed by cross-pollination between the classes. Eliza is not well-connected; but she acquires connection through her colonial experience, which gives her wealth and, more importantly, access to the powerful. She can be mistaken for aristocracy, upsetting the usual order of things.

Nancy Johnson also suggested that FB should be seen not just as an observer of society but also as a writer with a "radical" agenda. In her second novel, *Cecilia*, for instance (whose heroine was taken from Fanny's abortive play, *The Wittlings*), the eponymous heroine could be described as "a female philosopher." Outwardly, her drama is played out as a stereotypical female dilemma: how to find a suitable husband. But FB is also speculating about a world in which other values than money, property, inheritance hold sway; in which the rich can no longer exploit the poor, and justice is not the preserve of the upper classes but is shared by all. Perhaps we should be considering her life and work more in the light of Mary Wollstonecraft and George Eliot than Jane Austen?

Our triumphant day was led to its conclusion by Karin Fernald, the celebrated actress whose one-woman show about FB has toured the world. Karin gave us an illustrated tour of the Bath that Burney would have known in the early 19th century, when she lived with General d'Arblay very close to Hester Thrale Piozzi – a city of palaces and entertainments but also of licentious ladies, unruly dogs – and an overweight Dr. Johnson.

## Address from the President, Bath 2005

### By Paula Stepankowsky

First, I want to offer my thanks to Desmond Brown and to our conference organizers — Bill, Kate, David, Janet and Karin, and others — who have made possible this dedication and the conference we will enjoy tomorrow.

It is, indeed, wonderful to share this moment with all of you. It is a scene I little anticipated when I saw this monument for the first time in 1982. But it is one that, we hope, continues to burnish the reputation of FBA and increase the world's appreciation for this corner of Bath with its important literary associations.

Many of you were also in Westminster Abbey a little over three years ago when we had the honor of dedicating the memorial window to Frances Burney d'Arblay in Poets' Corner

That, too, was a long-sought highlight — not only for the society but for literature in general and for women writers in particular, as Frances Burney d'Arblay became the only woman writer who published in the eighteenth-century to be so honored.

The Abbey window recognizes her place in the literary firmament, but the restoration of this monument, near the final resting place of Madame d'Arblay, her husband and son, reminds me that she was not only a pioneering novelist and brilliant diarist, but also a brave, smart, funny and observant woman, a loyal friend and sister, and a devoted daughter, wife and mother — in short, someone we'd very much like to get to know.

And know her we do through the diaries and letters, where her voice is so vital we are almost fooled into thinking she is just gone into another room and will be back shortly. We laugh with her as she skewers a snob. We rejoice with her at her literary success. We suffer with her over a failed romance. We celebrate with her when she marries Alexandre d'Arblay. We feel her mixed emotions when she sees the proud man she loves struggle to raise food for his family using his military sword as a gardening-tool. We mourn with her as she buries her beloved husband and son near

this very place.

Fanny Burney loved Bath. She first visited in 1780 in the company of Mrs. Thrale, later Mrs. Piozzi. In 1791, after she left Court, she referred to it as "a City of Palaces — a Town of Hills, & and a Hill of Towns," and remarked, "this City, already the most splendid of England, will be as noble as can well be conceived" (*JL* 1: 35, 55). In 1815, when she and Gen. d'Arblay moved here in search of affordable housing and comfort for Gen. d'Arblay's ills, she wrote of Bath: "it is in a state of luxurious beauty that would fable description and almost surpass even the ideal perfection of a Painter's fancy."

And so it was natural that when Gen. d'Arblay passed away in 1818 that he should be buried in Bath in the lower churchyard of St. Swithin, across the street and down the hill from where we stand today. Their son, Alexandre, was laid to rest near the General upon his untimely death in 1837, and Madame d'Arblay herself followed in 1840.

And so it was that on a long winter's night in 1989, I read Joyce Hemlow's account of what happened years later in Vol. 12 of her monumental *Journals and Letters*.

As Dr. Hemlow tells it, the original tombstone placed over Mme d'Arblay's grave had deteriorated to the point that in 1905 (100 years ago) a Bath bookseller named J.F. Meehan wrote an article decrying its condition. This came to the attention of the Burney family, which erected the stone we see today over the grave in what Dr. Hemlow believed was its original position when she photographed it in 1951.

But then, for an unknown reason, the members of the Church Council serving in 1955 moved the stone to this enclosure without consulting the Burney family. And 50 years later, the mystery of what happened to Madame d'Arblay and her son is still not solved because correspondence over the ensuing years paints a contradictory picture.

These regrettable circumstances spurred me to think that by uniting

like-minded lovers of literature and history, we might be able to do something about it.

\* \* \* \* \*

When the Burney Society was formed, on 3 Nov. 1994, we set two extraordinary goals beyond setting up the society and beginning its publications. They were, first, to install a window in Poets' Corner to Frances Burney and, second, to do everything we could to reunite the d'Arblay family here at Walcot Churchyard. Failing that, and as an interim measure, we hoped to restore her tombstone and erect a plaque to tell the world of the significance of her life and work.

At the time, those two goals seemed so ambitious that they could never be accomplished, but thanks to all of you here — and other members of the society not able to join us today — we have achieved that goal.

I know that Joyce Hemlow (not to mention Frances Burney d'Arblay) is looking down on us today with approval, but also with the hope that we may not rest — yet.

The mystery of what happened in this churchyard so long ago is still unsolved. And it was Joyce Hemlow's hope that this stone would be returned from whence it came — a still-vacant spot. What we don't know is if that was its original position.

But until that day comes, we can be satisfied that the stone is now restored, and that the plaque we unveil today tells citizens of Bath and the world that Frances Burney d'Arblay is not forgotten. She is remembered vividly for four extraordinary novels, a host of plays and a series of diaries and letters that has no rival in the English language as a chronicle of a life and an era.

These memorials also remind us of the ongoing duty we have to protect this site and to ensure that it will always be shared with admirers of Frances Burney d'Arblay and lovers of English literature all over the world.

## Chawton House

### Continued from p. 1

The Library holds early, and in many cases, rare, editions of works by and about women from the period 1600 to 1830. Novels, poetry and drama are all included, as well as autobiographical writing, published letters and diaries, and factual material on a wide range of subjects. The collection holds the work of both the most well-known women authors of the time and many lesser-known, more obscure female writers, as well as a number of works which remain anonymous. Although the majority is material written by or about women, work by some of the most influential male writers of the period is also included. In addition, there is a selection of relevant modern critical and biographical material to support the main collection. Some of the Library's rarest texts are freely available through its Novels OnLine project, which provides full-text transcripts of a number of titles in the collection via the Library's website.



Chawton House Library, showing the south and west fronts. Photographed by Steve Shrimpton (Kind permission from CHL).

The many subjects covered by the factual material range from female conduct (for example, James Fordyce's *Sermons to young women* (London 1786, tenth edition) and Ann Murry's *Mentoria; or, the young ladies instructor* (Dublin, 1779, first Irish edition)), to travel (such as Miss Tully's *Narrative of a ten years' residence at Tripoli in Africa* (London, 1816, first edition) and Sydney Lady Morgan's *France* (London, 1817, first edition)), to medicine (*A Complete practice of midwifery* by Sarah Stone (London, 1737, first edition) is one example), to botany, history, domestic life and much more.

Amid significant holdings of poetry and plays in the collection, a few examples are the first printed edition of Katherine Philips' poetry, published in 1664 as *Poems by the incomparable Mrs. K. P.* (and unauthorised by Philips who had intended her poetry to be circulated only privately in manuscript form), *Female poems on several occasions* (London, 1679), by the pseudonymous "Ephelia," and original editions from the 1660s of plays by Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle (one of which includes contemporary handwritten corrections to the text), amongst many others.

Novels are one of the major strengths of the Chawton collection, forming nearly a quarter of the whole library. There are some early examples of the development of the novel in the

form of original editions of works from the 1720s by women such as Penelope Aubin, Mary Davys and Eliza Haywood, but the collection is particularly rich in novels of the second half of the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century, and holds early (often first) editions of novels by many women writers ranging from those who are very little known nowadays through to the most well-known female novelists of this period, such as Maria Edgeworth, Ann Radcliffe, Mary Shelley and, of course, Frances Burney. The Library holds first editions of all four of Frances Burney's novels, as well as the first edition of her *Diary and letters of Madame D'Arblay*, edited by Charlotte Barrett (London, 1842-46), a number of later editions of her letters and journals, her *Brief reflections relative to the emigrant French clergy* (London, 1793, first edition), and a selection of recent biographies and critical material on her work. Her younger half-sister Sarah Harriet Burney is also well-represented in the collection, with first editions of three of her novels, *Clarentine* (London, 1796), *Geraldine Fauconberg* (London, 1808) and *The Romance of private life* (London, 1839), together with a second edition of *Tales of fancy* (London, 1820) and a third edition of *Traits of nature* (London, 1813). This last is also held in French translation, *Le Jeune Cleveland, ou traites de nature* (Paris, 1819), and is the copy from the personal library of Frances Anne Vane Stewart, Marchioness of Londonderry (1800-65), whose collection of novels in English and French was purchased by Chawton House Library some years ago.

Among a number of portraits of literary women of the period, the Library holds a painting of a young woman who may have a Burney connection. The handwritten (undated) label on the back of the painting claims "Portrait of Frances Burney Madame D'Arblay (author of Evelina, etc.) by Sir Thomas Lawrence" but the subject does not look like Frances Burney and it seems unlikely that this label is accurate; it is not even certain that the portrait is by Thomas Lawrence. There has been a suggestion that the sitter could be Sarah Harriet Burney, although so far there is no conclusive evidence for this. The Library is in the process of trying to find research the painting further, but for the time being the identity of the sitter remains a mystery.

Chawton House Library is freely open to all members of the public who would like to use the collections for study and research. Use of the library is on an appointment basis, so visits are arranged in advance with library staff, and library readers go through a straightforward registration process on their first visit. For those interested in viewing the house and surrounding grounds, rather than using the library, it is possible to arrange tours of the house for groups of 10 to 40 people. (With the exception of groups of students visiting as part of their educational activities, there is a charge for group tours.)

The Library enjoys a very fruitful collaboration with the University of Southampton, facilitated, from September 2005, by Prof. Emma Clery, the University's Professor of Eighteenth-century Studies, and Dr. Gillian Dow, the Chawton House Post-Doctoral Fellow who works both at the University and

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## Chawton House

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the Library. The partnership between the two organisations has produced two major international conferences, *Women's Writing in Britain 1660-1830* (July 2003) and *Women and Material Culture* (July 2004). A selection of papers from the 2003 conference has recently been published by Palgrave Macmillan, edited by Prof. Cora Kaplan and Dr. Jennie Batchelor, and papers from these and other conferences co-sponsored by Chawton House Library can be found in Sheffield Hallam University's online journal *CW3*, which is accessible at the world-wide-web address <http://www2.shu.ac.uk/corvey/cw3journal/index.html>.



*Interior of the Reading Room at Chawton House Library. Photographed by Steve Shrimpton. (Kind permission from CHL.)*

There will be another major conference at the Library in July 2006, details of which are to be publicised in the near future. The University of Southampton also runs the Chawton MA, just entering its second year, which is a multidisciplinary programme for the study of British culture in the long eighteenth century, drawing on the resources made available by the Library's collection (details are available at the following internet address: <http://www.english.soton.ac.uk/chawtonma.htm>).

The Library has a programme of events, including evening lectures, occasional study days and an annual open day in September (as part of the UK's national Heritage Open Day). For those who would like to give their support to the Library, there is a Friends association, members of which receive the Library's newsletter *The Female Spectator*. Information about Chawton House Library and its activities can be found at [www.chawton.org](http://www.chawton.org), or for enquiries about using the Library, arranging a group tour, becoming a Friend, or details of forthcoming events, please contact Chawton House Library, Chawton, Alton, Hampshire, GU34 1SJ, UK, 01420 541010 or [info@chawton.net](mailto:info@chawton.net).

*Helen Scott (helen.scott@chawton.net) is the Librarian at Chawton House Library, where she has been working since February 2003. Prior to that she has worked as a librarian at various academic institutions, including the University of East London and Chelsea College of Art & Design.*

## AGM 2005 in Milwaukee

### By Paula Stepankowsky

Dr. Margaret Anne Doody, author of the groundbreaking biography *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works* and of other books and articles on Burney, her contemporaries and eighteenth-century literature, will be the speaker for the annual meeting of The Burney Society in North America on 7 Oct. 2005 in Milwaukee, Wis.

Dr. Doody, who is also a founding patron of the society, will speak on the topic "Frances Burney and the Fantastic: Stretching the 'Real'."

She is well known to members because she delivered the formal address at the society's first regular meeting in October of 1995 in Madison, Wis., following its formation in New Orleans in November of 1994.

The Burney Society meeting in North America will be a brunch meeting this year and will be held at the Woman's Club of Wisconsin from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 7. Doors will open at 9:30 a.m. for members to sign in and collect meeting materials.

The club is located at 813 East Kilbourne Ave. 414-276-5170 (phone), 414-276-7190 (fax). The club's web page address is [www.wc-wi.org](http://www.wc-wi.org).

Registration for the meeting will be mailed to members separately in early September. The cost for the brunch meeting will be \$35 U.S. per person, including the meal, the talk, conference materials, service and gratuities.

The brunch will conclude before the formal opening of the Jane Austen Society of North America conference at 1 p.m. that same day in Milwaukee, so members of both societies can attend both meetings if they wish. The JASNA meeting will be at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. The JASNA conference theme this year is "Jane Austen's Letters in Fact and Fiction." Registration information about the JASNA meeting can be found at [www.jasna.org](http://www.jasna.org).

Since the Burney Society sponsored a conference in Bath this year, the next conference in North America is scheduled for late October in 2006 in Tucson, Ariz., again at the same time as the annual JASNA meeting. See a separate story in this issue.

Dr. Doody is the John and Barbara Glynn Family Professor of Literature at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Ind.

In addition to her book on Burney, Dr. Doody has also published *The True Story of the Novel, A Natural Passion: A Study of the Novels of Samuel Richardson*, and *The Daring Muse: Augustan Poetry Reconsidered*, which won the Rose Mary Crawshay Prize awarded by the British Academy. She has also edited Burney's *Evelina* and *The Wanderer*, as well as Jane Austen's *Catherine and Other Early Writings* and Lucy Maud Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*.

Dr. Doody is also the author of the Aristotle Series, a collection of murder and mystery thrillers set in ancient Greece that has a growing following around the world. The fifth in the series, published this year, is *Mysteries in Eleusis*.

# Fanny Burney at Saltram

By Richard Aylmer

*Frances Burney was Keeper of the Queen's robes from 1786 to 1790 and traveled with George III and Queen Charlotte to Saltram in Devon in 1789*

In the autumn of 1788 George III was ill and was affected both physically and mentally. He recovered in February 1789. It was appropriate that the King should spend a relaxed summer and the Royal Party set out towards the end of June 1789 for Weymouth and visited a number of places in the West Country. They spent 15-27 August at Saltram, near Plymouth.

The trip may have enhanced the King's health; it was certainly good for his morale "... The greatest conqueror could never pass through his dominions with fuller acclamations of joy from his devoted subjects ..." Fanny Burney recorded. George III won his subjects' love by "...the even tenor of an unspotted life..."

Fanny Burney travelled with Margaret Planta, another royal servant. Fanny Burney found her own arrival at Saltram very disagreeable. The King and Queen were well received but Fanny Burney and Margaret Planta were not included in this welcome and had to make their way into the house through the large crowd which had gathered to see the King and Queen.

Fanny Burney mentions the walls hung with crimson damask on the ground floor of Saltram and pictures, "...some few of the Spanish School, the rest by Sir Joshua Reynolds, Angelica [Kauffmann], and some few by other artists..." Antonio Zucchi, who painted the lunettes on the dining room ceiling, married Angelica Kauffmann as her second husband in 1781.

Fanny Burney had a "... sweet parlour..." allotted to her "... with the far most beautiful view of any, on the ground floor and opening on the state apartments, with the library for the next room to it..." (see photo of Saltram *left*). Since those days the wall between this parlour and the library has been removed and replaced by pillars to enlarge the library. The enlarged library now opens onto the Mirror Room on the other side. In those days the Mirror Room was merely a lobby with a staircase which no longer exists. It seems probable that the state apartments to which Fanny Burney referred were reached by this staircase.

Fanny Burney did not accompany the Royals the following week on three days when the Royals went to a Grand Naval Review, to the Dockyard, and to Mount Edgcumbe. The Queen arranged for Fanny Burney and Margaret Planta to visit the Dockyard on their own. They were welcomed by Mrs. La Forey and her daughters, but the Commissioner of the Dockyard, Admiral La Forey, had gone to Mount Edgcumbe to attend the King and Queen. A Lieutenant Gregory showed them stores of ropes, sails, and masts. The anchor business "...seemed to be performed by Vulcanic demons, so black they looked, so savage was their howl in striking the red-hot iron, and so coarse and slight their attire..."

The ladies were joined by two sea-captains, Duckworth and Molloy. Captain Molloy was married to one of the La Forey daughters who was present. Captain Molloy invited them to inspect the *Bombay Castle* which was at anchor.

They found the midshipmen were at dinner in their mess and Fanny Burney involuntarily exclaimed "...Dining by candle-light at

noon-day!" A midshipman, starting forward, said, "Yes ma'am, and Admiral Lord Hood did the same for seven years running!"..." Fanny Burney liked his spirit and explained that she had a brother in the service, and they had a friendly chat. (James Burney 1750-1821, sailed with Captain Cook on his second and third voyages to the Pacific 1776-79. In 1782 he was Captain of the *Bristol* but fell ill in 1784 and this brought his active naval career to an end. In retirement, at the age of seventy-one, James Burney was promoted to the rank of Rear-Admiral).

Captain Duckworth, "...greatly amused me by letting me see how much I amused *him*..." This was Fanny Burney's first excursion on water. She was apprehensive about what would happen if Captain Molloy's barge, rowed by sailors "...smart for royal attendance...", were to overturn. Captain Duckworth teased Fanny Burney and explained they would be picked up with "...instruments..." and eventually revealed after "...comic resistance..." some three-pronged iron forks "...very tridents of Neptune..." Fanny realized she was being teased and exclaimed with horror that they would tear the body to pieces. "...Oh,' answered he calmly, 'one must not think of legs and arms when life is in danger'..."

(Mike Manley and Bob Cook of Plymouth Naval Base Visitor Centre and Nigel Overton, the City Museum Curator, agree that the forks could have been for fodder or hay and had just been obtained in the Dockyard or elsewhere. They were probably being taken to the Bombay Castle for coping with livestock which would have been carried.)

Fanny added that "...Under such protection..." she felt she could not refuse to sail around Mount Edgcumbe where in the distance they saw the Royals in "... garden chairs ... driving about the place..." A day or two later Fanny Burney found out and recorded in her journal that Captain Duckworth was a married man. Perhaps she was disappointed.

Fanny Burney had an enjoyable day but the senior naval officers who had gone to Mount Edgcumbe had not been invited to stay there for dinner and they were angry.

The Queen approved an invitation from Lady Mount Edgcumbe for Fanny Burney to pay a visit to Mount Edgcumbe the following Monday, and Margaret Planta went too. Fanny Burney mentions elsewhere that "... we can arrange nothing for ourselves..." They travelled by chaise to the ferry but Fanny Burney was apprehensive about having no escort which she would have had as a lady in private life. "...Our superior is too high to discover difficulties, or know common precautions..." There had been other occasions when Fanny Burney had felt humiliated because she was not always treated as a lady while she was a Royal servant.

On the opposite shore they were met by a gardener and found "... a very commodious garden chair waiting for us..." (It sounds as though there was room for two ladies in one chair. Perhaps large garden chairs were like rickshaws?)

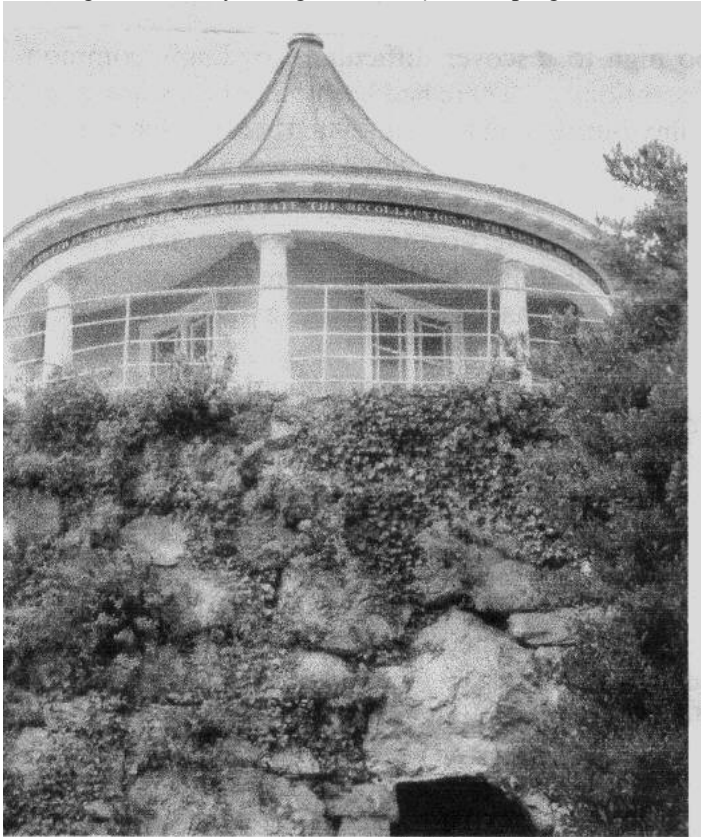
They were met at the gate by Lord and Lady Mount Edgcumbe, who were about to leave for their ancient country estate Cotehele (Fanny Burney spelt it *Coteil*) because the King had suddenly decided to visit Cotehele on the following day. Fanny Burney and Margaret Planta were looked after by the young Lord Valletort (Richard Edgcumbe 1764-1839 who became the second Earl of Mount Edgcumbe and fourth Baron Edgcumbe).

They had an extensive tour of the grounds by chair and admired the myrtles, pomegranates and flowering shrubs, which grew close to the sea.



They appreciated the contrasting views in different directions but found the great open view disappointing. The towns (e.g. the separate towns of Plymouth, Stockton and Dock Town) had "...no prominent features, the country is as flat as it is extensive, and the various branches of the sea, which run into it give, upon their retreat, a marshy, muddy and unpleasant appearance..."

Fanny Burney found a copy of her own novel *Cecilia* (1782) in the circular parlour at Mount Edgcumbe and, as she anticipated, it fell open at Book I Chapter viii, because it had been much read. In this chapter the fictional characters visit a rehearsal of the real opera *Artaserse* and hear the real singer Gasparo Pacchierotti (1744-1821). In 1779 Pachierotti had visited the Burney household and had sung a *rondeau* from the opera accompanied by Bertoni who had composed the music. In his day Pachierotti was as famous as Pavarotti or Domingo, according to Linda Kelly writing in the *Burney Letter* Spring 2005.



*The King's Gazebo, built in 1822 on a rocky knoll in the dockyard commemorates the visit of George III in 1789. Photo Mara Aylmer*

Fanny Burney became aware that not a single naval officer would provide a boat for Lord Valletort to sail up the Tamar to Cotehele the following day, apparently this was because they were offended that they had not been invited to dine with the King at Mount Edgcumbe the previous Friday. Would they have been so angry merely about food? Although evidence has not been found, the officers might have been angry with Lord Edgcumbe for denying them an opportunity to talk to the King about service matters. The country was restless. The French Revolution had already started with the storming of the Bastille on 14 Jul.1789 and war loomed. It is remarkable that serving naval officers would deliberately offend the Edgcumbe family. Lord Mount Edgcumbe (1720-95) was a senior Admiral, having had a long and active career in the Royal Navy. He served the Crown in other capacities and was a

Vice-Treasurer for Ireland (1773-82). He had only just been made the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe and Lady Mount Edgcumbe had been to kiss hands at Saltram on 16.Aug. on becoming a Countess. This was when Fanny Burney received her invitation to visit Mount Edgcumbe. However, on 19.Aug. Fanny Burney had had a conversation with Mr. Alberts, the Queen's page, about "...the danger of his [the King's] present continual exertion in this hot weather..." It can be speculated that the King's advisers might have considered it unwise, for one reason or another, for the King to meet a group of outspoken naval officers over a meal.

The following day, Tuesday 25.Aug, Fanny Burney remained at Saltram while the King and Queen went to Cotehele. It was already an ancient historic building. Building work was started in 1485 at Cotehele by a Richard Edgcumbe on the site of an existing building. He died in 1489, and the work was continued by his son Piers Edgcumbe 1472-1539. The family had resources for the work because Richard Edgcumbe had been rewarded for his loyalty to Henry Tudor (Henry VII) at Bosworth, the battle which brought the *Wars of the Roses* to an end in 1485.

On the Wednesday 26 August the Royals went to Kitley near Yealmpton, which became an hotel in the twentieth century.

Later on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> August Fanny Burney met a Captain Onslow who told her he had "...brought up a brother of mine for the sea. I did not refresh his memory with the severities he practiced in that marine education..." Unfortunately James Burney's career had been marred on occasions by his insubordination, for which he was disciplined, and his republican views did not help.

On Thursday 27. Aug. 1789 all the Royal party left Saltram and reached Weymouth on the Friday.

*RNews-11*: Angelica Kauffmann, p.33, Parker and Saltram p.36; George III p.79-81. Kitley p.94, Edgcumbe family p.96.

*Diary and Letters of Madame d'Arblay 1778-1840* (various editions). *The Royal Navy A History...* Volume III by Wm. Laird Clowes (1897-1903, rpt.1996 by Chatham Publishing) mentions Mr. Bastard. *Saltram, Devon* ( National Trust booklet 1995). *Cotehele, Cornwall* (National Trust booklet 1998). *Cecilia* by Fanny Burney (1782, reissued 1999 by Oxford UP) edited by Peter Sabor and Margaret Anne Doody .

*This article is excerpted and reprinted from a special issue of the Reynolds Newsletter, Supplement Summer 2005, published by Richard Aylmer, a descendant of Sir Joshua Reynolds' sister. He led a tour to Devon on (9 to 11 Sept.), following in the footsteps of Sir Joshua and Samuel Johnson who traveled there together in 1762. A recent reprint of James L. Clifford's Johnson & Reynolds: Their Trip to Devon is a useful guide. We hope to have details of their outing in the next issue of the newsletter*

*Saltram is a National Trust property open from 12.30 to 4.30 until 29 Sept and during October from 11.30-3.30, closed on Fridays. Mount Edgcumbe is also open, but the naval base at Plymouth Docks can be seen by appointment only.*

*The Reynolds Group may be conducting another tour to the area next year. For further information, contact richard.aylmer@appleinter.net or at 01865 241024 17.*

# HOW I CAME TO KNOW FANNY BURNEY

**By Joan Schneider**

For Christmas 1944, when I was fourteen, my father was given a book about historical diaries, which I also read. This started both of us reading published diaries (and incidentally it also prompted me to begin keeping a diary myself, a habit which has persisted.) My father bought a second-hand copy of the *Diary and Letters of Madame d'Arblay* in four big volumes, and we both began to read it.

I was fascinated by the account of the publishing of *Evelina* and the friendships with Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Thrale. The long accounts of dinner-party conversations became tedious, but interest revived with life at Court and the terrible Mrs. Schwellenberg. Though the later events were skimmed over and telescoped in that edition, I was nonetheless left with admiration for the writer and amazement at her life.

It was over forty years before I picked up the volumes again, prompted by reading a description of the visit to William Herschel's great telescope by Fanny Burney (I decline to think of her as "Frances" or "Miss Burney"; surely she herself would anyway prefer to be known as "Mme d'Arblay"?) The story of her life again gripped me, but I wanted more background information than was supplied by the original editor, her niece Charlotte Barrett. I therefore bought the scholarly biography by Joyce Hemlow: just what I wanted. I could not afford the complete edition of her later diaries then being published, but was able to borrow them through the local library, and follow page by page the suspense and the final joyful outcome of her romance with her French émigré admirer, marriage and motherhood.

The other Burneys also became familiar;

interesting that her adored and respected father came across to me, through her account of his actions, as selfish, prejudiced and petty, refusing to attend his loving daughter's wedding and responding to the misdeeds of his children, whether stealing from Cambridge University Library or conducting a dubious relationship with a half-sister, by forbidding them the house.

Her sister Susan I longed to know more about: lively, intelligent, less conventional in outlook than Fanny, and coming to such a tragic end. It is good news that her journal-letters are to be published.

Learning that the people of Neston, hearing Susan's sad story, had restored the inscription on her gravestone moved me, and I went there and also to Parkgate, where she died, just a week after arriving from Ireland, released at last by her husband (whom Fanny never forgave) to return to her family. A strange place today: a quayside with no sea, only a green flat expanse where the estuary has silted up.

There were other places to visit, too, in memory of Fanny herself: her birthplace King's Lynn, Norbury Park, where she and Susan spent happy times with beloved friends and first met Alexandre d'Arblay. (Is it not possible for the Burney Society to visit Norbury one day, and see its famous Painted Room?), Juniper Hall, where the émigrés lived, the dark little Ely Chapel, where her problem son was installed as priest and caught his death, and of course sites elsewhere in London and in Bath.

Surviving Burney documents are listed in Joyce Hemlow's book, and learning that some manuscripts of both FB and Susan were in the British Library, I obtained a reader's ticket and

studied the original papers: a thrill that no printed version can equal.

About this time I saw a copy of *Evelina* in the local bookshop. I felt I must read the book which caused such a sensation. I followed it with *Cecilia*, which I enjoyed more and recommended to my daughter, who likes "a good read".

Then I saw that *A Busy Day* was being staged in London and I went to a performance, which I thoroughly enjoyed. The excellent theatre programme included details of the Burney Society (which I had already heard of on a radio programme). I joined in 2000 and attended the unveiling of the window in Westminster Abbey and the interesting talks given that week end.

The Society's publications provide much interesting reading, and the invitation in the latest *Burney Letter* to share "first impressions" has prompted this contribution. My original interest in Fanny Burney may go back more years than that of most members, and is based less on her fictional works than on her life and the real people in that fascinating family.

*Do you remember your first encounter with Frances Burney? When did you read her, how did you come to discover her, what were your "first impressions"? If you would like to share your story (in 1000 words or less) please send it to the Editor.*

## Mole Valley Arts Alive Festival

Arts Alive in the Mole Valley is celebrating its ninth year in October 2005, with 85 events in the performing arts, literature, fine art and crafts. Charlotte Gardiner sends word of a special Burney-related event.

**Sunday 30th October 2005 at 4pm, Templeton Room, Juniper Hall, Mickleham, Surrey**

**"Madame de Staël at Juniper Hall": a Talk by Biographer Maria Fairweather**

Born in Paris in 1766, Madame de Staël was unique, both in her

intellectual and artistic abilities and in the force of her political influence, which helped to bring down Napoleon. Reading from her biography, which is the first to be published since the 1950's, Maria gives an illuminating account of Madame de Staël and the time she spent at Juniper Hall where she introduced the authoress Fanny Burney to her future husband General d'Arblay.

Admission: £6

Box office: 01306 881717

A free brochure of events at the festival can be had by calling 01306 879188 to join the mailing list or pick one up in Dorking Halls, Leatherhead Help Shop.

## Frances Burney in the ODNB

By Peter Sabor

*A large work is difficult because it is large, even though all its parts might singly be performed with facility . . . nor can it be expected that the stones which form the dome of a temple should be squared and polished like the diamond of a ring. (Samuel Johnson, "Preface" to A Dictionary of the English Language, 1755)*

Samuel Johnson's memorable remark on the difficulty of undertaking the first comprehensive English dictionary is surely applicable to a work published in sixty volumes and simultaneously in an online edition: the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), with some 10,000 contributors, 50,000 articles, and 55 million words. Some of these articles are revisions of ones in the venerable *Dictionary of National Biography*, but about three-quarters, including all of those on the Burney family, are new. Critics in the *Times Literary Supplement* and elsewhere were quick to seize on the flaws and errors inevitable in such a huge undertaking, with Marilyn Butler's essay on Jane Austen coming under especially heavy fire. As the author of one of the articles, on John Cleland, I should doubtless declare my two-page interest in the ODNB. What is more, the editor of the *Burney Letter* is the author of the article on Sarah Harriet Burney, and thus has an interest of her own. That said, I wish to comment on the Burney essays in the ODNB: concentrating on Frances Burney in this issue and continuing with other Burneys, great and small, in a subsequent piece.

Pat Rogers, the author of the ODNB article on Frances Burney, as well as those on Johnson, Addison, and several others, is among our most distinguished and prolific critics of eighteenth-century English literature. In eight double-column pages, about the length of all the other Burney family articles combined, he takes Burney from her birth at King's Lynn, Norfolk, on 13 June 1752 to her commemoration at Westminster Abbey precisely 250 years later, on 13 June 2002. It is, in many ways, an exemplary ODNB piece: condensing a great deal of information on Burney's long life, while also paying due attention to the remarkable range of her works. Rogers writes especially well on the publication and reception of *Evelina* and *Cecilia*, on the composition and suppression of *The Witlings*, and on Burney's Streatham journals, from 1778 to 1784, when "she often shows Johnson in a more intimate vein . . . than his usual appearance in the pages of Boswell" (VIII, 959). Rogers also gives a tantalising glimpse of Susan Burney's journal-writing in 1780, during a visit by Johnson and the Thrales to Samuel Crisp at Chessington: tantalising because Susan, surprisingly, has no ODNB entry of her own. Although writing for non-specialists, Rogers has reconduced material for seasoned Burneyites too. An example is his mention of a youthful translation of Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle's *Entretien sur la pluralité des mondes* (1686), "murdered into English by Frances Burney" and still extant in the Berg Collection: showing that her knowledge of French long predated her meeting Alexandre d'Arbly in 1793. Rogers's account of Burney's introduction to the Juniper Hall set, and of her courage in marrying a man "who had experienced an adventurous past, and who possessed an outlook broader than that of the week-kneed

socialites who had courted Frances previously" (VIII, 959), is also exceptionally fine.

There are small errors in Rogers's article, which should be corrected in the online version of the ODNB. In the caption to Edward Burney's famous National Portrait Gallery portrait of his cousin, his middle name is given as "Francisco"; this becomes "Francesco" in the text. The appalling Compton Delville in *Cecilia* becomes "Delville." The number of subscribers to *Camilla* is given as 300, perpetuating a mistake in Joyce Hemlow's biography, instead of the far more substantial 1058 (subscribing for a total of 1194 copies), and *pace* Rogers and Hemlow again, Ann Radcliffe (whom Rogers calls Anne) was not a subscriber.

Parts of Rogers's article are disappointing. Burney's court years, 1786-91, are brushed off in a single paragraph. Burney's official title during her court years, 1786-91, was Keeper of the Robes, not Second Keeper. Rogers calls her "second keeper," which is confusing; she was second because Elizabeth Schwellenberg was appointed first, but Schwellenberg was not officially her superior. No mention is made of Burney's important journal letters on the trial of Warren Hastings, and of the four tragedies she wrote at court, only one, *Edwy and Elgiva*, is even named. All four are worthy of attention, especially *Hubert De Vere*, which was originally to have been performed at Drury Lane before being replaced by *Edwy and Elgiva*. Burney's treatise *Brief Reflections Relative to the French Clergy* (1793) likewise disappears in Rogers's article, and he takes little interest in her final novel, *The Wanderer* (1814), noting that it "quickly fell into obscurity" (VIII, 963) but ignoring its remarkable hold over readers in our time.

Such lacunae, however, are inevitable: ODNB articles have strict length limits, and Rogers has done wonders with the space at his disposal. His incisive account of Frances Burney is written with an exceptional feel for her varied surroundings, including King's Lynn, London, Mickleham, and France. Above all, Rogers makes Burney come alive. It is important to know that her childhood home in London was "barely 50 yards" from that of Sir Joshua Reynolds (VIII, 958), that the tepid reception of *Edwy and Elgiva* in the 1790s "owes most to a lingering distaste for verse tragedy in its full histrionic panoply" (VIII, 962), and that on her death Burney bequeathed her half-sister, the novelist Sarah Harriet Burney, "with whom she had a complicated but close relationship, £200 per year" (VIII, 964). Burney was, as Rogers concludes, "deeply conditioned by her place in a complex family plot" (VIII, 964), and thanks to his article, the part she played in that plot – as well as the way she transcended her part – will be better understood.

*Peter Sabor is Director of the Burney Centre and Canada Research Chair in Eighteenth-Century Studies at McGill University. Recent work includes Pamela in the Marketplace, co-authored with Thomas Keymer, to be published by CUP this year, and the Juvenilia volume in the Cambridge Edition of the Works of Jane Austen. He is General Editor, with Keymer, of the Cambridge Edition of the Works and Correspondence of Samuel Richardson (CUP) and General Editor of the Court Journals of Frances Burney, 1786-91 (OUP, in progress).*

# Call for Papers: ASECS 2006 in Montreal

The annual meeting of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies is being held in Montreal, Quebec between 30 March and 2 April 2006.

It features the first-ever panel session sponsored by the Burney Society since its being granted affiliate status in the society in March 2005, an effort spearheaded by Catherine Rodriguez.

The topic proposed by Catherine, is **"Burney and Her French Connections"**; the panel invites papers on France and all things French in Frances Burney d'Arbly's life and works. Possible topics might include: representations of France and French citizens in Burney's works; stereotypes of the French; Burney's sojourn in France; Burney and the French

Revolution, the publication, reception and circulation of Burney's works in France, or Burney and the Emigrant French Clergy. Brief abstracts should be sent by 15<sup>th</sup> September to Lorna Clark at LClarkLJ@aol.com

Another panel of interest is **"The Letters of Susan Burney on the Irish Rebellion: 1798,"** chaired by Diane Menagh, 160 E. 48th St., New York, NY 10017, or dmenagh@mail.fairfield.edu. Susan Burney's letters are source material in the last eighteenth century for scholars of music, literature, history, feminist studies and other fields. The letters on the Irish Rebellion present an Anglo Irish woman's vision of "the savage Irish" at the same time they tell a tale of family

relationships and present a portrait of Dublin's community of English women, some, like Burney, married to English army officers sent to quell the ill-fated rebellion of the Irish.

There are other intriguing topics among the 200-odd panels, including ones on **"Forgotten Epistolary Friendships"** **"Women's Autobiography in the Long Eighteenth-Century,"** and **"Eighteenth-Century Women Writers After the Digital Turn."** The full program can be found at the website for ASECS at <http://asecs.press.jhu.edu> under Annual Conferences.

## *Hemlow Prize in Burney Studies*

The Burney Society is pleased to announce the foundation of an annual prize, named in honor of the late Joyce Hemlow, Greenshields Professor of English at McGill University, whose biography of Frances Burney and edition of her journals and letters are among the foundational works of eighteenth-century literary scholarship.

The Hemlow Prize will be awarded to the best essay written by a graduate student on any aspect of the life or writings of Frances Burney. The essay, which can be up to 6,000 words, should make a substantial contribution to Burney scholarship. The judges will

take into consideration the essay's originality, coherence, use of source material, awareness of other work in the field, and documentation. The winning essay will be published in *The Burney Journal* and the recipient will receive an award of US \$250, as well as a year's membership in the Burney Society.

The third Hemlow Prize will be awarded in October 2006. Essays should be sent, by email attachment, to the Chair of the Prize Committee, Audrey Bilger, Associate Prof. of Literature, Claremont McKenna College, [abilger@claremontmckenna.edu](mailto:abilger@claremontmckenna.edu). Submissions must be received by 1 May 2006.

## Burney Society Conference in Tucson, Arizona in 2006

### By Paula Stepankowsky

The Burney Society will be holding its annual meeting in conjunction with a themed conference which is scheduled for all day Thursday 26 Oct., and the morning of Friday 27 Oct. 2006, at the Loews Ventana Canyon Resort in Tucson, Ariz.

As was the case in Los Angeles in 2004, the Burney Society meeting will conclude in enough time for members of both societies to attend the Jane Austen Society of North America meeting, which will begin Friday afternoon at the Loews Ventana Canyon Resort.

While conference details are still being worked out, we plan to hold our annual dinner on the evening of Thursday 26 Oct., with talks held throughout the

day Thursday and on Friday morning.

Marilyn Francus and Catherine Rodriguez are chairing the papers committee for the conference.

### *Call for Papers: Burney Society Conference*

The theme for the next Burney Society conference in North America is "1814"—a year that saw the exile of Napoleon to Elba, the burning of the White House, and the end of the War of 1812, along with the premiere of Beethoven's 8<sup>th</sup> Symphony, the introduction of the steam press at *The London Times*, and the composition of "The Star Spangled Banner." The literary world saw the publication of Frances Burney's *The Wanderer*, along with Jane

Austen's *Mansfield Park*, Maria Edgeworth's *Patronage*, Lord Byron's "Corsair," William Wordsworth's "Excursion," and Walter Scott's *Waverley*. The Burney Society invites submissions on any aspect of Frances Burney's life or work during that year, including papers that focus on Burney in conjunction with contemporary authors, or situate Burney in the cultural moment of 1814.

Please send paper proposals of 250 words (and any audio-visual requirements) to Marilyn Francus, Department of English, West Virginia University, 230 Stansbury Hall, Morgantown, WV 26506, or via e-mail at [mfrancus@mix.wvu.edu](mailto:mfrancus@mix.wvu.edu), by May 31st, 2006.

## BOOK REVIEW

**Princesses: The Six Daughters of George III.** By Flora Fraser. London: John Murray, 2004. Pp. 476. Illustrated. ISBN 0-7195-6108-6.

### By Hester Davenport

“Never, in tale or fable, were there six sister Princesses more lovely,” wrote Fanny in admiration of Charlotte, Augusta, Elizabeth, Mary, Sophia and Amelia. Not only were they beautiful, but with their friendliness and unassuming ways they made Fanny’s life at court a little easier than it might have been, and the reader warms to them as she did. No one can forget her picture of the enchanting little Princess Amelia heading her third birthday procession onto the terrace at Windsor Castle and afterwards holding her face up to Fanny for a kiss, or kind Princess Royal sharing her medicine with her at Cheltenham. The fairy-tale princesses all seemed destined to find handsome princes and happy endings, but as Flora Fraser reveals in her impressive biography, their adult lives were wretchedly unfulfilling.

The girls were given a thorough and enviable education, so that they might grace the royal courts of Europe. When the older girls reached their late teens however, the King showed deep-set reluctance to countenance offers for their hands, even before his illness of 1788-89. But those desperate months, finely conveyed by Fraser, set the seal on the princesses’ fates: ironically, it would have been better for them if their beloved father *had* died. How far Fanny was aware of their plights while she was at court is unclear – in her *Journals* she seems very little so, but maybe she thought more than she committed to paper. She might have noticed that Royal, whom she describes as “the first of this

truly beautiful race,” was nineteen when she entered court, twenty-four when she left it, still unmarried (the next Princess Royal, her great-niece, married at seventeen). Fraser makes us aware of the humiliation for Royal of the ball held just before Miss Burney left court, for the “coming-out” of fifteen-year-old Princess Mary. Fanny’s journal entry for the evening is a very funny account of the drunken Prince William’s antics, but Fraser notes that for Mary’s older sisters, the opening of the ball was “a moment that would nudge them – six, eight, and nine years older than her – into the shadow of spinsterhood.”

In the end Royal did marry – at thirty-one – and was happy, though her only child was still-born. But the other sisters continued at home pursuing their unvarying lives, their father’s health always a concern, their mother’s disposition soured. Denied proper outlets for their affections, they found improper ones. Did Mme d’Arblay have any inkling, as she sipped tea in later life with the aging Sophia, that she had given birth to an illegitimate child? And that there were hideous rumours (dismissed by Fraser) that the father was her wicked brother Ernest?

For the Burney enthusiast the part of Fraser’s biography which holds most interest will be that which covers Fanny’s five years of service (it is a pity that she repeats the old mistake that Fanny was “Second” or “Assistant” Keeper of the Robes – the Royal Archives make clear that in title, if not practice, she was the equal of Mrs Schwollenberg, and was in fact paid considerably more than the old retainer). It is good to meet in a different context the familiar names found in the *Journals*, learn what they meant to their charges, and get a different perspective on life at court. While in Fanny’s *Journals* the equerries and the Honourable Stephen Digby feature largely, in Fraser’s account it is, at this time of childhood,

the women who matter (Lady Harcourt, Lady Charlotte Finch, Miss Gouldsworthy, for example), and indeed the hero/villain of the *Journals* gets only one mention in the whole book.

In writing six biographies at once, Flora Fraser set herself a difficult juggling act, and the first half of the book when the girls’ lives are running parallel flows more easily than the later years when they diverge. Moreover she has to cover almost a hundred years from the birth of the first to the death of the last, and there is a huge (and sometimes confusing) cast of characters. There have been earlier biographies, but Fraser has researched more deeply especially in the archives of their correspondence, and her originality is in telling the women’s stories largely through their own words. In this way she constructs to moving effect the story of Amelia’s passion for one of the equerries, General Charles Fitzroy, and her tragic death from tuberculosis, heroically endured, at the age of twenty-seven. These women were all articulate and could be wryly amusing. Sophia when only thirty-four writes to the Prince Regent (normally given a bad press, but always an affectionate brother) from the “Nunnery, Castle Court” to thank him for his kindness to the four remaining “old cats”: “Poor old wretches as we are, a dead weight upon you, old lumber to the country, like old clothes, I wonder you do not vote for putting us in a sack and drowning us in the Thames.” Outsiders’ letters and journals include an excruciatingly fulsome letter accepting an invitation from Princess Augusta, from “her most obliged, most faithful, most grateful and most respectfully devoted F d’Arblay.”

The book uses much previously unpublished material, and should be valuable to scholars. But its method of sourcing quotations and facts is an obstacle to research. Nothing is marked in the text; anyone wanting to know where a quotation comes from – if

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indeed it is sourced – is obliged to memorise the last word of the sentence or quote, making sure that it *is* the last word and that there isn't more later, then scan the list for that chapter. Thus, representing a couple of pages, we have “comedy,” “face,” “engagements,” “alliance,” “think of,” “fool!” “monks,” “known,” and “needle.” Such an infuriating system should not have got past an editor.

Three of those words end quotations from Fanny, though they are credited only to a “contemporary” as Miss Burney had not yet made her entrance into court. She does so in due course but then, curiously, she remains thus titled, even after marriage. It's a minor point of criticism in a book with such a large canvas, and of course Fanny, though a fruitful source of quotations, played only a very minor role in the Princesses' lives, but Mme d'Arblay would not have been happy about it.

In middle age the surviving sisters reached calmer waters. Augusta may or may not have been privately married to the soldier she loved. Elizabeth escaped at forty-eight to marriage with a fat German prince and her own household. Mary married the disagreeable Duke of Gloucester. Only Sophia was left manless, sadly admitting, “I have lost myself by my conduct.” Of course the possession of a husband is not vital to happiness, and the sisterhood had hobbies, loving brothers, friends, and the companionship of each other. Biography is a form of story-telling which always ends unhappily, but there is a peculiar poignancy in bright lives blighted because of a father's *love*.

*Hester Davenport, author and teacher lives in Old Windsor. Her biography of Frances Burney, Faithful Handmaid (2000), covered the years that Burney worked in the household of King George*

*III. She has recently published a biography of The Prince's Mistress: A Life of Mary Robinson (2004).*

### Contributions Welcome

The *Burney Letter* welcomes input from members. Please send any notes, news, letters, essays, book reviews, accounts of travel, announcements of concerts, plays, exhibitions or conferences, notices, queries, photos or suggestions to the Editor, Dr. Lorna Clark, The Burney Centre, McGill University, 853 Sherbrooke Str. W., Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3A 2T6 or by e-mail to [lclarklj@aol.com](mailto:lclarklj@aol.com)

## Selections from Susan Burney's Letter-Journals to be published

Readers of the Fall 2004 *Burney Letter* will remember Philip Olleson's article on his plans to publish a web-based edition of the complete letter-journals of Susan Burney, younger sister of Fanny Burney, together with a print edition of selections. At that time, the future of the project as a whole was uncertain because of lack of funding, although there was some prospect of publishing the edition of selections on its own.

Since then, Ashgate have agreed to publish the edition. Provisionally to be titled *Musical Life in Late Eighteenth-Century England: The Letter-Journals of Susan Burney*, it will extend to

around 130,000 words, and will include an extended biographical introduction and chronology of Susan's life in addition to the annotated selections from the letter-journals.

Susan was an accomplished musician and a perceptive critic of music and the opera, and her letter-journals have received a good deal of attention for this reason. The main focus of the edition will be on Susan's writings on music and musicians, but the choice of extracts will be made to present a rounded portrait of her and to illustrate all her activities.

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