

Burney Letter

Vol. 13 No. 1

The Burney Society

<http://dc37.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/burney/>

Spring 2007

ISSN 1703-9835

Burneys in Windsor 6-7 July 2007

By Hester Davenport



General view of Windsor Castle, showing the statue of Queen Victoria and the Round Tower in the distance.

While the emphasis will be on the novelist and journal-writer, the Burney Society conference in Windsor (on 6-7 July 2007) will also feature other members of the talented family. It should prove a memorable occasion, not least for its venue in the fifteenth-century Vicars' Hall in the precincts of the Castle. As the local representative of the British Burney Committee I greatly look forward to welcoming participants to my home town.

The conference is being staged to mark the early stages of the editing of the Court Journals, and Peter Sabor and his team of editors (Lorna Clark, Stewart Cooke, Nancy Johnson and Geoffrey Sill) will be joining forces to discuss the task ahead and progress so far. Other prestigious speakers include Patricia Crown on Fanny's artist-cousin Edward, Margaret Doody on her ideas of comedy and tragedy, Flora Fraser on Miss Burney and the Princesses, and Jane Roberts, the Royal Librarian, on George III and Queen Charlotte as collectors. I hope to present a paper about Windsor at the time of Fanny's court service, and there will be short talks from a number of lively young scholars.

See Burneys in Windsor on p. 3

'Frances Burney and 1814' In Tucson

By Paula Stepankowsky

Burney Society scholars and enthusiasts from throughout the U.S. and Canada gathered in Tucson, Ariz., on the last weekend in October to consider 1814, the year that saw the publication of Frances Burney's *The Wanderer*, Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, Maria Edgeworth's *Patronage* and Walter Scott's *Waverley*.

Margaret Anne Doody, University of Notre Dame, and John Wiltshire, Latrobe University in Australia, were the plenary speakers at the conference, which included a roundtable on teaching Burney, along with presentations by nine speakers on such topics as the limits of paternal authority

and Burney's approach to endings.

A highlight of the conference was a reading from Burney's comedy *A Busy Day* organized by Juliet McMaster and given by a group of volunteers from the society. (See the story nearby for a review of the reading.)

Dr. Peter Sabor, representing the Hemlow Prize committee, gave the 2006 prize for the winning essay to Heather Lusty, a student at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas. Heather's essay is on "Gambling In Burney" and will be published in the upcoming Burney Journal. The prize is given in memory of Dr. Joyce Hemlow, the founding editor of the Burney

Project, which is housed in the Burney Centre at McGill University in Montreal.

Dr. Doody spoke on both the literary and historical boundaries and invasions taking place in 1814 in her talk, entitled "Borders, Invasions, Contested Spaces and Margins in 1814: *Waverley*, *Patronage*, *Mansfield Park* and *The Wanderer*." While these novels are works of fiction, they were written – and are set – during times of great change, ranging from the rebellion of 1745 to the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, Dr. Doody said.

See Tucson Conference 2007 on p. 2

INSIDE: Windsor Conference, pp. 3-5

Bath Church Restoration, p. 3

Exhibition, Concert, pp. 6-7

Tucson meeting, pp. 1-2

Tucson Play, pp. 8-10

ASECS Report, p. 2

Vancouver meeting, p. 10

Hemlow Prize, p. 11

McGill Fellowship, p. 11

Report on Tucson 2007

Continued from p. 1

Dr. Wiltshire focused on the many ways Burney focused on the body, illness and disease in both her novels and in her letters in his talk, "Frances Burney as Pathographer." He paid particular attention to her remarkable account of her own mastectomy, which has become legendary in literary and medical annals.

Alex Pitofsky discussed ineffectual fathers in Burney's writings in his talk on "Mansfield Park, Burney, and the Limits of Paternal Authority," while Elaine Bander talked about the similarities between three novels and their discussion of the clash of cultures in her talk on "Male Ambitions and Female Difficulties: *The Wanderer*, *Patronage*, and *Mansfield Park*'"

Other speakers included: Laurel Czaikowski: Unsignified Women: [Lack of] A Place in Social Construction in *The Wanderer*; Emily C. Friedman: "Wanderer's End: Understanding Burney's Approach to Endings;" Brian Goldberg: "Anonymous Wanderers in 1814: Burney's *The Wanderer* and Southey's *Roderick, the Last of the Goths*;" Hilary Havens: "The Involuntarily Reacting Body and the Mind in *The Wanderer*;" Maggie Sloan: "The Difficulty of *The Wanderer*: Mentorship and Female Subject Formation;" and Jessika L. Thomas: "Gender and Class in Burney's *The Wanderer* and *Camilla*."

More details and papers from the Tucson conference will be included in the upcoming edition of *The Burney Journal*.

At the business meeting, President Paula Stepankowsky thanked the conference coordinators, Marilyn Francus, Catherine Parisian and Lucy Magruder, for all their hard work. She also gave an update on the activities of the society in the past year, which have been described in the *Burney Letter*.

The next conference the society will sponsor will be held at Windsor Castle on the weekend of July 6-7. See other articles in this issue about details of that conference.

The Burney Society will meet again in North America at a brunch meeting on the morning of Friday, Oct. 5, 2007, at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver in

Vancouver, B.C., with Prof. Betty Schellenberg of Simon Fraser University as speaker.

ASECS Report

By Marilyn Francus

The Annual ASECS meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, in March 2007 was alive with talk of Frances Burney. The Burney Society panel, "Burney and her Literary Heirs" was very well attended (about 25 people – which filled the room). Crystal Lake's paper, "Frances Burney and the Age of Ruin," analyzed the architectural sites in *The Wanderer*, in light of Burney's visits to Wilton House, Milton Abbey, and Stonehenge; she also viewed them as metaphor, as architecture reflects and reveals temporal corruption and ideological conflict. (How is it that a place like Wilton House, a preservation site for great productions of civilization, sustains such a tawdry past? How does one respond to such a site? How does Burney respond and use such sites?). Audrey Bilger's paper, "Female Difficulties Revisited: Burney and the Politics of Embarrassment in the Long Eighteenth Century," analyzed the psychology and sociology of embarrassment in the period, and specifically in Burney, challenging the notion of an autonomous self with the idea of the self as relational. (Audrey also raised questions about our culture's interest in embarrassment, and embarrassment as a part of modern entertainment, as a shared experience, and in some ways a bonding experience, as embarrassment signals a recognized humanity). Virginia Cope's paper, "Burney's Heroine's of Disinterest," centered on *Evelina* and *Cecilia*, arguing that there is a paradox of disinterest in these novels, in which one must have interest (often in the form of property) to be disinterested, and that disinterested behavior often "pays off" in terms of the high rate of interest (emotional, relational, economic) that one accrues as a result. We had a lively discussion after the presentations.

George Haggerty chaired a panel entitled "Men in Burney and her Contemporaries" which featured papers by Cynthia Richards ("A Man of War in Domestic Seas: Captain Mirvan and the Figure of the Returning Soldier"), Alex Pitofsky ("Monckton's Masquerade:

Desperation and Masculine Rivalry in *Cecilia*"), and Geoffrey Sill ("Men of (In)sensibility: Colonel Digby, Edgar Mandlebert, and Others"). This was a strong session too: Cynthia spoke of Capt. Mirvan's behavior in light of naval protocols of the period (and in light of James Burney); Alex discussed Monckton as hero in his own mind; Geoffrey discussed Burney's relationship with Digby, raised (and dashed) hopes, and the expectations of gender and sensibility.

Other Burney papers at the conference included Scott J. Juengel ("Host, Hostage, Hospitality: Burney's *The Wanderer* and Cosmopolitan Right" in an "Eighteenth-Century Exile" panel); Barbara Britton Wenner's "Sarah Harriet Burney: 'Queerness' Competes with her Sister" (on a "Smart Talk by Smart Women: the Pains and Pleasure of Conversation" panel); Kristie Niemeier ("The Duel as a Sign of Madness and an Unstable World in Frances Burney's *Cecilia*" in a session entitled "Giving and Receiving Satisfaction: Dueling in Eighteenth-Century Literature and History"); and Leanne Maunu's "Violence, the Nation, and Female Community in Frances Burney's *Evelina* and *The Wanderer*" on a "Theorizing Violence" panel. In fact, there were so many session that talked about Burney that it was difficult to attend them all.

Burney Letter

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

President: Paula L. Stepankowsky

Editor: Lorna J. Clark

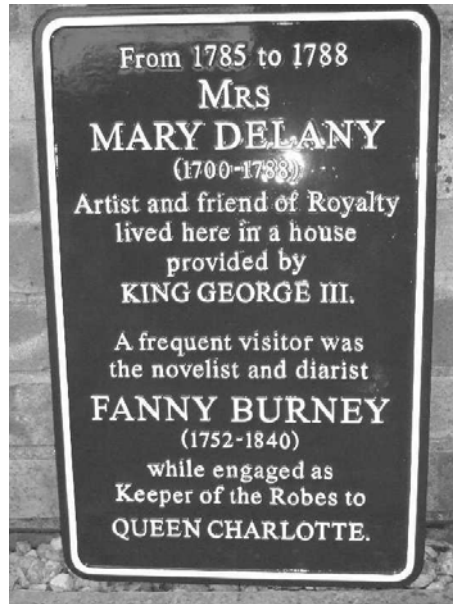
Address correspondence regarding newsletter articles to Dr. Lorna Clark, Burney Centre, McGill University, 853 Sherbrooke Str. W., Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3A 2T6 or to lclarklj@aol.com

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

Burneys in Windsor

Continued from p. 1

A full programme of other activities has been arranged. This year sees the publication by the CUP of *The Cambridge Companion to Frances Burney*, edited by Peter Sabor, and there will be a drinks reception to launch the volume. The ensemble Café Mozart will present a programme of trios – one by Dr. Charles Burney – and combine with Karin Fernald who will read from Fanny's journal letters. It is hoped that a sonata by Charles Rousseau Burney will be played. More musical enjoyment will be had in attending evensong in St George's Chapel with its renowned choir and we shall have a late-evening conducted tour of the Chapel, with special emphasis on the changes brought about by George III. A day-time tour of the top of the town is offered, and participants arriving on Thursday, 5 July, may be able to squeeze in both a visit to the State Apartments and one to Chertsey Museum for an exhibition of late eighteenth-century costume. To round everything off, a coach-trip to Burney localities in Surrey has been arranged for Sunday 8 July. As Jane Roberts wrote when she saw the programme, "What fun you will all have!"



Most of all I look forward to the unveiling of the handsome plaque, shiny blue with white lettering, to Mrs Delany and her good friend Miss Burney, which will be placed as near as possible to the site of Mrs Delany's house, long since demolished. It was paid for through generous donations and the sale of books at last year's Burney AGM, and now sits in my house awaiting its hour. It has been a disappointment that the Queen was not able to perform the unveiling, but Flora Fraser, chronicler of royalty, accepted our invitation immediately and with

enthusiasm.

We have both royal and civic approval for putting up the plaque, and it is hoped that the cost of fixing can again be covered through Burney members' generosity. It will be worth it: when the conference is over and delegates have gone home, Windsor will be left with a permanent memento of the occasion in our tribute to two remarkable women.

There are still a few seats left on the coach trip to Surrey on Sunday 8 July. We'll be visiting lots of places with Burney connections - the Temple Room in Juniper Hall, where she met Alexandre d'Arblay, Mickleham Church where they married, Great Bookham where they lived at first after marriage, Camilla Lacey where Camilla Cottage was built, and it is hoped to add one or two other surprise locations. Payment of £27 (excluding lunch at the excellent local pub) can be made at the time in sterling provided Hester gets names - e-mail her at davenport@cellmead.freeserve.co.uk

Anyone who has not yet booked a place at the conference, but would like to join us, should contact either David Tregear (e-mail tregear.david@virgin.net) or the society treasurer Alex Pitofsky (pitofskyah@appstate.edu) as soon as possible.

St Swithins Walcot Bath: The missing Burney plaques.

By Bill Fraser

Joyce Hemlow, Kate Chisholm and other inquisitive enthusiasts have tried to find them, squeezing behind the organ and scrutinising the west wall to try and work out where they were. We now know for certain that they are not in the place where they had been until the organ was rebuilt in the early fifties. Why they were taken down and what happened to them will remain a mystery.

St Swithins has been refurbished in style and is a welcoming and beautifully light environment. The organ is not being replaced. You will see from the photo at left that the absence of the plaques detracts from the completeness of the restoration and we hope you will feel that a project to replace both plaques (for Frances d'Arblay and for Sarah Harriet Burney) is worthy of our support as a Society. We are fortunate that Austin Dobson included a photo of Mme d'Arblay's plaque in Vol. Six of the *Diary and Letters* p. 417; sadly, as far as we are aware, there is no record of the Sarah Harriet plaque.

The suggestion is that we replace the Mme d'Arblay plaque as originally worded on a similar stone although without the decoration at the top and that we use similar stone for Sarah Harriet with an inscription, "In Memory of Sarah Harriet Burney,

Novelist, 1772-1844, Daughter of Dr Charles Burney and half-sister of Frances d'Arblay."



The cost of carrying out the replacement will be in the region of £1800.

I will be able to discuss this with you all at Windsor but we would hope to embark on the work later this year.

Programme for Burneys in Windsor

6-7 July 2007

Friday 6 July

Arrival at Vicars' Hall from 9 am (Coffee / tea will be served)

10:00 Welcome by Andrew Carter, Warden of St. George's House, and Kate Chisholm

10:15 Hester Davenport, *The Windsor Fanny Knew*

10:45 COFFEE and the Changing of the Guard

11:30 Flora Fraser - *Miss Burney, The Princesses and the Claustal Palace*

12:00 Jane Roberts - *George III and Queen Charlotte as Collectors and Patrons*

1:15 LUNCH

2:15 Plenary Speaker (To be announced)*

3:30 Unveiling of the Plaque in St. Albans Street by Flora Fraser, with a short address by Paula Stepankowsky, President of the Burney Society

4:00 TEA

5:15 Evensong in St George's Chapel

6:15 AGM, The Burney Society, UK, chaired by David and Janet Tregear in the Catherine Room of St. George's House

7:00 Pre-dinner drinks on The Lookout (Dean's Cloister if wet)

7:30 DINNER, in Vicars' Hall, with music by Cafe Mozart (with Andrew Carter) and *Notes from St Martin's Street* by Karin Fernald. Followed by tour of St George's Chapel, led by Andrew Carter

Saturday 7 July

7:30 Matins, followed by Holy Communion in St. George's Chapel, for those who would like to attend

8:00 BREAKFAST

9:30 Introduction by Bill Fraser

9:35 Peter Sabor, Director, on the Court Journals editing project at McGill University

10:05 *Court Editors panel* - chaired by Peter Sabor - with Lorna Clark, Stewart Cooke, Nancy Johnson and Geoffrey Sill

11:15 COFFEE

11:45 Panel, chaired by Marilyn Francus, with talks by Mascha Gemmeke, Tara Ghoshal Wallace and Cathy Parisian

12:45 LUNCH

2:00 *Young Scholars Panel*, chaired by Fiona Ritchie, with Audrey Bilger, Respondent

2:45 Patricia Crown - *'His innumerable as well as beautiful works': The Artist Edward Francis Burney*

3:30 TEA

4:00 Margaret Doody - *Harlequin Fool and Ghostly Father: Burney's Ideas of Comedy and Tragedy*

4:45 Closing words

5:15 Choice of either attending Evensong in St. George's Chapel, taking a tour of the top of the town with Hester Davenport, or resting

6:00 *Drinks reception* with Grand Auction of Burney Memorabilia and Book Sale. The reception, hosted by Linda Bree of Cambridge University Press, is to launch *The Cambridge Companion to Frances Burney*, published in July 2007. Donations of books, etc. for the sale will be very welcome, although this has to be strictly on a sale or return basis!

Optional Extras:

- *Early birds* - St. George's can obtain reductions on the cost of a ticket for entry to the Castle to £11 (normal price £14)
- *Thursday, 5 July* - A visit to Chertsey Museum to see a fine display of late eighteenth-century costumes, followed by dinner in Chertsey
- *Saturday 7 July* - Dinner on Saturday at 8 p.m. at a local restaurant
- *Sunday 8 July* - Tour to Mickleham and Great Bookham, by coach, including Mickleham Church, Juniper Hall, Camilla Lacey and Great Bookham Please see separate sheet for more details and booking form.

*With great regret the organisers announce the withdrawal of Professor Lars Troide from the programme for reasons of health; we wish him a speedy recovery.

Optional extras for the “Burneys in Windsor” Conference

Thursday 5th July

- For early birds who would like to visit the State Apartments of Windsor Castle, Queen Mary’s Dolls’ House and the Queen’s Gallery (with an exhibition of royal weddings to mark the Queen’s Diamond Wedding), St George’s House offer reductions on the standard ticket price of £14 to £11. Last admissions 4 pm. Please book tickets separately with St. George’s House on **01753 848720** by 1 June.
- 6 pm visit to Chertsey Museum to see a fine display of late eighteenth-century costumes. This will be FREE as we are hoping to use cars, picking up from outside the Castle (around 7 miles). There will be tea/coffee, a talk by the curator Grace Evans, and a chance to see the rest of this delightful small museum. Afterwards we shall have dinner in a nearby restaurant before returning to Windsor (a minimum of 10 participants, maximum 20).*

Saturday 7th July

- 3-course dinner on Saturday at 8pm at a local restaurant for **£20.50** including gratuities (the menu, with vegetarian options, will be circulated beforehand for you to make your choices).

Sunday 8th July

- Sunday tour to Mickleham and Great Bookham. Starting at 10.30 am we shall go by coach, first to Juniper Hall where we shall be served with coffee and biscuits and see the splendid Templeton Room where Fanny first met Alexandre d’Arblay. We shall then look round Mickleham church where they were married. Just opposite the church is The Running Horse pub where lunch will be taken (own choice, to be paid for on the day). Afterwards we’ll visit Camilla Lacey, where Camilla Cottage once stood. At Great Bookham we can see the Hermitage where they lived in the early years of their marriage, and the church where they worshipped. We hope to have a cup of tea there before returning to Windsor. (Additional venues may be added to the itinerary.) The cost is **£27** per person. A minimum of 17 participants are needed, maximum 25.



Name: _____ Please indicate your requirements and send to David Tregear with your registration form (or the form is already sent, bring for payment at the conference):

Day	Event	Number	Cost
7/07/07	Dinner at Windsor restaurant		
8/0707	Coach trip to Mickleham & Great Bookham*		
	Total included	-----	£

- We must confirm the coach asap, so please let Hester Davenport know on **01753 866198** or e-mail davenport@cellmead.freeserve.co.uk by **1 June** if you would like to come. Hester would also like to know numbers for the Chertsey trip, and whether you would like a place in a car or could offer seats (clear instructions will be given to drivers before setting off!)
- For all of these events, payment may be made at the time. An indication of interest now would help the organisers.

Press Release 28 March 2007 from the
HOLBURNE MUSEUM OF ART, BATH

Canaletto & the English Pleasure Garden

10 July to 30 September 2007

Two magnificent paintings by Canaletto form the centre of an exhibition at the Holburne Museum of Art in Bath which explores the phenomenon of the Georgian pleasure garden. Uniquely the Holburne stands at the gateway to Sydney Gardens, believed to be the only surviving eighteenth-century pleasure garden in this country. To celebrate its position and to offer a glimpse into eighteenth-century leisure the Holburne will show *Canaletto & the English Pleasure Garden* from 10 July to 30 September 2007.

Canaletto's two views of London pleasure gardens *View of the Grand Walk, Vauxhall Gardens* and *Interior of the Rotunda, Ranelagh* were among the most delightful and intriguing paintings in the recent *Canaletto in England* exhibition at the Dulwich Picture Gallery. They were saved for the nation last year when bought by Compton Verney and will now form the centre-piece of the Holburne's exhibition. This will examine the history of the pleasure garden and the role it played in the history of art, entertainment and leisure.

The Georgian pleasure garden afforded the perfect opportunity to both see and be seen. Promenading or social walking was eased by refreshments and music and later by meals, concerts and fireworks. The pleasure gardens in Bath, such as Sydney Gardens, followed in the footsteps of the large London gardens of Vauxhall and Ranelagh. Jane Austen first attended a Gala in Sydney Gardens in June 1799. She later moved to a house just opposite the Gardens and became a regular visitor.

The exhibition will combine paintings, drawings, decorative arts and prints as well as surviving

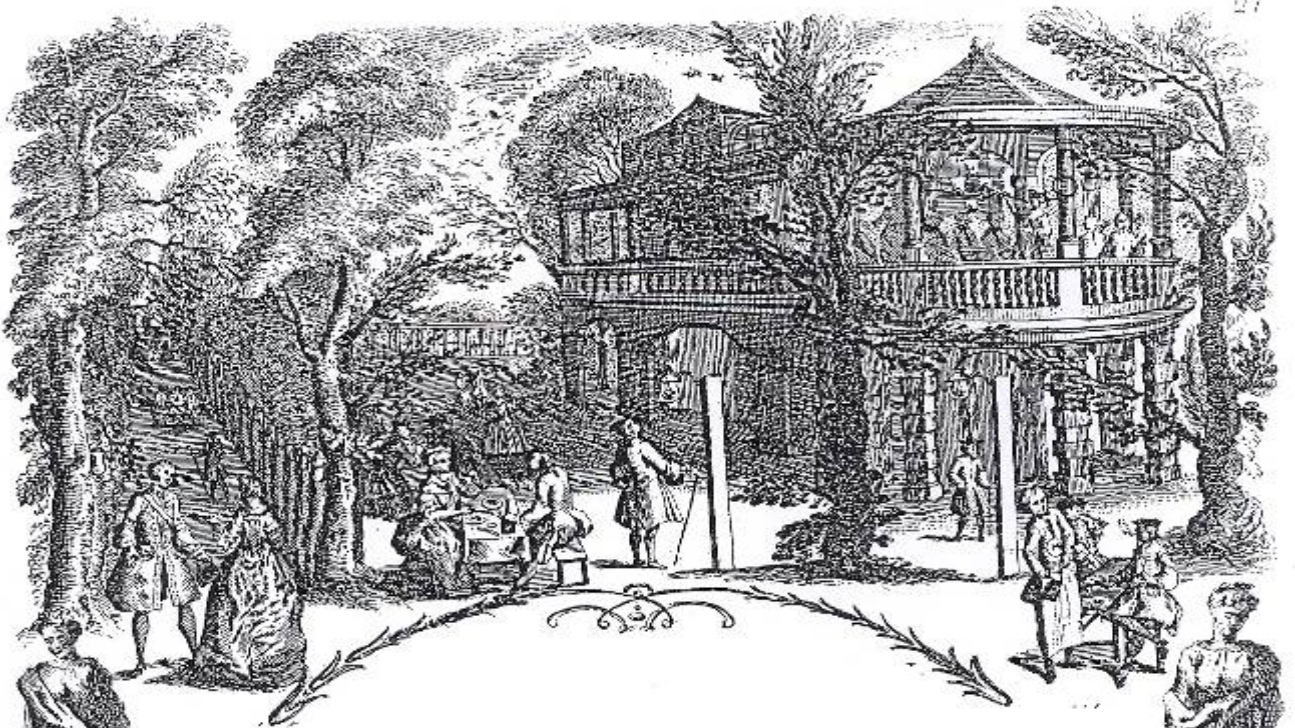
ephemera to give a flavour of the pleasure garden and the activities it housed. Exhibits will range from George Morland's charming and much imitated painting of a family in a London tea-garden (Tate) to Thomas Rowlandson's famous view of Vauxhall (V&A) and satirical studies of Sydney Gardens by Rowlandson's friend and travelling companion John Nixon (British Museum and Victoria Art Gallery, Bath). The associated paraphernalia associated with the pleasure gardens on display will range from shareholders' tokens, which granted free admission to a magnificent Chinese punch bowl and a Bristol Delftware dish, both decorated with views of Vauxhall based on views by Canaletto and others.

Amina Wright, Curator of Fine Art at the Holburne Museum notes: "We are thrilled to be able to borrow these two wonderful Canalettos, among the best known views of the Vauxhall and Ranelagh pleasure gardens in their 1750s heyday.

We will show the oil paintings alongside a series of other views of Vauxhall and Ranelagh, engravings based on drawings by Canaletto. Copies of these prints were circulated all over Europe, and inspired other cities, including Bath, to create public pleasure gardens of their own".

For further information or for high resolution jpegs please contact: Katie Jenkins T: 01225 820818 or E: k.jenkins@bath.ac.uk

The Holburne Museum of Art, Great Pulteney Street, Bath, BA2 4DB Open Tuesday to Saturday 10am to 5pm and Sunday 11am to 5pm Admission to the Museum £4.50 / concessions £3.50 / children and UK students FREE - Includes admission to the permanent collection www.bath.ac.uk/holburne



The Regency Duo

present

Gardens of Delight

Celebrating the exhibition

Canaletto & the English Pleasure Garden

a musical entertainment with readings
from Fanny Burney's *Evelina*

7pm Monday 9 July 2007

Ticket £10 (to include a glass of madeira on arrival)

Doors open 6.30pm

The Holburne Museum of Art,
Great Pulteney Street, Bath,
BA1 4DB T: 01225 820820

Shanghaied in Tucson:

Or ... How I gave up writing Science Fiction and learned to love Frances Burney

By Vaughan Stanger

It started with a suspicious package, as these things often do.

A few days before I was scheduled to fly to San Francisco to begin my vacation, I received a bulging envelope, addressed to me but also marked "Valet," I narrowed my gaze: not quite a "Brontë Brow" but close. Since when had I become someone's valet?

Feeling baffled, I tore open the envelope. Inside I found a photocopy of Act III of *A Busy Day* by Frances Burney. To be frank, I hadn't heard of either the author or the title. I sent a cryptic and, in truth, borderline apoplectic email back to the sender, one James Petts *esquire* of Redmond WA. Some of you may have had the dubious pleasure. You have my sympathies. ("La, ma!" indeed.)



L to R: Juliet McMaster as Mrs. Watts, Elaine Bander as Miss Watts, Peter Sabor as Mr. Watts, Conrad Harper as Mr. Tibbs and James Petts as Frank..

James, bless him, ignored my suggestion. When I finally fetched up in Tucson, he entreated me anew to play the valet. Feeling rather like an astronaut falling into a black hole, i.e. resigned to my fate, I grunted something that apparently sounded like "yes."

I'm a science fiction writer, you see. I do 21st century and up, and that's all. And as for acting! I still have traumatic memories of "Speech and Drama" at school, or "Spit and Dribble" as James renamed it. Born to tread the boards, I most certainly was not.

"I can't act!" I exclaimed to our stern-looking director during our brief rehearsal. But Juliet McMaster was not about to take "no" for an answer, least of all from some jumped-up, fly-by-night, Johnny-come-lately writer of s*****e fiction,

though she was far too polite to say so. Instead, she gave me a few much-needed acting tips. I shuffled off, terrified, but also impressed. Juliet clearly meant business. They *all* meant business, even James, who can't normally be serious if offered all the beer produced by Seattle's microbreweries. And that's a lot of beer...

Of course, none of the players had any intention of taking the event *that* seriously, as I discovered on the night of our one and only performance. The entire reading was a hoot from start to finish. Relieved to have delivered my dozen or so lines at the beginning of Act III without, as far as I could tell, having made a complete idiot of myself – although audience members reading this article may beg to differ – I retreated to the sidelines to revel in the performances of my fellow thespians. Plaudits all round but especially to Elaine Bander as Miss Watts. Rarely can "La, Ma" (or "...Pa") have been uttered so often with quite such conviction...or relish.

A text that had seemed, to me at least, rather dry on the printed page, made a whole lot more sense when acted out. Which was an interesting insight for a writer who only ever sees his work in print or pixels (if he's lucky).

So, have I forgiven James and the rest of the Burney Players for press-ganging me into making my theatrical debut? Well, not quite. Though I undoubtedly had a whole heap of fun, I feel that some form of revenge – Jacobean preferably – is required. Justified, even. And how does a writer enact his revenge? Ah, that would be through his characters.

Sometime in the future, be it near or far, this writer will find himself with an excess of plot and an absence of memorable characters.

"La, Ma', what shall I do?"

"Write what you know," my mentor replied. "Or rather, who."

Yes, the Burney Players will do just fine.

Vaughan Stanger, originally from Kettering, near Birmingham, England, is currently living in Brentwood, Essex. He has a B.Sc. in Physics with Astrophysics and Ph.D in X-ray Astronomy (1985), both from the University of Leicester in England. Since graduating, he has worked for the same company, under a number of names (the company, not Vaughan), currently known as BAE Systems, where he is a Senior Project Manager. Vaughan writes science fiction in his spare time, and has had several stories in journals in the UK and abroad. His stories have also been translated into foreign languages, and one has been selected for inclusion in a "Best Of" anthology for the Canadian journal Neo-opsis.

Shanghaied in Tucson, Part II:

By James Petts

A few weeks before the Burney meeting, I received an enquiry from Paula Stepankowsky, Burney Society President, asking if I would be willing to take a part in the reading of a piece by Burney; apparently Juliet had specifically requested a male English accent. Of course I readily agreed, and awaited the script which I was told Juliet would send to me. Paula was well aware that my oldest friend, Vaughan,¹ would be visiting from the UK, so when the envelope arrived from Juliet mentioning not one, but two male parts to read, I began to suspect that Vaughan was being “done up like a kipper” as a modern-day Cit might say. Since Paula and Vaughan together had done *me* up like a kipper in their public pronouncements at the time of Marian’s and my wedding, all I could do was shake my head and think “It couldn’t happen to a nicer guy.” Revenge is sweet.

As you will have seen from his contribution, Vaughan received the package out of the blue, and he too caught the fishy scent of kippers. Although he initially declined the glittering opportunity for which many would have killed and/or died, I had confidence that with a secret weapon he might be persuaded to take part when he was down in Tucson: after all, it gets cold in the desert and night, and the condo and the car were both in my name...

After the first read-through² (the night before the performance) Vaughan looked somewhat ashen, and I attributed this to the altitude and lingering jet-lag. I, however, had seen members of the Burney Society in action in Los Angeles a couple of years ago, and had the advantage over him, knowing full well that the reading would be no dry, sterile homage to the writer, but full of fun and laughter, and possibly – if we were lucky – positively farcical. Of course, I wasn’t going to mention that to Vaughan, as it might have diminished his apprehensiveness.

Neither Vaughan nor I actually attended the Burney dinner, but we *did* dine in the same restaurant (and what a wonderful restaurant: thanks to Lucy for the recommendation), and we could hear the laughter and animated discussion spilling over from the Burney party. This was encouraging for both of us. There is nothing worse for an accomplished player than performing before a lifeless crowd: even rotten fruit and getting the bird – in the original sense, *not* the modern – is better than that!

And on to the performance. After some discussion with the staff of the restaurant about providing necessary benches, we were all seated and ready to perform. As it turned out it was a hoot from beginning to end. Vaughan, as My Lord Jervis’ valet was horribly stuck up and snooty, even more so than any gentry would be (which, of course, was what was desired in a valet in those days: why sneer oneself, if one could pay somebody to do it for one?). I initially thought he was partially slipping out of character, and that he might have been helped by some of the disdain that any true-born Englishman naturally feels for a

bunch of temporarily rebellious colonials, but that was unworthy of me: he was merely playing his part to perfection.

And it went on: Peter and Conrad were magnificently matched, and had me in stitches, and the rest of the Wattses were likewise outrageously funny. Margaret as Miss Percival could have given anyone a run for their money. Of course, everybody played his or her part wonderfully, and given the audience reaction, I think that Juliet is to be commended for producing such an uproariously amusing piece.



Juliet McMaster as Mrs. Watts.

For my part, playing Frank – the “perfect coxcomb” – was hugely enjoyable, since it is a part I naturally play so well. If I had had any regret about the whole piece it would be that I had no moustache to twirl.

You know, I might even have said “Curses! Foiled again!” Maybe next time.

James Petts, originally from Rochester, Kent, is currently living in Redmond, Washington and is married to Marian LaBeck, Paula’s sister. He has a B.Sc. in Chemistry, and a PhD in Organic Chemistry (1986), both from the University of Bristol, and has worked in the Fine Chemicals, Pharmaceutical, Biotech and Telecom industries; he is now working as a Senior Database Administrator for Amazon.com in Seattle. James enjoys reading, especially science fiction, and history, live theatre, and listening to odd music. Before moving to the US, he was heavily involved with the Lusitano horse breed, and worked with both the British and Portuguese governments on breed standards. He and Marian own a Lusitano horse in England.

¹ “Oldest” in the sense that we first met in 1971 at grade school.

² Which was also the *last* read-through...

A Busy Day Performed to an Appreciative Audience

By Lorna Clark

A dramatic presentation to grace the proceedings is a fine annual tradition of the North American Burney Society. Over the years, various scenes from Burney's comedies have been adapted and directed by the master of ceremonies, Juliet McMaster. This year, it was Act III, scene iii of *A Busy Day* which was performed by "The Burney Players" in Tucson, Arizona, after the Burney Society dinner on 26 October, 2006.

Rehearsing began the night before at the condo shared by several society members; after a communal supper, the table was moved back and work began in earnest. However, some of the lead actors had been delayed by storms on their way down, and so missed the chance to rehearse. The next night, they had to walk on stage and play their parts completely impromptu; given the bravura performances turned in by cast members, those watching would never have guessed.

The scene takes place in Kensington Gardens; as the "curtain" rises, the family group of the nouveaux-riches city cits Mr. Watts (Peter Sabor), Mrs. Watts (Juliet McMaster) and Miss Watts (Elaine Bander) are seen, accompanied incongruously by the gentle heroine Eliza (Paula Stepankowsky). To them enters the valet of Lord John Dervis (played by Vaughan Stanger), whose courtly bows lead him to be mistaken for a fine gentleman by the high-spirited Miss Watts, who proceeds to flirt most egregiously with him. A letter is delivered to Mr. Watts conveying an offer from a Mr. Cleveland for his daughter; an absurd scheme by the hero's scapegrace brother is mistaken by Eliza for a puzzling message from her true lover and fiancé Cleveland; while she ponders the enigma,

her thoughtful musings are counterpointed by the exuberance of the Watts tribe: the irrepressible Miss Watts (arrayed in a white gown, with a blue bandeau in her hair) flaunts her fan and herself about the stage while her mother, Mrs. Watts, comically coiffed in a large bonnet, anxious to keep pace with her energetic daughter, whines comically (and interminably) about her aching feet, pinched into tight new shoes. Arrayed in a white gown complete with fan and a blue bandeau on her hair, Miss Watts displayed all her fine airs to loud laughter from the audience.

Peter Sabor was a most convincing patriarch as Mr. Watts, valiantly striving to maintain his dignity and remain master of the situation, scolding his womenfolk to little effect and finding relief in the timely appearance of his old friend and fellow-tradesman, Mr. Tibbs to whom he confides his troubles, as an unwelcome member of the gentry class. The moment when Mr. Tibbs (played by Conrad Harper) entered with dignity upstage was truly impressive, its comic effect heightened by his sporting of an enormous wig (delivered in a truly dramatic fashion by Federal Express just before the performance). While the two cronies sit sympathetically (and hilariously) jawing side-by-side, their appearance gives fright to the skittish Miss Percival (Margaret Anne Doody), who swoons into the reluctant arms of the handsome hero (Alex Pitofsky), and his refined sister Jemima (Marilyn Francus). Miss Percival's hysterical shrieking brings back the female Wattses; the comic genius of Burney is seen at its height in this scene, with the juxtaposing of social classes, each irritating and misunderstanding the other. The audience roared with laughter at the combination of Miss Percival's affected

antics, Cleveland's ineffectual protests, Mrs. Watts's manic curtsying, and Miss Watts's exuberant self-display. The scene closes with a dialogue at cross-purposes between a besotted Cleveland and the insouciant Frank, played by a very debonair James Petts.

All the talented cast deserved the thanks and applause of a well-entertained audience; special mention should be made of the two actors imported for the occasion, James Petts and his unsuspecting visitor Vaughan Stanger, (flown in specially from England over the objections of the Equity Actors' Union). Both of these fine gentlemen, bowing to persuasion from the director, gracefully acceded to their fate, and turned in admirable performances. (The effect on Vaughan, who came over to visit his friend James and found himself suddenly (through no fault of his own) parachuted into the midst of a period-piece in front of a raucous North American audience, can only be imagined. (See story on pp. 8-9)

We hope that our peerless director Juliet McMaster will keep alive a tradition that is able to elicit so much laughter (enough to rival the rowdiness of the party next-door) and prove that literary study need not be dull. The annual celebration sets the Burney meeting apart from other academic conferences and seems a fitting tribute to an author who (despite her disclaimers) undoubtedly enjoyed participating in amateur theatrics. In its hearty and unpretentious good fun, the performance discovers unsuspected talent and helps to bring the community together as well as showcase Burney's skill as a dramatist. We await with eagerness the next performance in Vancouver.

Vancouver, B.C., Site of 2007 NA Meeting

Mark your calendars for the 2007 meeting of The Burney Society in North America, which will be a brunch meeting on the morning of Friday, Oct. 5, at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver, with Prof. Betty Schellenberg of Simon Fraser University as speaker.

The Burney Society will again be meeting during the

same weekend the Jane Austen Society of North America holds its annual general meeting. Many members of the Burney Society also belong to JASNA.

More details about the Vancouver meeting will be included in the fall issue of the Burney Letter. For more information about the JASNA meeting, go to www.jasna.org.

Hemlow Prize in Burney Studies

The Hemlow Prize in Burney Studies was instituted in 2004 in honor of the late Dr. Joyce Hemlow, the 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. Hemlow was responsible for tracking down the voluminous manuscript journals and letters of Burney and other members of her family, and writing a definitive life of Burney based on these materials, the award-winning *The History of Fanny Burney* (Clarendon Press, 1958). In 1960, Hemlow founded the McGill Burney Papers Project, dedicated to the publication of complete, definitive scholarly editions of Burney's journals and letters. She was twice awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship to support her work. Aided by a team of scholars at McGill and elsewhere, she published the 12-volume edition of *The Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney (Madame d'Arblay) 1789-1840* (Clarendon Press, 1972-84).

Hemlow was a founding Patron of the Burney Society and a great supporter of its activities over the years. After her passing on September 4, 2001, the Burney Society agreed that the most fitting tribute to such an extraordinary scholar would be to establish a prize to benefit up-and-coming students of Burney's work. The Hemlow Prize in Burney Studies is awarded annually to the best essay written by a graduate student from any country on some aspect of the life or writings of Frances Burney.

The deadline for this year's prize will be July 1, 2007. Essays of up to 6000 words may be submitted for consideration. The judges will take into consideration the essay's contribution to Burney scholarship and the quality of the writing and research. 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. Essays should be sent, by e-mail attachment, to the Chair of the Prize Committee, Audrey Bilger, Associate Professor of Literature, Claremont McKenna College, abilger@cmc.edu

McGill-ASECS Fellowship

By Peter Sabor

I am delighted to report that the Burney Centre now has funding for an annual fellowship for visiting scholars. The fellowship, generously funded by ASECS, together with McGill University, is designed for scholars working on the Burney family or their extended circle. They will be given newly renovated working space in the Burney Centre and in the Rare Books Division, both located in the McLennan Library. This important initiative was first proposed by Burney Society member Cathy Rodriguez, and strongly supported by the Executive Director of ASECS, Byron Wells, and at McGill by the Acting Head of Rare Books, Richard Virr. We are also indebted to the Librarian, Janine Schmidt, the Chair of the Department of English, Paul Yachnin, and the Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Natalie Cooke, all of whom are contributing funds to the fellowship. The formal announcement, which will be posted on the Burney Centre website and elsewhere, is as follows:

The Burney Centre, in conjunction with the Rare Books and Special Collections Division of the McGill University Library, offers an annual Fellowship, designed to assist scholars who need to travel to and establish temporary residence in Montreal in order to use the resources of the Library.

The Fellowship is funded by the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, together with the McGill University Library, the Department of English, and the Faculty of Arts. The Fellowship is available to scholars interested in any aspect of Frances Burney, the Burney family and their extended circle. It carries an award of US \$3,000 for a one-month stay, at a time to

be arranged.

Applicants, who must be members of ASECS, should send a curriculum vitae and a description of their project, specifying the relevance of the Burney Centre and Rare Books and Special Collection Division holdings to their research, to the address below. They should also indicate when they wish to take up the Fellowship. There is no application form.

Applications are considered by a Committee which gives preference to specific and clearly described projects. The deadline for new applications is 30 November 2007, and candidates will be informed of the results in January 2008.

Applications should be addressed to:

Dr Peter Sabor
Director of the Burney Centre
Department of English
McGill University
835 Sherbrooke Street West
Montreal, PQ
Canada H3A 2T6

Enquiries should be addressed to the Burney Centre:
Burney.Centre@mcgill.ca

MEMBERSHIP DUES REMINDER

To join the Burney Society, or to renew your membership for the 2007-2008 dues year starting from 13 June 2007, please fill out the form below (or simply write your own) 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 £12 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.

Name.....

Address.....

City:.....State/Province/County.....

CountryPostal Code:.....

e-mail address.....Wish to receive newsletter only in an electronic version:.....

Membership Dues.....Donation:.....Total Amount:.....

Return address:

IN NORTH AMERICA;
THE BURNEY SOCIETY
3621 9TH ST. DRIVE N.E.
HICKORY NC 28601
USA

IN GREAT BRITAIN:
THE BURNEY SOCIETY
36 HENTY GARDENS
CHICHESTER, WEST SUSSEX
UK PO19 3DL