

Burney Letter

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Burney House and garden, listed with John D. Wood & Co.

Burney House For Sale

By Jacqueline Banerjee

To my surprise, a substantial and picturesque “period property” called Burney House was featured among “Homes of the Month” for March 2006, in our local Surrey newspaper. This five-bedroomed house in Westhumble is currently for sale by John D. Wood & Co (e-mail: dsmth@johndwood.co.uk) with a guide price of £1.65 million. This gives scope for yet more speculations. What exactly is this house? In particular, how is it related to Fanny’s Camilla Cottage?

The plaque commemorating the d’Arblays’ time at Westhumble is on an archway near Westhumble & Boxhill station. Unlike other such plaques, it makes no claim to mark the actual site of a residence. Nor does nearby temptingly-named Camilla Drive yield any clues to such a site. Knowing that Camilla Cottage itself had been transformed after Fanny’s time there,

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British Burney Conference 2007

The UK branch of the Burney Society is planning a conference in Windsor on Friday 6 July and Saturday 7 July 2007, to complement the editorial work now under way on the *Court Journals* of 1786-91. We hope to have talks from the team of editors, as well as by a representative from the Royal Archives, and from Windsor specialists, such as Hester Davenport, who wrote *A Faithful Handmaid: Fanny Burney at the Court of King George III*. There will also be opportunities for round-table discussion led by a panel of invited speakers on subjects relating to Frances’s life in this period. Other speakers will include Patricia Crown, the expert on Edward Francisco Burney

We think we have found the ideal venue. The Vicars’ Hall, a splendid

oak-beamed room, was built in 1415 in the Castle precincts and is traditionally believed to have been where Shakespeare’s *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was first performed before Elizabeth I in 1597. But despite its ancient origins, the hall has been comfortably furnished and provided both with modern conference equipment and facilities for the disabled. There is a connection with Fanny’s time at court in that some of the historical paintings on the walls are by George III’s favourite artist, the American Benjamin West (thought by Fanny to be a bit too big for his boots). Outside is a terrace with a fine view over the town and the River Thames to Eton College, with the Chilterns in the distance.

Nearby is St. George’s Chapel, built in the fifteenth century by Edward IV, which

is the Chapel of the Order of the Garter established by Edward III in 1347. Fanny worshipped there regularly while at Court. The Chapel is renowned for its music, and we shall attend Evensong on the first day, and later in the evening have a private tour of the Chapel, where we shall be shown the changes brought about by George III. (It was to see these alterations that Boswell came to Windsor in 1790, where he spotted Fanny and pursued her to her lodgings, urging her to resign while at the same time pleading on his own behalf for a sight of some of the “beautiful billets” sent her by Dr. Johnson).

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Burney House

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and that the extended house, called Camilla Lacey, had then been burnt down in 1919 and replaced by another large property – and finding nothing on Camilla Drive that seemed to fit the bill – I had assumed that all traces of Fanny’s original home in Westhumble had long gone, its grounds probably built over by the new housing estate. This sort of thing has happened all over Surrey.

However, Burney House proves to be on a long private driveway off nearby Chapel Lane, backing on to, though not accessible from, the Camilla Drive development. In fact, it stands exactly where Camilla Lacey is marked on a map of 1873 available at the web site <http://www.old-maps.co.uk/oldmaps/large_ind.jsp>. Moreover, it is known to have been joined, originally, to its neighbouring house, another large residence still known as Camilla Lacey. Here, it would seem, albeit with a middle piece missing, is the post-1919 property built on the site of the first Camilla Lacey, and before it, Camilla Cottage. This is confirmed by the estate agent’s particulars, which state that an earlier house on the site was indeed burnt down in 1919.

The particulars also state that Fanny Burney “is supposed to have written her famous diaries under a beech tree in the original grounds.” This suggests that the present Camilla Lacey occupies the Camilla Cottage site, while Burney House only stands in what would have been the Cottage’s grounds. However, Camilla Cottage formed the “nucleus” of the *whole* (old) Camilla Lacey (see Hill, p.241), and a spokesman for John D. Wood & Co. believes that some of the pre-1919 walls not only survived the fire but were also incorporated into the structure of Burney House itself. This has been corroborated by another local source, the architectural historian Lady Alexandra Wedgwood, whose grandfather knew the owner of the first

Camilla Lacey at the time of the fire (indeed, he sent him a telegram of sympathy – a matter of some alarm to the owner, who was away from home and did not yet know what had happened). There is, therefore, at least the possibility that traces of Camilla Cottage linger on in the unusually stout walls of Burney House.

Whether or not they do so, Burney House is very special in and of itself. Its present views may not be as glorious as the ones Fanny enjoyed, but it is now beautifully set in an acre of grounds landscaped to designs by Gertrude Jekyll. In place of the simple flower and vegetable beds which Fanny envisaged before moving in, there are tiered gardens, a secret garden, and woodlands shared with the present Camilla Lacey. Both inside and out, it seems to have all one might wish for from a house of this type – space, charm, character and, of course, history. It is tempting to imagine that one day the “Letter Book” of Alexander d’Arblay, said to have been destroyed in the 1919 fire, will turn up there behind some piece of old brickwork. There was certainly a legend, locally, that important papers might have escaped the flames (Lady Wedgwood remembers her mother telling her that she and her sisters were sent round at the time, to look for scraps of manuscripts). However, as Lorna Clark has pointed out to me in our recent correspondence, why any such papers should have been left behind after the d’Arblays’ departure is yet another mystery!

Hill, Constance. *Juniper Hall: A Rendezvous of Certain Illustrious Personages during the French Revolution, Including Alexandre D’Arblay and Fanny Burney*. London & New York: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1904.

With many thanks to Lady Alexandra Wedgwood, David W. Smyth of John D Wood and Co., and the present owner of Burney House (for kindly granting permission to reproduce the photograph of the house).

Editor’s note: When Frances was unexpectedly summoned to leave her home and join her husband in France in 1802 (a sojourn which stretched to ten years), she arranged to rent their beloved Camilla Cottage to a tenant. Her preparations involved packing away books and papers (including the manuscripts of her plays) into a closet that was papered over, so that it would not be used by the tenant. However, these manuscripts were likely removed with the rest of their effects prior to the sale of the cottage, on visits paid for that purpose in 1814.

Later owners of Camilla Cottage, apparently fascinated by its colourful history, had amassed a collection which included the manuscripts of three novels, engraved portraits of Burney and her friends, and some autograph letters. These, kept in a small room called the “Burney Parlour,” must have been the artefacts tragically consumed in the flames.

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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Membership in The Burney Society is available for \$30 (Students \$15) US annually in the United States and Canada, and £12 annually in Great Britain. To request membership information, or to notify the society of a change of address, write in the United States and Canada to: Alex Pitofsky, 3621 9th St. Drive N.E., Hickory NC 28601, USA or to pitofskyah@appstate.edu. In Great Britain, write David and Janet Tregear, 36 Henty Gardens, Chichester, West Sussex, England PO19 3DL or tregear david@hotmail.com.

Back issues available

A limited number of back issues of *The Burney Journal*, the annual journal of the Burney Society, are available to members and institutions for \$10 US each.

The society was founded in 1994 and has published seven volumes of *The Burney Journal*, beginning in 1998. The eighth

volume, which covers 2005, is forthcoming to members for the dues year June 2005 to June 2006.

To order back issues, send a cheque for the appropriate number made out to The Burney Society to Alex Pitofsky, NAm Treasurer, 3621 9th St. Drive N.E., Hickory, N.C., USA 28601.

British Conference 2007

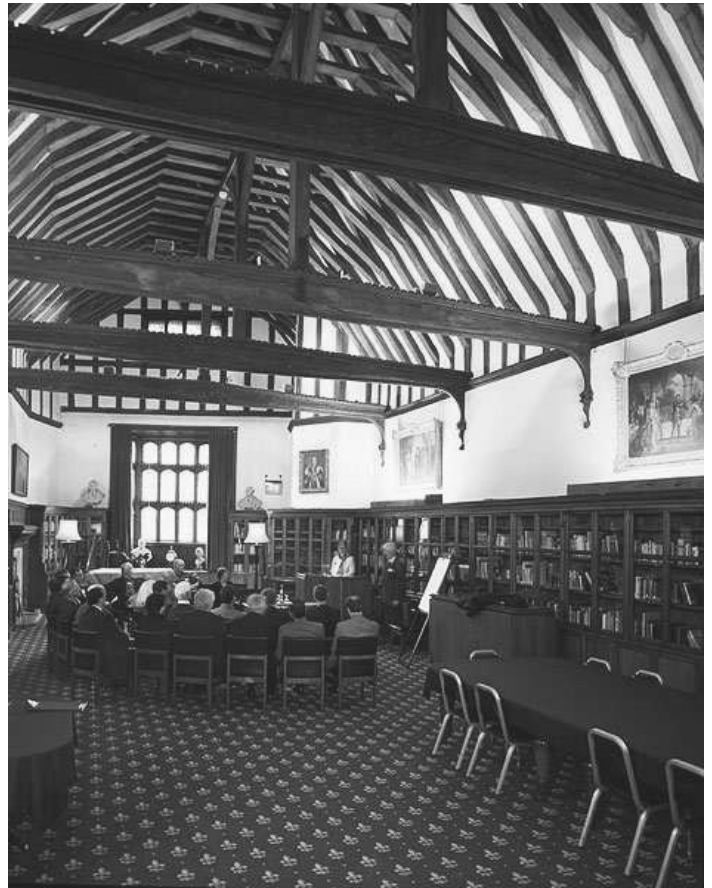
Continued from p. 1

The conference facilities are run by an organisation based at St. George's House, a 17th-century building situated, like the Vicars' Hall, well beyond the tourist trail. Delegates will be free to arrange their own accommodation, but St. George's House is also run as a hotel for conference guests, with 17 single rooms and 8 doubles. If demand for rooms exceeds supply, they can arrange for delegates to stay at the Harte & Garter Hotel, just outside the Castle walls, at the same price. This building is a 19th-century one, but it is on the site of the original Garter Inn which Shakespeare made one of the settings of *The Merry Wives*.

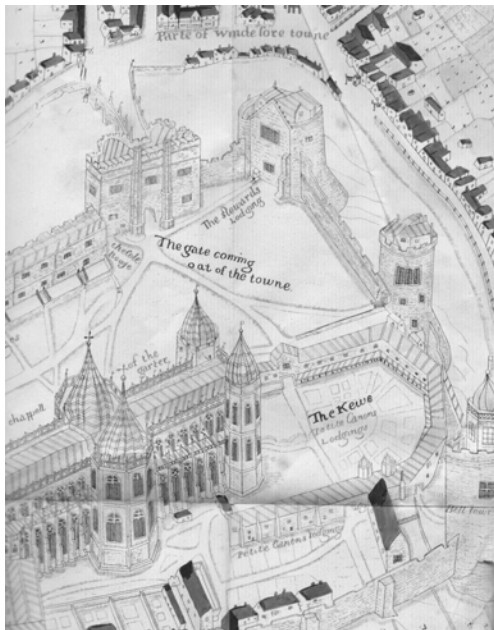
The conference will begin with tea in the afternoon of 6 July and end after tea on the Saturday. All meals will be included, and there are facilities for the disabled. We shall have entertainment during the buffet supper with music of the period played by the Windsor Box and Fir Company (who performed at the 2002 conference). We hope that all the editors of the *Court Journals* will make it to Windsor to tell us of their work, and we have other ideas to make the conference special.

We have just received the exciting news that Her Majesty the Queen has given consent to the placing of a plaque close to the site of Mrs. Delany's home in St. Albans Street Windsor. It will commemorate the two friends, Mary Delany and Frances Burney, and provided we also win the support of the local council, we plan that it will be unveiled at the 2007 Conference. This will make the event even more memorable!

The full program and prices will be in the Fall Newsletter, but do make a note of the dates in your diary now!



Inside the Vicars' Hall, by kind permission of St George's House



1607 map by John Norden, showing St. George's Chapel and the Henry VIII Gate into Windsor Castle. The Vicars' Hall is in the lower right-hand corner, next to the Bell Tower (now Curfew Tower).

UK Society Meets

By David and Janet Tregear

The Annual Meeting for UK this year will be at Juniper Hall, Mickleham, Surrey, from 12 noon until tea at 3.30 p.m. on 13 June 2006. Mascha Gemmeke will talk about Frau Schwellenberg, who was at the Court with Fanny Burney as a less than helpful mentor, and Fiona Ritchie will speak on Fanny Burney and Shakespeare. For those coming to the meeting the cost will be £16 per person, and memberships may be renewed for the year till 13 June 2007 at £12 per person, or £20 for two at the same address. Cheques made payable to the Burney Society should be sent to us at 36 Henty Gardens, Chichester, PO19 3DL. If any would like to give a firm indication of interest in Windsor to us in the next two months, we hope that they will do so. The costs have been estimated, although these are not fixed and we hope may be reduced with the help of successful sponsorship and some fund-raising. (We plan to have a second-hand bookstall at the June meeting as a start to raising funds for the Conference.) Perhaps an initial deposit to Alex for North American members or to us for UK members, of, say, £25, may help to concentrate attention.

"And this is dear Jane . . ."

By Jacqueline Banerjee

A well-known comment by Jane Austen's brother (quoted here from Carol Shields's book on Austen) runs, "It is probable that she never was in company with any contemporary authors" (p. 118). Also well-known is the fact that the d'Arblays' neighbours at their second home, a rented cottage in Great Bookham, were the Cookes – Mrs. Cooke being a first cousin of Jane Austen's mother, and the Rev. Samuel Cooke being Jane's godfather. What is sometimes forgotten, however, is that Jane and her sister Cassandra were expecting to accompany their mother to the Cookes' in the summer of 1799, not long after Fanny had set up house just a mile or so away at Camilla Cottage, and was still on "dropping in" terms with them.

True, Jane was not looking forward to the visit: "I assure You that I dread the idea of going to Bookham as much as you can do," she wrote to her sister Cassandra on 8 January, 1799. "I am not without hopes that something might happen to prevent it," she added (*Letters*, p.33), fantasising, for instance, that the Cookes would have an accident on their way back from the "season" at Bath, and all be out of action for the summer. But the visit was still "on" in June, when Jane mentioned it in another letter to Cassandra, and Claire Tomalin has pointed out that there was, in fact, no reason why it should not have gone ahead as planned (p. 149). It is highly likely not only that Jane and Cassandra did accompany their mother to Great Bookham that summer, but also that they were introduced to local society while they were there. And "local society" would surely have included the d'Arblays – especially since Jane herself had subscribed to *Camilla* only three years before.

This (very probable) first visit to Great Bookham seems to have been forgotten, or sometimes discounted, because there is no particular reference to such a visit in either of the two novelists' letters. Yet the arrival of Mrs Cooke's cousin and her daughters would have meant little to Fanny Burney, for she would have known nothing of young Miss Austen's secret talents at that time, or for years afterwards. As for Jane

Austen herself, very few letters survive for 1799 anyway, and none at all from the second half of the year.

Of course, the fact that no Austen letters from Great Bookham have come down to us may indeed be significant – suggesting not that the visit never materialised, but that such correspondence as resulted from it contained some indiscretions. We do know that Cassandra burnt most of her sister's letters to her a few years before her own death, and other family members too would have been just as keen to protect her reputation.

Now, if indeed this young visitor had some acerbic comments to make, about whom would they have been made? David Nokes, another of Jane Austen's more recent biographers, believes Jane Austen disliked the way "Mrs Cooke was always going on about her great friend and neighbour Madame D'Arblay," and adds that this, together with Mrs Cooke's own little success as a novelist, "did nothing to endear her to an aspiring literary rival" (p.193). But there are other uncomplimentary references to the Cookes in the letters which have escaped destruction, besides the uncharitable wish that they might meet with an accident on the road from Bath. For instance, we have one letter in which Jane voices some concern about the gardener, Isaac, whom the Austens are apparently passing on to the Cookes: "The Cookes' place seems of a sort to suit Isaac," she writes to her sister, adding, "The only doubt which occurs to me is whether Mr Cooke may be a disagreeable, fidgety Master, especially in matters concerning the garden" (*Letters*, p. 105). Perhaps, then, any offending letters would have contained comments on someone else besides the Cookes, someone whom it might be more risky to criticise – or perhaps mimic? Professor Nokes writes later that Jane and Cassandra Austen "had always liked to laugh at the way that literary people talked, especially the Cookes' Bookham friends, the Burneys, with their '*caro sposo's*'" (p. 378). In short, Jane Austen might have had some things to say about Madame d'Arblay which, her family thought, were better consigned to oblivion.

Professor Nokes's comment raises another question. How would the Austen sisters have known how the "Burneys" talked, and addressed each other, if they had never even met them? Pat Rogers provided one possible answer to this in the *TLS* of 23 August 1996. Having failed to mention the possibility of a visit in 1799, Professor Rogers concluded that Jane Austen would have simply heard gossip about them, later on, from the Cookes' children. Fanny Burney had known all three of the children who survived into adulthood, but had been critical of the rather sullen younger son, and his apparently equally uptight daughter. Such dislike is usually reciprocated. So this hypothesis fits well with the quite commonly advanced proposition that, in Chapter 32 of her "Surrey" novel *Emma*, Jane Austen models the impossibly pretentious Mrs Elton on the older novelist. Mrs Elton certainly uses the very same term of endearment to her husband, and talks as gushingly as Fanny Burney must have done about grand houses, music and the Surrey countryside – "It is the garden of England, you know. Surry is the garden of England," she repeats smugly. If this really is a caricature of Fanny Burney, who certainly was apt to say things like "dear, ever dear Chesington" and so on, it is perfectly likely to have come from gossiping with young people who had no time for their mother's old friend.

Like other scholars, however, Professor Rogers also sees Fanny Burney as a likely model for another Austen character, this time in a later novel: Fanny Price in *Mansfield Park*. Indeed, he writes, "The clearest link is between the two young ladies named Fanny." Not only is the Christian name the same, but Fanny Price, like Fanny Burney, is a sensitive and self-conscious observer, closely and ambivalently involved in theatricals. He might have added, "and capable of great love." The similarities here are indeed more striking, more profound, and more convincing. But this would seem to militate against the earlier proposition. Would these kinds of insights have been obtainable from second-hand tittle-tattle? It is worth bearing in mind, too, that the

Cookes' daughter Mary was five years younger than Jane Austen, and was perhaps not the companion from whom she would have chosen to hear tales.

Of course, Jane Austen could have grown to understand her celebrated predecessor from her work, her defence of which is memorably outspoken:

Oh! It is only a novel! . . . It is only *Cecilia* . . . Or, in short, only some work in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its vanities, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour are conveyed to the world in the best chosen language. (*Northanger Abbey*, Chapter 5)

Yet this famous passage, with its comments on "effusions of wit and humour," says more about the novelist than the woman herself. As a novelist, Fanny Burney's voice is fresh, vigorous and humane. Her acute sensibility is usefully

balanced with humour and good sense, and it was by achieving this balance that she set new parameters for women's fiction. Her more intimate feelings were reserved for her self-analytical journals and letters, which Jane Austen simply could not have read. In short, Jane Austen's comment on Fanny Burney's work in *Northanger Abbey* has rather a different ring to it from the portrait of Fanny Price in *Mansfield Park*.

No doubt it is possible that the younger novelist just guessed that behind the image of an apparently rather affected older woman, with her court background and continental husband, there must have been the sensitive soul of a writer – one who was not incapacitated by her sensitivity, but capable of tremendous devotion to those she loved, and of a quiet heroism in their service. This was something Jane Austen might indeed have come to appreciate later, when she herself was more mature. Still, while we are dealing in all these intriguing possibilities and probabilities, I must offer my own opinion that even such a talented artist as Jane Austen could hardly have

painted such a perceptive portrait of Fanny Burney without ever having met her sitter in the flesh. . . .

Austen, Jane. *Jane Austen's Letters*. Ed. Deirdre le Faye. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1997.

Nokes, David. *Jane Austen: A Life*. London: Fourth Estate, 1997.

Rogers, Pat. "Sposi in Surrey." *TLS*, 3 February 2004.

Shields, Carol. *Jane Austen*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2001.

Tomalin, Claire. *Jane Austen: A Life*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968.

Adapted from the author's Literary Surrey (2005) (see Review on p. 16). Jacqueline Banerjee has a PhD from King's College, London, and has been a Research Fellow at Cambridge. She has taught at universities in England, Canada, Ghana and Japan and has published articles and two books, Through the Northern Gate (1996) and Paul Scott (1999).

Chawton House Library Series

By Lorna Clark

The publishing firm, Pickering & Chatto, has announced a new series of women's writing based on holdings in the Chawton House Library, a research library and study centre housed in the Elizabethan manor house once owned by Jane Austen's brother. The Library currently houses a collection of 9000 volumes and manuscripts, primarily focused on early women's writing in England from 1600 to 1830. Its aim is to encourage rediscovery of neglected women authors.

This new joint venture aims to make available many of these rare texts in new scholarly editions. The series will have three strands: *Women's Memoirs*; *Women's Travel Writings* and *Women's Novels*. The latter project will include reset editions of important novels by women authors, selected for their rarity; all the novels will be republished in full and include a substantial general introduction, head-notes, endnotes and a consolidated index. The editions will be prepared by academic experts and published at the rate of about one a year.

The first three texts chosen include a little-known novel written by Frances' half-sister, Sarah Harriet Burney, *The Romance of Private Life*, to be edited by Lorna J. Clark. Burney's last novel contains two striking tales. Based on her travels on the

continent, *The Renunciation* presents a colourful picture of life abroad. An English girl travels to Italy in search of kin and supports herself as an artist, offering an early feminist heroine. *The Hermitage* is a gripping psychological thriller involving a ruined country maiden and an unsolved murder. With shades of the Gothic, it offers a case-study of the after-effects of trauma, anticipating the genre of the detective novel and challenging prevailing critical assumptions of the patriarchal origins of the genre.

The other two texts are the anonymously published *The Histories of Some of the Penitents in the Magdalen House* (1760), a novel aimed at promoting the charity formed to rehabilitate prostitutes, to be edited by Jennie Batchelor, and Megan Hiatt, and *Adelaide and Theodore* (1783), edited by Gillian Dow. This popular translation of Mme de Genlis's work will be placed within the context of 18th-century debates about female education.

Series Editors for *Women's Novels* are Stephen Bending and Stephen Bygrave, both of the University of Southampton. To place a standing order for books in this or any other series, e-mail sales@pickeringchatto.co.uk.

Chawton Library Acquires Pictures of *Camilla*

The Chawton House Library has recently acquired a pair of paintings that illustrate scenes from Frances Burney's *Camilla* (1796). Painted by Henry Singleton (1766-1839), they show "Camilla fainting in the arms of her father" and "Camilla recovering from her swoon." The paintings had formerly belonged to Rudolf Nureyev. Helen Scott, the Librarian, reports on these recent acquisitions in *The Female Spectator*, which can be subscribed to free of charge. Email info@chawton.net; website is at www.chawton.org.

First Burney Panel at ASECS

By Lorna Clark

The Burney Society sponsored its first-ever panel session at the annual meeting of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies in Montreal, Quebec, between 30 March and 2 April 2006. The Society had been granted affiliate status in ASECS in March 2005, an effort spearheaded by Dr. Catherine Rodriguez, who proposed the panel topic, "Burney and Her French Connections."

The call for papers invited proposals on France and all things French in Frances Burney's life and works. Possible topics might have included: 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.

So much interest was expressed that four papers were chosen for the panel, chaired by Prof. Lorna Clark. Prof. Alvaro Ribeiro started off with "'To the Gates of Paris': Fanny Burney's Missed Paris Tour," which "unpacked" the notion that Frances was denied her chance at a French education by Dr. Burney, for fear that she might be drawn to Catholicism. Drawing on family manuscripts, he relayed the impressions of her older sister, Hetty of the glamour of Paris.

Secondly, Prof. Mary Lynn Johnson looked at a later brush with French culture, in "British Miss Burney and Cosmopolitan Madame La Fite: Clashing Cultures in Queen Charlotte's Household." Burney's muted and skeptical response to Mme La Fite's overtures for friendship did not do justice to this dignified

and warm-hearted woman, who might have "expanded her personal horizons and perhaps even deepened and enriched her brilliant writing."

Kelly McGuire looked at Burney's next and decisive encounter with the French at Juniper Hall, in "Frances Burney, Germaine de Staël and Reflections on Suicide." Since de Staël was "one of the intellectuals directly responsible for promoting the notion of an English Malady," the "ongoing textual debate" between the two writers on the topic of voluntary death is of interest. In particular, Burney's last novel, *The Wanderer*, reflects the effects of her sojourn in France in shaping her thinking on the subject.

Finally, Dr. Elizabeth Claire gave a power-point presentation on "'La danse depuis le singe' – English Ladies Dancing and French lords-a-Leapin' in Fanny Burney's *Evelina*." Using engravings to illustrate her talk, Dr. Claire pointed out that the figure of the dancing monkey frequently appears in 18th-century novels, suggesting a cultural icon that reflects "British men's anxieties" and represents "a thinly veiled racial slur against the French." The penultimate scene in Burney's *Evelina*, in which Captain Mirvan urges his dressed-up monkey to imitate Mr. Lovel, is read metaphorically to suggest some of the "complex ways in which misogyny, homophobia, and British colonial racism" were articulated through forms of popular culture, including the dance.

The session was well attended; the audience, which included several Burney Society members, were given information about the aims and achievements of the society and invited to Tucson (see p. 7).

Meeting in Milwaukee

By Paula Stepankowsky

The Woman's Club of Wisconsin provided an elegant setting for the 11th annual meeting of the Burney Society in North America on Oct. 7, 2005, which featured Dr. Margaret Anne Doody as the speaker.

About 30 members of the society gathered for the brunch meeting in Milwaukee, which included a business meeting, as well as Dr. Doody's talk on "Frances Burney and the Fantastic: Stretching the 'Real'."

Professor Doody, author of the groundbreaking book *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works*, outlined the "fantastic" elements in Burney's novels, pointing out examples of links between characters, scenes and even costumes and the "Commedia dell'arte" of the day.

This "comedy of professional artists," also interpreted as "comedy of humors," was a form of improvisational theater which began in the 16th century and was popular well into the 18th century. Burney drew on this tradition for some well-known scenes in the novels, including *Evelina*'s adventures at Ranelagh, Dr. Doody said.

The complete text of Dr. Doody's talk will appear in the upcoming edition of *The Burney Journal*.

President Paula Stepankowsky chaired a short business meeting before the talk and reported on the Bath conference held

in July of 2005, along with plans for the next conference in North America, which will be in Tucson, Ariz. in late October this year. (See article elsewhere in this newsletter for more details.)

The Jane Austen Society of North America is also meeting the same weekend, so members of both societies can attend both meetings.

Paula also told of discussions about another conference in the United Kingdom, this time in 2007 in Windsor with the Court Journals as the theme. The British leadership team subsequently decided to move ahead with a Windsor conference (see p. 1).

Dues Notice

Members in both North America and the United Kingdom will soon be receiving dues notices for the coming 2006-2007 dues year, which begins on June 13, Frances Burney's birthday.

Dues are \$30 a year, or \$15 for students, in North America, while they are £12 for members in the UK.

Dues in North America can be sent to Alex Pitofsky, 3621 9th St. Drive N.E., Hickory, N.C. 28601. In the UK and Europe, they can be sent to David and Janet Tregear, 36 Henty Gardens, Chichester, West Sussex, England, PO19

Burney Society Meets in Tucson

By Paula Stepankowsky

The year 1814, one of great significance in the life of Frances Burney and other literary figures, will be topic of the 12th annual meeting of the Burney Society in North America in Tucson, Ariz., on Oct. 26 and Oct. 27, 2006.

Dr. Margaret Anne Doody, author of the groundbreaking book *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works* and author of many other books and articles on Burney, her contemporaries, and 18th-century literature, will be the plenary speaker for the conference.

Professor Doody, who is also a founding patron of the society, will be the plenary speaker.

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 Tucson will be held at the Loews Ventana Resort just outside Tucson in the foothills of the Santa Catalina Mountains. The meeting will begin with a series of panels on the morning of Thursday, Oct. 26. A banquet will be held on Thursday evening, followed by a morning of talks on Friday, Oct. 27. A dramatised reading, directed by Juliet McMaster, will conclude the conference.

Details about the Call for Papers are available in a nearby article and on the society's web page. The deadline for proposals is May 31, 2006. The conference co-coordinators are Marilyn Francus and Cathy Rodriguez.

Registration for the meeting will be mailed to members separately in late August or early September. The cost is yet to be determined.

The Burney Society meeting will conclude before the formal opening of the Jane Austen Society of North America conference at 1 p.m. that same day in Tucson so members of both societies can attend both meetings if they wish. The JASNA meeting will also be held at the Loews resort, and the topic is Austen's 1814 novel, *Mansfield Park*. Registration information about the JASNA meeting can be found at www.jasna.org.

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

In addition to her book on Burney, Prof. Doody has 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 edited Burney's *Evelina*, co-edited *Cecilia* and *The Wanderer*, and also published editions of Jane Austen's *Catherine and Other Early Writers* and *Anne of Green Gables*. She has authored numerous reviews and articles.

Prof. 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.

Call for Papers

Burney Society Annual Meeting in Tucson, Arizona October 26-27, 2006, "1814"

This year's conference theme 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 8th 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.

Our plenary speaker will be Professor Margaret Anne Doody, the John and Barbara Glynn Family Professor of Literature at the University of Notre Dame.

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

Westminster Proceedings to be Published

The conference volume based on the Burney Society Conference in Westminster Abbey in 2002 has found a publisher. Cambridge Scholars Press is an academic press which is looking to expand their coverage in literary subjects. They are interested in publishing proceedings of conferences, research monographs, and edited volumes of academic work. The publishing house is the brainchild of a group of scholars based at Cambridge University – lecturers, research fellows and doctoral students – although they have no formal connections to the university or its press.

The conference volume was vetted through a submission process to establish that it would be "presentable as a book" rather than a mere collection, and that it showed coherence and self-sufficiency. The press offers excellent copyright conditions, and does not charge any fees for reproduction permissions. As well, their publishing process is quicker than usual, taking just 6-12 months.

A contract has been signed and contributors will be contacted by the editor, Dr. Lorna J. Clark. The volume should be published in 2007.

Frederick Lock's Scrapbook: The Children at Norbury Park

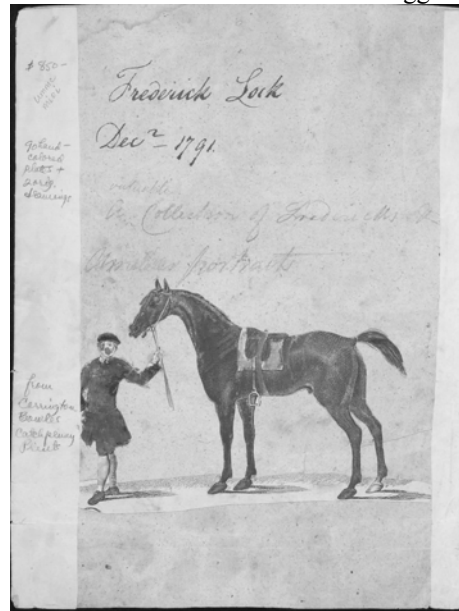
By Andrea Immel

In the fall of 2001, a slim archival folder with a flag labeled "Boy's Scrapbook ca 1791" landed on my desk. The Post-it on the front cover asked, "Where should this be shelved?" so I called up the bibliographic record and took out the item in question. That summer, over more 25,000 historical illustrated children's books, manuscripts, and educational toys had been put on deposit at the Cotsen Children's Library by the donor Lloyd E. Cotsen, who was transferring his enormous collection to Princeton in stages. No manuscripts were supposed to have come in that shipment, so this one I figured must have been packed up by mistake. The scrapbook's wrinkled pale yellow covers with three cut-out engravings colored in by a child on the front were not exactly prepossessing. It hadn't cost Mr. Cotsen much money, but there had to be something uniquely appealing about it, or the Bromers, a high-end antiquarian bookselling firm in Boston, wouldn't have offered it to him in the first place. Fifteen years ago things like children's scrapbooks, commonplace, ciphering, or copybooks didn't come on the market very often, because almost no one thought they were particularly interesting or valuable. So what had caught the Bromers' eyes?

I opened it up carefully, noting that "Frederick Lock 1791" was written in a well-formed hand on the inside of the front wrapper. Not the little boy's, but probably that of an older sister or mother. Except for a few watercolors by a skilled amateur, the twenty-two pages of the scrapbook were neatly filled with small pictures cut out of prints, many colored by hand with watercolors. Of the two or three large prints, the one of street musicians – a monkey, a dog with a fiddle, and a cat singing a ballad – with the handwritten caption "Frederick & Amelia & Co. reduced to poverty" jumped off the page. Something about the combination of that particular image with the two-hundred-year-old joke made me smile, but, more importantly, it connected the signature to the unknown maker of the scrapbook. It was disconcerting, I have to admit, to be looking at the object as a

disinterested professional and suddenly sense the presence of a little boy named Frederick who had long been dead. It was as if he were trying to get my attention, and indeed, he succeeded.

As I continued to leaf through the scrapbook, I found more captioned prints that invited me to imagine dynamics within the Lock family. As I analyzed the images with the goofy captions, the outlines of a group portrait began to emerge. Frederick, I thought, was something of a comic, the younger brother asserting himself by deflating the girlish vanities of his older sisters Amelia and Augusta. For example, he clipped out caricatures of women like Mrs. Dorothy Dandlepuppy or Geneva Kate, then wrote captions like "sweet little gentle Amelia" or "pretty sister Amelia" for them. He also married off his sisters to most inappropriate people, pairing Augusta (aka Miss Jenny Jigabout) to Sheridan's Irish fortune-hunter Sir Lucius O'Trigger



Detail from Frederick Lock's scrapbook.

in *The Rivals*. But Amelia seemed to be Frederick's favorite sister, because he kept writing the two of them into prints, as if they were imagining themselves to be characters in stories the pictures suggested to them. Prints of Squire Mannerly and Lady Dorothy, identified as Frederick at age 40 and Amelia at 50, were clearly a projection of brother and sister as grown-up companions. One of the most

intriguing prints of all was a caricature of two dueling dwarves, Viscount Vengeance and Lord Fury, captioned "Norbury & Frederick arrived at manhood" was written (Frederick was Lord Fury and Norbury Viscount Vengeance). As there was no indication that Norbury was a brother, I guessed that he and Frederick must have been friends. Unfortunately, the associated names of "Lock" and "Norbury" meant nothing to me then, so I didn't put two and two together. If I had known that Norbury was the nickname of Susan Burney Phillips's favorite son, and it alluded to the home of Susan's intimate friends, William and Fredericka Lock, the mystery of the scrapbook would have been solved much sooner.

But the scrapbook was a find, no question about it, and I began researching the prints Frederick had used. Identifying their source turned out to be child's play, even though there were no publishers' names on any of the images. Although the individual pictures had been taken from inexpensive copperplate engravings, the style pointed to the late 18th-century print-seller Carrington Bowles. Once I started hunting for images in the scrapbook in *Catchpenny Prints: 163 Popular Engravings . . . Originally Published by Bowles & Carver*, I found most of the sheets Frederick had cut bits and pieces from. While it was relatively time-consuming to trace an image back to the original print, the majority of the images had come from a dozen or so engravings. Frederick probably had belonged to a reasonably well-to-do family, if he had been allowed to sacrifice a pile of prints for the project. While this was a giant step in the interpretation of the scrapbook's contents, I resisted the temptation to write up my findings until I knew something about the lively, funny little person who had made it. I had a hunch that the album had been preserved as a memento of a dearly beloved child who had died young, but there was no concrete information to confirm or deny it. So the notes were put in a file until the time came to track down Frederick, Amelia, and Augusta Lock, and, perhaps, the mysterious Norbury.

In 2004, the editors of the *Lion & the Unicorn* invited me to contribute to a special issue of on the subject of handmade literacies, a perfect venue for an essay on the Lock scrapbook. Although the secondary literature on scrapbooking suggested how much meaning could be teased out of an album's contents when the compiler is known, I had to find an approach that did not depend on establishing the identity of the maker to see how she or he fashioned a self through the presentation of memories. The Lock album did not really conform to kind of scrapbook that is a self-conscious artifact anyway – it looked like a project for a rainy day or during a convalescence when time needs to be filled agreeably and constructively. But according to the secondary sources, this kind of scrapbook hadn't existed before the Victorian era when scrap prints became widely available. Presumably children in Georgian England would not have made scrapbooks because the emphatic prohibitions against defacing print in contemporary children's books have always been interpreted as proof that such an activity would have been taboo. So I decided to see if a rationale for scrapbooking as an entertaining but educational pastime for children existed in the late eighteenth-century by trying to discover what the prints Frederick cut up – a kind known as a lottery sheet about which little was known – were supposed to be used for.

Rather to my surprise, I did. And in the middle of writing the essay, I was

having lunch with Bill McCarthy, the biographer of Anna Letitia Barbauld, and asked him the best (or quickest) ways to try and find out who Frederick was. He thought for a moment and suggested looking for a genealogy of William Lock of Norbury in a biography he wasn't sure Princeton owned. Within five minutes of fetching the duchessa Sermonetta's *Locks of Norbury: The Story of a Remarkable Family* (1940) from the stacks, I had the answer. My hunch had been pretty much dead on: the table showed that Frederick had been the youngest of the



Detail from cover of scrapbook ca. 1791.

Locks' six children, and died at age seventeen of tuberculosis. He was ten years younger than Amelia, and eleven years younger than Augusta. Next I combed the index for references to the Lock children and hit pay dirt – anecdotes about Frederick, with quotations of his infant wit,

as well as Amelia, Augusta and the family's dear friend, Susan Burney Phillips, Fanny Burney's favorite sister, and her children. The chase was on, and there were hilarious accounts of the rather physical relationship between Frederick and Norbury in the excerpts from Susan's journal letters published in R. Brimley Johnson's *Fanny Burney and the Burneys* (1926). Reexamining the scrapbook in light of all this new information allowed me to glimpse into one of the period's most elegant houses and to observe family life from a child's perspective. I hope members of the Society will enjoy reading the fully illustrated article "Frederick Lock's Scrapbook: Patterns in the Pictures and Writing in the Margins," which includes a more detailed account of the Locks and Susan Burney Phillips in the January 2005 number of the *Lion and the Unicorn* (29:1): 65-87. I'd be delighted to hear from anyone who might know the whereabouts of the Lock family correspondence upon which *The Locks of Norbury* was based.

Photos reproduced courtesy of Cotsen Children's Library, Princeton University.

Andrea Immel is Curator of the Cotsen Children's Library, a historical collection of illustrated children's books, manuscripts, original artwork, prints, and educational toys at Princeton University. Her interests include the history of children's book publishing in the early modern period and the material culture of childhood. She has written notes, reviews, and essays, as well as curated exhibitions on illustrated children's books 1660 to the present day.

New Research on the Crewe Family

By Lorna Clark

The Crewe family, a family intimately connected to the Burneys, has attracted its own scholar who is discovering a goldmine of information about this fascinating family. The Burney connection came through the dashing Fulke Greville, who had engaged the services of the young musician Charles Burney, and in 1748, transferred to himself the indentures binding the young musician to Dr. Arne. The close association of the two youths is indicated by the fact that Burney was asked to give away the bride at Fulke Greville's clandestine marriage and to stand proxy for a ducal godfather at the baptism of Greville's daughter. That daughter, Frances Anne, would blossom into a beauty, marry rich landowner and MP John Crewe, and become a leading light of the London ton; she would always retain her friendship for the Burney family. Indeed, Frances Burney herself bears the marks of the connection in being named after her godmother, Greville's wife Frances.

British scholar Michael Allen was led to work on the Crewes

through his interest in Charles Dickens. Author of *Charles Dickens' Childhood*, he was intrigued to learn that Dickens' grandparents had been employed in the Crewe household. He embarked on fifteen years' of research of family history but was particularly drawn to Frances Anne Crewe, the brilliant London hostess, who attracted politicians, writers, artists and musicians to her home.

In 1786, Mrs. Crewe kept a record of a visit to pre-revolutionary France, where she met Louis XVI, Marie Antoinette and the Marquis de Lafayette. While she moved in the glittering salons of Paris and commented on aristocratic fashions and amusements, she also noted the seeds of dissatisfaction among the lower classes.

An English Lady in Paris: The Diary of Frances Anne Crewe 1786, edited by Michael Allen, is an attractively illustrated book with coloured plates of paintings by Reynolds and Gainsborough that have never before been published. Priced at \$59.90 Cdn, it is available from Oxford-Stockley Publications at 17 Heather Close, St. Leonards, UK, BH24 2QJ or at oxfordstockley@binternet.com.

Teaching Burney in the Classroom

By Lorna Clark

The Department of English at Carleton University offered a special course in its Winter Session 2006. Open to students in Honours English, it was organised as a fourth-year seminar, an Author Study of Frances Burney, taught by myself.

The course aimed to explore in depth the life and works of this prolific writer, presenting her as a pivotal figure among 18th-century women writers. She represented the new professionalism by succeeding simultaneously in several genres: novels, plays, journals and biography. Her writing in both public and private domains was considered, with some attention to the primary material on which critical assumptions are based. The classes followed her career chronologically, which meant an interspersing of literary forms throughout the 12-week term. The last class explored her critical reception up to the recent explosion of feminist interest, and beyond. To fulfill course requirements, each student had to give a seminar, write a term paper, and survey a variety of secondary sources, presented in an annotated bibliography.

Texts for the course included all four novels: *Evelina*, *Cecilia*, *Camilla* and *The Wanderer*. Selections from the *Journals and Letters* were taken from the Penguin edition (Sabor and Troide). As for drama, three comedies (*The Witlings*, *The Woman-Hater* and *A Busy Day*) and two tragedies (*Edwy and Elgiva* and *Hubert de Vere*) were read. The list was fairly heavy for an undergraduate course, so the dozen or so students who enrolled were a keen and enthusiastic group.

The students came from a variety of academic backgrounds; all were majoring in English, though some had minors in subjects like psychology, history or Canadian Studies. Most knew virtually nothing about Burney before they started, although they were intrigued by the idea of being on the forefront of something new. Compared to students twenty years ago, however, they had at least heard her name and one had read the chilling account of the mastectomy for another course.

Classes were three hours in duration [!] and consisted mostly of discussion, livened up by audio-visual presentations (eg. a gallery of portraits of her contemporaries); tape-recordings (excerpts from Jill Walker's "Fanny Burney" from *CBC Ideas* (2003) and the BBC's rendition of *Evelina*); and artefacts (such as the program for the West End debut of *A Busy Day*). Music was sometimes played; books, engravings and photographs were passed around. This supplementary material helped to evoke the cultural context and heighten students' interest.

The range of topics chosen for the end-of-term papers shows

the diversity of interest and response: *Evelina* as bildungsroman; social satire in *The Witlings*; the use of costume in *The Wanderer*; incest; fairy-tale elements; methods of characterisation; the theme of appearances; the motif of travel. The favourite novel was undoubtedly *Evelina*, and perhaps not solely for its brevity; most of the students adhered to the theory of deterioration in Burney's writing-style first delineated by Croker, and saw her career as a trajectory downwards. The *Journals and Letters* were also appreciated, and for reasons similar to those which had impressed the Victorians. They seem so "real"; they evoke the past with a vividness that brings it to life before our very eyes. For modern-day students, Burney's glimpse into the drawing-rooms and pleasure-grounds of Georgian England was a revelation indeed.

Typically when teaching, the instructor learns far more from the students than s/he imparts; the discipline of preparing material

for classes brings out unexpected merits and flaws. So it was with Burney's writing. The most successful texts by far were the comedies; indeed they were so popular that they proved the highlight of the course. It seems ironic that the plays, whose very existence was little known until quite recently and whose publication seemed an event of importance only to scholars, should have struck such a chord with the generation born in the 1980's. The students were genuinely amused; they marveled that the plays could be so funny and wondered why they had not been performed when written. They enjoyed pondering the mystery of this lost opportunity, one of the intriguing "might have been's" of literary history.

The impact made by the course on this group is suggested by one student's forming the ambition to direct a production of one of Burney's plays; with her background in the theatre, she just may do it one day. For her final essay, she analysed the script and suggested the changes that a director should make. Another student was inspired by the course to pursue graduate studies in the field. A third posted his responses to Burney on the internet, creating an Eng 4401 blog on his website, alongside his poetry, short stories, essays and journal entries, a mode that Burney surely would have approved (the site is located at <http://rintaran.klaporte.com/>). And then there was the student who emailed me weeks after the end of the course to announce that he had been busily catching up on those long novels left unfinished during term-time and wanted to express, belatedly, his long-delayed enjoyment of *Camilla*. (His post-semester efforts went above and beyond the call of duty.)

Would I do it again? The course was certainly a lot of work,

since I always follow the rule of re-reading everything just before I teach it and Burney is definitely a prolific writer (i.e. to teach the *Journals and Letters*, I felt I had to re-read all 24 volumes' worth, not just the selection perused by the students). However, the pleasure of helping a new generation to appreciate Burney and hearing their fresh and enthusiastic responses certainly outweighed the disadvantages, so yes, if given another opportunity (and department approval), I would certainly take it.

I'll leave the last word to the students. Each week, they would write a brief response to the week's reading, intended to collect their thoughts and prepare for discussion. For the last class, they were asked to reflect on the course as a whole, on what they had learned about Burney. Here are some of their comments:

"Frances Burney is one of the few writers who is actually 'funny' to a modern audience" (Jeff McCaig)

"Frances Burney, as an author, is one that surprised me by her ongoing relevance, her vividness, her historic significance but mostly her wit and humour. Frances Burney is one of the few writers who is actually 'funny' to a modern audience . . . she uses genuine wit and expression

that can't help but make the reader laugh out loud" (Jeff McCaig). "I particularly enjoyed Burney's whole range of writing styles. . . . The other aspect that I enjoyed . . . was her continual theme of the female identity" (Emma Kane). "Throughout this course, I have been continually surprised by Burney's lack of interest in clothing. Considering that she was Keeper of the Robes, I was hoping for lavish descriptions of ladies' outfits" (Morgan Blenk). "Her first novel, *Evelina*, had me completely interested. I really enjoyed the innocent and satirical tone that was threaded throughout the novel" (Amanda Podnar). "My personal favorite piece . . . is her account of her surgical procedure: her mastectomy. Never in my life, have I read anything so vivid, so graphic, so realistic" (Julie-Anne McHardy). "The overarching theme that I found present in most of her work . . . is the extreme importance of appearances and what is proper or improper. . . . A second important thread . . . was the topic of incest. There were more threads that I'm sure I will continue to . . . mull over" (Shawn Gray). "I believe that it is her *Journals and Letters* that led Burney to become such a notable author. Her remarkable account of her life, successes and failures, joys and sorrows, births and deaths, has earned her a place in literary history. Her *Journals and Letters* give scholars an inside look at her life, and the inner workings of her genius. . . . Burney's journals show the many sides of her life. Burney as a writer, Burney as a daughter, a wife, a mother, a widow, as a woman" (Jillian Nause).

"Burney's journals show the many sides of her life. Burney as a writer, Burney as a daughter, a wife, a mother, a widow, as a woman" (Jillian Nause).

"Before having taken this course, I had never heard of Fanny Burney, although I have taken survey courses of British literature. There always seems to be a lack of female writers . . . After studying her journals, her life, her novels and plays, I am pleased that I took this opportunity to find out about this little known but valuable contribution to the history of literature. Burney provides not only a look into the personalities and habits of the famous

names of the day, but also a peek into what life was like for a woman: a woman who against common propriety took up the pen with an irresistible impulse to describe everything around her with energy, detail, and vivacity. Her novels are early feminist statements as well as social critiques . . . Her comedic plays are witty explosions of satire . . . Her tragedies are more psychological releases . . . revealing the dark times she endured. Burney will hopefully continue to be appreciated and read . . . and perhaps will be re-discovered . . . as an important female writer" (Erica Leighton).
I couldn't have said it better myself.

Burney provides . . . a peek into what life was like for a woman (Erica Leighton).

Prof. Lorna Clark is a Research Adjunct Professor in the Department of English at Carleton University in Ottawa. In January 2006, she was invited to teach a fourth-year seminar in 18th-Century Literature, for which she created a new course, an in-depth author study of Frances Burney. A contributor to the new Oxford DNB and the Cambridge Companion to Frances Burney, she is a volume editor for the Chawton House Library Series (Pickering and Chatto) and The Court Journals of Frances Burney (Oxford).

BURNEY STUDIES

Burney Studies are flourishing around the world; more students are undertaking research on Frances Burney, as indicated by the number of letters that arrive on the editor's desk.

Recently, we received an enquiry from Cairns, Australia, where Michelle Pelling has just completed her BA at James Cook University; for her honours thesis, she looked at the significance of Burney's four comedies as "unadulterated indicators of social change, since none of them were published or produced."

An outpost of Burney studies is located in Coruña, Spain, from which Carmen Maria Fernández Rodríguez writes. She reports that interest in Burney is strong at the university, mostly inspired by the Head of the department, Dr. Lorenzo Modia, who specialises in eighteenth-century literature.

In Nottingham, UK, Corinne Fourny, a recent PhD is helping Philip Olleson on the Susan Burney project. She did her research in the departments of English and French Studies; her thesis topic was "Intersecting Discourses: The Interaction of the Libertine and the Sentimental Discourse in Mid-Eighteenth Century French and English Novels."

Finally, Amy Cummins writes from Fort Hays State University in Hays, Kansas, about her enjoyment of the production of *The Wiltings* at the Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century British Women Writers Conference in Lafayette, Louisiana in April 2005 (covered in the Fall 2005 issue of the *Burney Letter*). She notes that Burney's works are not currently covered on the curriculum of her institution (which specialises in 19th-century American women's literature) but hopes that she may be able to teach Burney, whose works she studied in graduate school, at some point in the future.

A Tale of Two Women: Mme de Staël and Fanny Burney

By Maria Fairweather

“We shall shortly, I believe, have a little colony of unfortunate (or rather fortunate, since they are safe) French noblesse in our neighbourhood.” Two or three families have joined to take Jenkinson’s house, Juniper Hall, and another family has taken a small house at Westhumble, which the people very reluctantly let, upon the Christian-like supposition that, being nothing but French papishes, they would never pay,” Susanna Phillips wrote with her characteristic light touch, to her sister Fanny Burney in the autumn of 1792.

Fanny was intensely curious about the new arrivals. The “French noblesse” in question: Count Louis de Narbonne, briefly Minister for War; his friend and former chief of staff, General Alexandre d’Arblay; Francois de Jaucourt and his lover Madame de la Châtre; Mathieu de Montmorency and several other members of the French liberal aristocracy. All friends of Madame de Staël, they had fled from France in August 1793. They had hoped to give France a limited monarchy and a constitution more along English lines, but after the King’s attempted flight in June 1791, events had overtaken them. With Louis in prison and the proclamation of the first Republic in August 1792, the constitutionalists (as they were known) were widely blamed by the royalists for helping to unleash the French revolution.

Although she was six months pregnant with Narbonne’s second son that August, Madame de Staël had helped her lover and several other friends to escape from Paris to England thanks to her husband’s diplomatic status (he was Sweden’s ambassador to the French King) and her own influence and money. She herself had narrowly escaped death during the bloody September massacres, only just managing to escape from Paris to take refuge at her father’s house at Coppet in Switzerland. While Narbonne and his friends had at first been welcomed by the patrician Whigs, the Tory government regarded all the constitutionalists as dangerous subversives and blamed them for recent events in France. As the situation in France worsened, and war between France and

England seemed inevitable, the position of constitutionalists in London became untenable. A move to Juniper Hall, near Dorking in Surrey, which was paid for by money sent to Narbonne by Madame de Staël, was to be their refuge for several months. Madame de Staël’s traveled to England some weeks after the birth of her son; her arrival at the end of January 1793 coincided with the news that Louis XVI had just been guillotined.

Born in Paris in April 1766, the daughter of Jacques Necker, a Swiss Protestant who was to become Louis XVI’s powerful and reforming Minister of Finance, Germaine de Staël was brought up from her earliest years in her mother’s salon among the cream of the French Enlightenment, where her extraordinary intellect and talent for conversation soon became apparent. Her father’s right hand and the wife of Sweden’s ambassador, already acclaimed for her work on Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the young Madame de Staël held a salon that soon became the most influential and interesting in Paris, as well as the headquarters of the young liberal aristocracy.

Madame de Staël’s arrival at Juniper Hall helped to lift the atmosphere of gloom in the little French colony. Talleyrand, then in London, became a constant visitor. Among the leading local families, the Locks of nearby Norbury Park, who were friends of Fanny Burney, were among the few who welcomed their new neighbors. Unable to contain her curiosity, Fanny had come to visit them and soon met Madame de Staël, who was herself very keen to meet a writer she much admired. – “Madame de Staël, daughter of M. Necker, is now at the head of the colony of French noblesse . . .” Fanny wrote to her father, “She is one of the first women I have ever met with for abilities and extraordinary intellect.” In spite of initially disapproving of the progressive politics of the French visitors, Fanny declared that they had now become “bosom friends.” Although in many ways each other’s polar opposites, the two women instantly took to each other. Before long they were engaged in teaching each other their respective languages.

Fanny Burney had only recently left the service of the Queen, which had all but

worn her out. Five years of devoted service had earned her a pension of £100 a year, which gave her a measure of financial independence. After years of stultifying boredom at court, and the modest propriety of life at home with a disagreeable stepmother, the forty-year-old spinster was utterly bewitched by her new French friends, particularly by Madame de Staël’s warmth and brilliance and increasingly, by the quieter charms of M. d’Arblay, with whom Fanny was falling in love. Letters to her father were full of praise for them all.

Fanny’s letters filled her father with alarm. Madame de Staël’s reputation, her moral laxness and relationship with Narbonne had reached Dr. Burney’s ears; indeed one of his old friends had written to him begging him to ensure that Fanny should have nothing to do with that “adulterous demoniac.” Fanny would have to be very careful, since her pension depended on the extremely straight-laced Queen. When Fanny announced that she intended to spend a week at Juniper Hall, Doctor Burney cautioned his daughter on no account to do so and to have as little to do with Madame de Staël as possible. Although Fanny defended her friends with spirit and was too unworldly to see anything but friendship in Madame de Staël’s relationship with Narbonne, she was nevertheless cautious and prudish enough not to take the risk. Before long and with a heavy heart, Fanny had returned home to London, while d’Arblay, who was engaged in writing out Madame de Staël’s work, *De l’influence des passions sur le bonheur des individus et des nations*, remained at Juniper Hall.

Undeterred, Madame de Staël, who was well aware of Fanny’s dilemma and also of the growing love between her and d’Arblay, decided to go up to London to see her. On receiving Madame de Staël’s letter announcing her arrival, Fanny fled to her sister Charlotte’s house. Madame de Staël decided that it was a perfect opportunity to meet the family, after which she drove to Fanny’s sister’s house, where “she was so charming, so open, so delightful,” that “while she was with me I forgot all the mischiefs that might follow,” wrote the exhausted Fanny that evening, to her sister Susanna. In spite of Madame de Staël’s

appeal and d'Arblay's assurances that he would have been happy to introduce Madame de Staël to his mother and his sister, Fanny was determined not to go down to Surrey while Madame de Staël was there. Madame de Staël's formidable mind, her connections with the constitutionalists, her liberal views, were bad enough without her racy personal life and her total disregard for the conventions. Madame de Staël was hurt and quite unable to understand how a grown woman of independent means could be so much in awe of her father. Fanny's excuse that she was unable to come because her father needed her, provoked Madame de Staël to ask Susanna Phillips: "But is a woman under guardianship all her life in your country? It appears to me that your sister is like a girl of fourteen." Fanny however, had decided by then to marry the penniless d'Arblay and was determined to do nothing which might forfeit her pension from the Queen, which, apart from anything she might make from her writing, was all they would have to live on.

When in May, Madame de Staël left England for Coppet where Narbonne and the others were to join her, she begged Susanna to reassure Fanny of her friendship – "Please tell Miss Burney that I do not hold anything against her – that I leave this country sincerely attached to her and bearing her no ill will." Fanny too, was upset at the curtailing of their friendship, admitting to her friend Mrs. Lock that she wished the world had minded its own affairs and that she was "vexed, very much vexed by the whole business." Later that summer Madame de Staël sent Susanna Phillips a brief essay, "On Norbury Park" in which she expressed her love and gratitude to England and to her English friends:

"Sweet image of Norbury, come and remind me that a pure and vivid happiness can exist on this earth . . . In that retreat I found for a while, shelter from the crimes

of France, and from the prejudice which the horror they must cause inspire in everyone . . . ; these sentiments, so sweet and so necessary after the torments of three years of revolution, unite in my memory with the worthy friends and the delightful retreat where I experienced them. I thank them for four months of happiness, salvaged from the shipwreck of life. I thank them for having loved me."

Madame de Staël and Fanny Burney were not to meet again. News of the d'Arblays marriage that summer delighted Madame de Staël who wrote at once to congratulate her – "Now that you are in some way a part of my family, I hope that if I come back to England I will be able to see you as much as I like, that is all the time."

In the meantime, while the Terror raged in France, Madame de Staël was engaged on an extraordinary mission of saving as many of her friends still trapped in Paris as she could. "With difficulties almost incredible, Madame de Staël has contrived a second time to save the lives of M. de Jaucourt and M. de Montmorenci, who are just arrived in Switzerland," Fanny, now Mme d'Arblay wrote to her father Dr. Burney in October 1793.

In spite of Madame de Staël's pleas and threats, Narbonne remained in England until the summer of 1794. He arrived too late to save his relationship with her – she was now engaged on a new love affair with Count Ribbing – but, as always, she provided shelter and money. Later that year, she was to meet the most important of the men in her life – Benjamin Constant.

The d'Arblays were to have no contact with Madame de Staël for most of the following turbulent decade, during which time Madame de Staël's growing literary and political influence made her an enemy first of the Convention, then of the Directory, and finally of Napoleon Bonaparte, then First Consul. In the spring of 1802, following the Treaty of Amiens (which put an end temporarily to war

between France and England), Paris was flooded with English visitors, among them the d'Arblays. Madame de Staël sent off a note at once to Fanny: "I hope you will let me know when you are sufficiently rested from the fatigue of your journey, so that I might have the honour of seeing you without importuning you," she wrote. Madame de Staël's salon was the most influential in Paris but by then her relations with the First Consul were beyond repair. Fanny wrote an icy note in the third person putting her off. Although she was too honest not to admit in her diary that Madame de Staël "had returned good for evil to many friends that would do any character credit," to their discredit, both d'Arblays lacked the courage to see her. Perhaps they were afraid of offending the First Consul, or perhaps they had already read Madame de Staël's letters to Narbonne, with their clear evidence of their relationship, which Narbonne had given to his friend d'Arblay for safekeeping when he left England. Many years later, these letters turned up among a collection of Mme d'Arblay's papers. On the folder containing them, Fanny had written: "Burning letters for burning – a fine moral lesson too." Fortunately, she did not take this extreme measure.

Maria Fairweather was born in Iran of a Greek father and a Russian mother. She was educated in England. Married to a British diplomat at the age of 19, she traveled around the world with her husband and two daughters. After working for twenty years as a conference interpreter, she went back to University where she read Russian and History in which she took a first. She lives with her husband in London and Wiltshire. Mme de Staël is her second biography. The first was The Pilgrim Princess – a life of Zinaida Volkonsky.

Tour of Plymouth

The Reynolds Group invites members of the Burney Society to join them on a tour of Plymouth during the second weekend of September 2006. They plan to visit Mount Edgcumbe and Saltram where Frances Burney stayed in June 1789, as a member of the Royal household. Her apartments, with a "sweet parlour" and "most beautiful view," were on the ground floor. While there, she visited the Naval Dockyard and was also shown around Mount Edgcumbe with its lovely grounds, but did not accompany the royals to the Edgcumbe estate at Cotehele. Details of Burney's stay at Saltram and of the Reynolds Group's tour to Plymouth in 2005 are written up in *Reynolds Newsletter 12*. For information on the tour or for a copy of the newsletter, please contact richard.aylmer@appleinter.net.

MARIA FAIRWEATHER at “ARTS ALIVE,” JUNIPER HALL

By Maurice Homewood

The District Council of Mole Valley, which includes Dorking and Leatherhead in the County of Surrey, has been running an annual arts festival – “Arts Alive” – for the last nine years. As one of that authority’s Councillors (and a member of the Burney Society) I have been able to take a small part in its organisation, with a particular interest in bringing “Burney events” to the Templeton Room of Juniper Hall. In previous years we have welcomed Claire Harman and Hester Davenport, both prominent biographers of Miss Burney, to the house where General d’Arblay, the Count of Narbonne, Talleyrand, Fanny Burney and Germaine de Staël would probably have encountered each other between 1793 and 1794.

I had been on the look out for a new biographer of Madame de Staël ever since reading Christopher Herold’s *Mistress to an Age* many years ago (it was published in 1958). It had struck me that the meeting, probably in the Templeton Room, between this formidable European intellect and the diffident author of *Evelina*, would have been an occasion that all of us who read the Burney Newsletters would have given much to have witnessed. And no sooner did I see the review of Maria Fairweather’s new book – *Madame de Staël* – than I pounced upon the possibility of inviting her to speak. With the help of our Arts Officer, Charlotte Gardiner, emails flew, publishers were contacted, arrangements made and a date set for 30th October. Meanwhile, I read the book: a gold mine of information on a writer who does not seem to receive in England the popular interest that is her due. Perhaps this is because she belongs to mainstream European culture? Or because her work is not easily found in translation? Whatever the reason, she seems much overlooked – which is a pity, since Maria Fairweather presents her as having (in my own words) the verbal attack of Germaine Greer, the writing skills of Simone de Beauvoir, brilliant black eyes and a magnetic personality. And she knew everybody!

A detail missing on the cover of *Madame de Staël* is a brief biography of the book’s author, and I hope the publishers will provide this on future editions. Since I was to introduce Maria, I was able to corner her before the talk. Born in Greece, she became the wife of a member of the Diplomatic Corps – at one time the British Ambassador to Rome – and traveled widely in Europe. This gave her, when she came to research the book, the necessary background in languages, places and contacts. (Had I known her Greek background, I would not have dared to try to explain to her the enigmatic plaster relief of Demeter at Eleusis on the wall of the Templeton Room.)

Then it was time for Maria to address her packed audience. A “packed audience” in the Templeton Room is about 70 people, all that the room is capable of holding if a table is also to be found for the speaker. The story of Germaine de Staël took us, at a headlong pace, from Switzerland through France, England, Germany, Italy and Austria. Maria led us nimbly through her parentage – her Calvinist mother, who had proposals of marriage from Edward Gibbon before marrying the illustrious Swiss banker Jacques Necker – and so to Germaine’s high-pressure education and her appearances at her mother’s *salon* at a very early age – “Next to Madame Necker’s chair there was a small wooden footstool

where her daughter always sat, obliged to keep her back straight. No sooner had she taken her place than five or six gentlemen came up to her and addressed her with the greatest interest.”

Germaine’s wit and conversation were well honed by this precocious launch into intellectual society, and she soon had a wide circle of admirers. When she was 17, her mother was angling for a very promising match for her, with one William Pitt (“Pitt the Younger”) who happened to be traveling in France with his friend William Wilberforce. Germaine angrily refused the prospect (and so did Pitt in the apocryphal remark that he was already “wedded to England”). At length, her father negotiated a marriage with the elegant Baron Eric Magnus de Staël Holstein – Swedish, a penniless gambler, charming and accomplished and well-loved at the French court. From this point Madame de Staël was launched upon the world, and Maria’s audience was treated to an account of her wider adventures.

And now, people from that epic age of Napoleonic Wars began to walk and talk before us, through the agency of Maria Fairweather’s lively commentary. Germaine de Staël quarreled with, and was exiled by, Napoleon. She wrote, she talked – oh how she talked – of liberty, women’s place in society, constitutional monarchy – throughout Europe. She met and impressed many – but few more so than the 40-year-old English authoress whom she encountered in the very room in which we were sitting. “She is one of the first women I ever met for abilities and extraordinary intellect,” wrote Fanny Burney to her father. And, of course, Miss Burney was also falling in love with General d’Arblay at this time – “You could not keep your heart from him if you saw him for only half an hour.” But, alas, Doctor Burney was not to be seduced by such phrases. He had been told that his daughter was fraternising with French citizens of doubtful moral character and ordered her to have no more to do with them. It is regrettable that the dutiful Miss Burney abruptly ended the friendship with Germaine de Staël and even extended this coolness to refusing an invitation to meet her when eventually, as Madame d’Arblay, she followed her husband to France. But this is in the past, where things were done differently – for different reasons and with a different logic.

A stream of questions followed the talk, among which was “Did the meeting with Madame de Staël have any long term influence on Miss Burney?” Maria pondered aloud whether the rebarbative Mrs. Arlbery in *Camilla* might owe something to the outspoken Germaine. Those reading this report might also like to consider the same question. But first – read the book! (See review on p. 16).

Maria Fairweather, *Madame de Staël*. London: Constable & Robinson, 2005. 522 pp. £9.99. ISBN 10 1-84529-228-8.

Maurice Homewood is a Councillor on the District Council of Mole Valley, which includes Dorking and Leatherhead in Surrey. He has been instrumental in encouraging regular Burney events as part of the annual Arts Alive festival in the Valley.

Young Vic Theatre Reads *The Witlings*

By Lorna Clark

The Young Vic Theatre recently presented a dramatised reading of Frances Burney's *The Witlings* as part of its Young Geniuses season. Each year, this well established fringe company (whose own theatre is currently being rebuilt) features plays and works by writers from any age and place at the beginning of their careers. *The Witlings* made it on to their short-list but not to final production. With other plays on the shortlist (which included Aristophanes and Brecht), *The Witlings* was chosen for a dramatised reading over one weekend in early December 2005.

The director, Michael Buffong, confesses that he found Burney's first attempt at play-writing a bit "over-written," a common flaw with talented young writers. He had to cut some redundant speeches, such as when one character describes another character just before s/he enters. He also reduced the role of Jack, because "he seemed one-dimensional and was more like a device to deliver the plot."

Nevertheless, he found working with Burney's text to be an engaging and enjoyable experience. "The comedy still works today because the themes are still

very relevant, and the idea of people saying one thing while thinking something else (as in the asides) is a human trait we all understand."

The reading was attended by Burney Society vice-president Kate Chisholm, who found it "really exciting" and noted that the actors played their parts "with such relish." She also appreciated that the production brought out "the dark side of the comedy."

Actress Karin Fernald accompanied her, and sent the following appraisal below.

Review of *The Witlings* at Young Vic on 10 December 2005

By Karin Fernald

Partly out of a sense of duty and at the end of a long day, Kate Chisholm and I attended a staged reading of the above, in the Young Vic rehearsal studios at the Oval, Kennington, south London. We emerged at the end stimulated and delighted. The young director, Michael Buffong (knowing nothing of Burney's life or of the strange history of her play) had assembled a fine cast, who read and moved the piece with great energy and emotional truth. Their diction too, for the most part, was up to the demands made, something not to be taken for granted. Our attention was held in particular by Shelley King's commanding Lady Smatter: feline, foul-tempered and sexy. Some touches would have amazed the author, such as Lady S. placing her ward Beaufort's hand on her own bosom, while trying to put him off the newly-impooverished Cecilia – this was understated though, and did not seem out of place to a modern audience. This play, tough enough to stand centuries of neglect, has the resilience to accept different interpretations.

Cecilia herself, played by Alex Moen, was sympathetically forthright, losing her temper to the point of rudeness with the nosy Mrs. Voluble (Lucy Briers, biliously razor-sharp). Codger (Jay

Simpson) though young, was well characterised, with simplicity and confidence. The passages between him and his helter-skelter son Jack – a superb creation of Miss Burney's – were a bit underdone, perhaps, because Mo Sesay (as Jack) rushed his speech, but he relaxed and slowed down as the evening went on. Mrs. Sapient was played by veteran actress Sheila Reid; fluttery, wide-eyed and ecstatic over each ponderous cliché she manages to come out with. We much enjoyed Leo Wringer's precise and admirably focused Censor, beautifully spoken.

As Dabler, Deke Walmsley a little bit rushed through the scene in which he is trying to write his appalling poem beginning, "The pensive maid, with saddest sorrow sad," etc. There is meat in this character, who follows his muse with such energy and such hopeless inadequacy. We could have done with a more intense reading from the young actor. But for a staged reading with little rehearsal this was no small achievement. Soon, surely, this play, newly published in Michael Caines's volume of 18th-century plays by women (Toby Press), will become as widely-known as it deserves – and perhaps, one fine day, receive a full professional production.

Burney Journal Seeks Refereed Status

By Paula Stepankowsky

The Burney Journal, the annual journal of The Burney Society, is entering its ninth year, and with it come changes that will lead to refereed status for the publication, something that has been a long-time goal of the society.

As part of the transition, Victoria Kortés-Papp is stepping down as editor. The Society thanks Victoria for all her work over the past eight years.

Because of the expanded role envisioned for the *Journal* under its coming new status, it will be edited in the future by an editorial team, assisted by a referee

panel, rather than one editor.

The editorial team includes: Dr. Stewart Cooke, vice president of the society and vice president for Canada, who has been co-editing the *Journal* for the past year; Dr. Marilyn Francus, the co-coordinator of the Los Angeles conference in 2004 and the Tucson conference in 2006; and Dr. Alex Pitofsky, North American Treasurer of the Burney Society.

Dr. Cooke is on the faculty at Dawson College and is also affiliated with the Burney Centre at McGill University in Montreal. Dr. Francus is on the faculty at West Virginia University and Dr. Pitofsky

at Appalachian State University.

The *Journal* will continue to be published at McGill University with the generous support of Dr. Peter Sabor, director of the Burney Centre.

An international team of referees is being assembled by the editorial team representing the countries in which our members live, including the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia.

Members of the referee panel will be announced soon.

BOOK REVIEW

By Lorna Clark

Madame de Staël. By Maria Fairweather. London: Constable & Robinson, 2005. Pp 522. ISBN 10 1-84529-228-8. £9.99.

Despite the hostility of the academy, biography has always remained a popular genre, perhaps because it provides the pleasure of identification, gives an accessible route into the past, or satisfies a yearning for closure by shaping a life into a discernible pattern: whatever the reason, biographies continue to flourish on best-seller lists, and remain a secret pleasure of my own.

The life of someone like Madame de Staël, though, presents a formidable challenge, and should not be approached lightly by either author or reader. A woman of massive intellect, whose life coincided with a time of upheaval, whose intimates were caught in a web of intrigue, and whose career swept across Europe: how could all of this be condensed into one volume? Maria Fairweather, in her recent biography, *Madame de Staël*, has done an excellent job of meeting these challenges, and makes it all look easy. Drawing on a daunting array of sources, including the letters or memoirs of anyone who knew her (and everyone knew Mme de Staël), she spins the thread of her narrative, while yet remaining lucid and entertaining. While focusing on one remarkable individual and presenting events from her vantage-point, the book offers succinct overviews of the political situation at moments of crisis. It follows the French Revolution through progressive stages of early idealism to bloodshed and anarchy, and shows Napoleon as he rose to power, waged war, established an empire, and was overthrown. Banished by Napoleon as a pernicious meddler, a woman who insisted on interfering in politics (a realm outside the feminine domain), Mme de Staël helped forge the alliance that brought him down – and then showed characteristic generosity to a defeated adversary. Where de Staël's published works contribute to the debate, these, too, are critiqued by Fairweather with critical acumen.

The biography includes a detailed chronology, copious illustrations and an

extensive bibliography. It is divided into five sections corresponding to stages of her life. She was born Anne Louise Germaine Necker in Paris in 1766, the much-fêted only child of Jacques Necker, future Minister of Finance under Louis XVI and Suzanne Curchod, an intelligent woman who once turned the head of Edward Gibbon. The young Germaine showed unusual precocity and received an unorthodox education; her marriage of convenience to a Swedish diplomat in 1786 did not impede several passionate affairs throughout her life. Blest with intellectual rather than physical attractions, her presence was magnetic and she drew to her salon the greatest thinkers of the age. In the early stages of the Revolution, she espoused the cause of the reformers; when events began to spin out of control, she courageously saved the lives of several people, using her money, diplomatic immunity, and creative ingenuity to aid their escape over the border. She finally had to flee herself and sought shelter in her parents' château at Coppet, Switzerland.

It was from here that she traveled to England in January 1793 to join her lover, Louis de Narbonne, who had found refuge in the Surrey countryside. It was at Juniper Hall that her path crossed that of Frances Burney, who was on a visit to her sister Susan, attracted by the group of French émigrés, including her future husband Alexandre d'Arblay. I have always imagined this conjunction from the viewpoint of Burney, who was initially dazzled by the charisma and flattered by the attentions of such a celebrity, but who drew back from intimacy when faced with the disapproval of her father, dismayed by Mme de Staël's notoriety. Later, when the d'Arblays were living in Paris (and without the excuse of Charles Burney's interference), they again failed to return her friendly overtures, and (in the words of Maria Fairweather) "lacked the courage to see their old friend" (276).

From the standpoint of a Burney biography, this has always seemed a great pity, a lost opportunity, most of all for the reader, who would have liked to benefit from her vivid impressions of her famous contemporary. It also seemed a shame that Burney herself had lost the chance to expand her own horizons by contact with a woman of such depth and daring.

However, when looked at from the other side, the incident dwindles into insignificance.

The proposed visit at Juniper Hall was of a week's duration, Mme de Staël's entire stay there just a few months. In a life filled with momentous and cataclysmic events, this was but a minor blip; for the woman who moved in such a brilliant society, matching her wits with men of remarkable intellect, the disappointment must have been a transitory one (and any benefit short-lived). The avoidance in Paris also takes on a new dimension; if the d'Arblays were reluctant to be seen associating with her, they were certainly not the only ones. Mme de Staël's continual political intriguing was resented by Napoleon, so much so that soon after their arrival in Paris, she was banished from the city. For a couple who wished to remain quiet and unobtrusive, especially after the renewal of hostilities with England, keeping company with such a controversial figure as Mme de Staël would not have been wise.

I do not agree, therefore, with Maria Fairweather's assessment that their decision to withdraw politely was "to both the d'Arblays' eternal discredit" (276). I also remain somewhat unconvinced by her portrayal of Mme de Staël as an attentive and loving mother. While the adult children who survived her (those who made it that far) undoubtedly remembered her fondly, the long periods of time (months or even years) when she abandoned them completely to the care of servants or grandparents, even babies a few weeks old (at a time when infant mortality rates were high), suggests an unconventional life freed from the usual trammels by wealth and privilege. To present her otherwise, it seems to me, is not entirely consistent with the facts.

These quibbles aside, the biography is both informative and enjoyable. The climax comes when de Staël is traveling around Europe helping to build a coalition to bring down the tyrant-emperor. The sections covering her visits to Russia and Sweden are particularly well done. Drawing together an immense amount of research, the author consolidates the vast sweep of history to manageable size, coalesced down to the essence, to the life of one individual, living on the cusp of her age. Maria Fairweather's *Madame de Staël* gives a fascinating glimpse into a momentous era and paints a sympathetic portrait of an extraordinary woman who lived her life to the full with courage and conviction.

BOOK REVIEW

Literary Surrey. By Jacqueline Banerjee.
Headley Down, Hants: John Owen Smith,
2005. Pp. 200. ISBN 1-873855-50-8.
£9.95.

I have long thought that one thing that Frances Burney lacks is a recognizable place to call her own, one which could serve as a mecca for pilgrims and a magnet for tourists; we need some sort of “Burney Centre” or tour or even “walking route” brochure. We need a birthplace museum or a Burney House, some place associated with her writing and furnished tastefully to the period. Other writers have these: there is Hardy Country, Brontë Country, Dickens’ London, the Lake District (for the Romantic poets), and beautiful Bath, with Jane Austen centres at every turn. But Burney has nowhere, other than the odd street name or blue plaque, to recall her history. Perhaps she was too mobile, too urbanised; the story of her life sprawls across two countries and two continents, with so many places in-between.

That is why I was delighted to come across Jacqueline Banerjee’s *Literary Surrey*, in which Burney is given a creditable place, and has a chapter all to herself. Banerjee knows her Surrey and is fascinated with the literary associations lurking beneath the English countryside, which she evokes vividly for the reader. For places which today, to the unschooled eye, might look like suburban sprawl, she is able to uncover the rich heritage underneath. Plentifully illustrated with recent photographs, as well as reproductions of old paintings and engravings, this book convinces the reader of the beauty of the Surrey countryside and the mesmerising effect it had on those sensitive souls who experienced it in an earlier, more bucolic era.

The book is divided into ten chapters, six of which revolve around a single writer of note linked to the county: John Evelyn, Fanny Burney, Matthew Arnold, George Meredith, H.G. Wells and E.M. Forster. (The coverage seems skewed towards

Victorian and early modern writers which, one may guess, are Banerjee’s specialty.) There are earlier figures included, however, such as William Cobbett, whose *Rural Rides* qualifies him as a Country Writer.

An interesting section traces literary associations with Box Hill and the River Mole. It fleshes out the story of Jane Austen’s visits to the county which formed the basis of the famous fictional excursion in *Emma*. A lesser-known connection is John Keats, who stayed for a couple of weeks at a hotel near Box Hill in November 1817, where he completed the poem, *Endymion*, whose ending may have been inspired by the moonlit serenity of the scenery.

The last chapter commemorates “Surrey Writers in Times of War” and includes an outline which might well have come earlier on, tracing the history of the county briefly from Roman times. Another is devoted to children’s authors, whose interest is suggested by the stature of those represented: no less a writer than Lewis Carroll (Charles Dodgson) established a family home here, The Chestnuts; it was during his Guildford years that he met young Alice Liddell, the inspiration for *Through the Looking Glass*. The other famous inhabitant was the beloved children’s writer, Enid Blyton, whose books have sold millions of copies around the world. She lived at Surbiton from 1920 to 1924 and launched her literary career from there.

This last connection suggests one feature of the book; steeped in enthusiasm, it casts its net so widely (including any writer who passed through or stayed even briefly in the county), that it begins to blur in the reader’s mind the significance of what a “Surrey writer” could mean. Indeed, in a country so rich in historical and literary associations as England, yet so contained geographically that people could move around easily, it is difficult to distinguish those with a deep attachment to a particular place that inspired or influenced their writing directly. Perhaps the peripatetic Burney, with her multiple associations, is not so different after all.

The chapter on Burney works well in

this regard, in that her sojourns in Surrey do seem to represent defining periods in her life. The earliest visits she paid were to Chesington Hall, the rambling boarding-house inhabited by her beloved Daddy Crisp (now unfortunately pulled down), where Burney spent several delightful vacations. Dubbed “Liberty Hall,” it offered her the privacy and freedom she needed to write; much of *Evelina* was composed there, and it sustained her through the final push to finish *Cecilia*.

Secondly, Streatham Park, the Surrey home of the Thrales, was an important setting in Burney’s life between 1778 and 1781; befriended by Mrs. Thrale, she was fêted by her guests, and introduced to literary people (Mrs. Montagu, Arthur Murphy, Samuel Johnson) who helped further her literary career. Her suppressed play, *The Witlings*, was penned there, the first of several brilliant comedies written by Burney which might well have succeeded had they been staged.

Finally, Surrey was home to Norbury Park as well as Juniper Hall. On visits to her sister Susan, who rented a cottage at Mickleham (between 1784 and 1795), Frances met her dear friend Frederica Lock and her future husband, Alexandre d’Arbly. Norbury, with its cultivated family life set in beautiful countryside, became her ideal of domesticity, and Juniper Hall (where the Burney Society now gathers) with its seductive French colony was where she fell deeply in love. Her strong attachment to the place shows in her choice to settle nearby, having found everything there she wanted. Her marriage took place in Mickleham Church, with its well-preserved Norman tower, a stone’s throw from Susan’s cottage. The honeymoon was spent at nearby Phoenix Farm (which can still be glimpsed behind a tall hedge); the d’Arblys then moved to a cottage in the village of Great Bookham, three miles away. Dubbed the Hermitage by Frances, their cottage still

See Literary Surrey on p. 18

Literary Surrey

Continued from p. 17

stands, just across from St. Nicholas Church; it was here that she described her husband working in the garden while she wrote, pruning the hedge “in true military style, with his sabre” (46) and serenading her with a mandoline that lacked two strings. It was here that her only child was born in 1794, and her literary child, *Camilla*, produced to support him. The journals and letters written during these years are suffused with contentment and reflect the peacefulness of the rural setting.

From the cottage, the d’Arblays planned and built their own home on Surrey soil, *Camilla Cottage*, in a field in a “remarkably beautiful” location, owned by Mr. Lock. They moved there in 1797. Within a few years, however, M. d’Arblay returned to France and sent for his wife and son to join him; Frances had to pack up their belongings and leave, renting their home out to tenants. Caught up in revolution and war, the family would never live there again, and they lost possession in 1814 when the Lock

estate changed hands. The eight years’ idyll spent in Surrey remained, to the end of

Burney’s life, a symbol of the most perfect happiness she had known on earth.

Banerjee tells this story well, and includes at the end of the chapter scholarly footnotes, a list of Suggested Reading and Places to Visit, which includes a memorial to Samuel Crisp in St. Mary the Virgin Church, as well as all the locales mentioned above. Kew Palace and Queen’s Charlotte’s Cottage are also located in Surrey, although they are not likely to have had the same powerfully positive connotations for Burney.

The Places to Visit sections at the end of every chapter tantalise with suggestive layers of significance; they also contain useful information (directions, phone numbers and opening hours) that allows the reader to use this book as a guide on a tour around the county to places of literary significance.

Literary Surrey is an interesting book, attractively produced, and entertainingly written. The author, who has a PhD from King’s College, London, and was a Research Fellow at Cambridge, combines thorough research with a lively style and a light touch. It is well worth the read, if only because it accords to Burney (finally) her own special place.

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, Burney Centre, McGill University, 853 Sherbrooke Str. W., Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3A 2T6 or by e-mail to lclarklj@aol.com

Sarah Harriet Burney’s *Pride and Prejudice*

By Lorna Clark

A first edition of Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* owned by Sarah Harriet Burney, Frances’ half-sister, is on sale for £55,000 at Simon Finch Rare Books. Bound in contemporary green half morocco with gilt spines and marbled sides, it is signed by its owner in black ink on the title page of all three volumes.

Sarah Harriet Burney was an early enthusiast for the novels of Austen, which were lent to her by her publisher. Perhaps more surprisingly, Austen knew and appreciated the work of this lesser-known Burney, judging by the fact that she refers to reading Burney’s first novel, *Clarentine* (1796) three times.

Sarah Harriet’s copies of *Mansfield Park* and *Sense and Sensibility* are preserved in rare book libraries at Yale and New York University, respectively. In her letters, Burney writes of her amusement at reading *Emma* but reserves her highest praise for *Pride and Prejudice*, which she obtained soon after its publication and declared it “charming.” She admired its originality, well developed plot, “*piquant*” dialogues, and distinctly drawn characters, and claimed to have read it as many times “as bumper toasts are given – *three times three!*—”

More details on this item are available at www.simonfinch.com.

Hemlow Prize in Burney Studies

By Audrey Bilger

The Burney Society invites submissions for the Hemlow Prize in Burney Studies, named in honour 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 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 Professor of Literature, Claremont McKenna College, whose email address is Audrey.bilger@claremontmckenna.edu. Submissions must be received by June 1, 2006.

MEMBERSHIP DUES REMINDER

To join the Burney Society, or to renew your membership for the 2006-2007 dues year starting from 13 June 2005, please fill out the form below and return it with your cheque (payable to the Burney Society). Those who live in the US or Canada should send a cheque for \$30 to Alex Pitofsky, Secretary/Treasurer, 3621 9th St. Drive, N.E., Hickory NC 28601, USA. Those living in the UK, Europe or elsewhere should send a cheque for £9 to David and Janet Tregear, Secretaries/Treasurers UK, 36 Henty Gardens, Chichester, West Sussex, PO 19 3DL UK.

Tax-deductible donations, to help the fund-raising effort are also welcome. Thank you for your support.

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