

# Burney Letter

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## The Woman-Hater at the Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond

By Peter Sabor



Clive Francis as Sir Roderick; Nick Earnshaw as Bob Sapling and Amy Neilson Smith as Henny Sapling are in the background.

Frances Burney began writing *The Woman-Hater* in or around 1800, completing it before she left England in April 1802 to join her husband in France. Together with *A Busy Day*, which she wrote at about the same time, it is the last of her four comic and four tragic dramas. Cut off from England by the Napoleonic wars, she had no opportunity to arrange a production of either comedy, and after her return in 1812, at the age of sixty, she had no dealings with theatre managers. Before leaving England, however, she did draw up projected cast-lists for both plays. For *The Woman-Hater* she envisaged a production at Drury Lane, home of the ill-fated production of her tragedy *Edwy and Elgiva* in 1795. Her would-be actors included the company's two star performers, Sarah Siddons (as Eleonora) and John Philip Kemble (as Wilmot), as well as other leading actors and actresses, such as Thomas King (as Sir Roderick), Dorothy Jordan (as Miss Wilmot), and Jane Pope (as Lady Smatter).

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## There's a small hôtel: Juniper Hall

By George Rafael

A few years ago, I found myself by chance spending Christmas Eve in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Because of ground delays in London, my New York-bound flight had to stop there – the crew needed a break; rules (good ones too) – as Halifax was as far as they were prepared to fly. This detour turned out to be quite fortuitous. After a visit to the well-tended cemetery where the victims of the Titanic are buried, I wandered through the windswept Old Town and discovered a wonderful antiquarian bookstore, one of the best I've ever seen, and there came across an elusive volume: Duff Cooper's TALLEYRAND.

For anyone interested in the French Revolution, in diplomacy, or wishing to bask in the vulpine cunning and license of Napoleon's foreign minister, Cooper's biography provides pure reading pleasure. A passage starting the third chapter especially piqued my curiosity: "On the

road that runs from Leatherhead to Dorking there stands an eighteenth-century residence which, although it has undergone considerable alterations, still bears the name of Juniper Hall. Here, in the summer of 1792, was formed the nucleus of a small society of French refugees. The Constitutionals – those members of the aristocracy who if they had not welcomed the Revolution had at least tried to make the best of it, and who, only after the fall of the monarchy and under the shadow of the Terror, abandoned their country in order to save their lives, found at Juniper Hall a brief haven of refuge."

Another little teaser in the same chapter, concerning Fanny Burney and her sister Susanna Phillips's visits there, perfectly encapsulates the collision of English manners with French savoir faire: "Prim little creatures, they had wandered out of the sedate drawing rooms of *Sense and Sensibility* and were in danger of losing themselves in the elegantly

disordered alcoves of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*."

Well, with that invitation to the minuet, I just had to find the place, no easy task as it turned out. It took months of research. None of my friends had heard of the place and what references I could find in Pevsner's Surrey guide (architect: Couse, Kenton; student of Robert Adam; some work at High Wycombe) were rather dry and unilluminating. An historian acquaintance who lives in Kensington Square, next to a house bearing a National Heritage blue plaque with Talleyrand's name on it, had heard of it and put me on to the Field Studies Council (a semi-autonomous governmental body that specialises in the preservation of flora and fauna); they had an open weekend and in the company of a rambling friend, I was off.

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## Orange Tree Theatre

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But Burney's dream production of *The Woman-Hater* was just a dream, and the play remained unperformed for over two hundred years. In October 2003, it at last had its premiere in Montreal at McGill University's Moyses Hall, as the highlight of a two-day Burney Society conference. The production, co-directed by McGill's Myrna Selkirk and Dawson College's Steven Lecky, featured actors from both institutions, as well as period music provided by students from McGill's Early Music program. It ran for only one night, but some three hundred people packed into the hall: all of the conference delegates, supplemented by Montrealers drawn by a timely preview, by Alyson Grant, in the *Gazette*. Drastic directorial cuts, removing over half of the text, made for a fast-paced performance lasting about ninety minutes. The complicated plot was outlined in a prologue written for the occasion, and the dialogue was interspersed with musical interludes. There was some fine acting by the amateur performers, and the audience was privileged to be the first ever to see at least part of Burney's comedy performed.

Four years later, at the Orange-Tree Theatre, Richmond, *The Woman-Hater* has now received its premiere in its original form. The production, directed by Sam Walters, opened on 19 December 2007 and runs until 2 February 2008. The Orange-Tree, in suburban Richmond, is some miles from the West End, but easily accessible from central London by tube or train. A small theatre in the round, seating some 170 spectators on two levels on all sides of the stage, it has made long-neglected Restoration and eighteenth-century comedies one of its specialities. Among the plays revived here have been Arthur Murphy's *All in the Wrong*, Thomas Holbrook's *The Road to Ruin*, Congreve's *The Way of the World*, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's *Simplicity*, and Vanbrugh's *A Journey to London*: all seldom, if ever, produced in the West End, or elsewhere.

Sam Walters could not call on Sarah Siddons or John Philip Kemble for his splendidly lively and thoughtful production of *The Woman-Hater*, but his

cast is outstanding. Clive Francis makes an aptly splenetic, blustering Sir Roderick in the title role, while Auriol Smith plays his former love, the compulsively verse-quoting Lady Smatter, with a brilliant sense of timing, making each of her misattributions a moment to relish. David Gooderson as Old Waverley is deliciously lecherous as he contemplates the prospect of the youthful Sophia's becoming his mistress, while Dudley Hinton as Jack Waverley makes a meal of the scene in which he vainly attempts to disguise himself from his hypocritical father, with a flapped hat and painfully tight trousers generating much laughter. In the difficult roles of Eleonora, Sir Roderick's sister, and Wilmot, her estranged husband and Lady Smatter's brother, Joan Moon and Michael Elwyn take entirely different approaches. Joan Moon plays her part straight, which does Burney no favours: the sentimental excesses of Eleonora's laments for her lost husband and their unfortunate daughter would hardly be out of place in a tragedy. Michael Elwyn, in contrast, takes Wilmot's grief, remorse, and bewilderment to an absurdly raucous extreme, making the scenes in which he figures an unexpected comic delight. Amy Noble is a suitably demure Sophia, keeping a straight face during her talk of meeting in a cottage even as Old Waverley is prancing about in anticipation of romantic trysts to come. Jennifer Higham has the delightful role of Miss Wilmot, the hoyden disguised as a prig. Beneath her plain gown she sports blue jeans and a bright pink t-shirt, emblazoned with the slogan "girl raising hell," and her hell-raising on stage, often at the expense of her weary Nurse, provides some of the play's most enjoyable moments. Minor parts, such as Nurse, Bob Sapling and his sister Henny, are played in a variety of regional accents, ranging from Irish to broad West Country.

The costuming is similarly eclectic. Most of the cast are in Victorian dress, which works well enough for an early-nineteenth-century play, but Jack Waverley's leather jacket and Miss Wilmot's jeans and t-shirt provide a startlingly modern touch. Props on the curtailless Orange Tree stage are minimal, but Sir Roderick's servants, Stevens and Smith, make fine comic use of the forbidden backgammon box that they vainly attempt to conceal from their irate

master.

Sam Walters's remarkable fidelity to Burney's text results in a three-hour running time for the performance. He might have sacrificed some of Eleonora's wearisome lamentations with no great loss, but it is a treat to have *The Woman-Hater* on stage in unadulterated form. Just before the denouement, Walters introduces an effective but non-authorial chase scene, in which most of the characters run hither and thither in search of one another. This and the irreverent parodying of Wilmot's role aside, theatre-goers at Richmond can see *The Woman-Hater* much as Frances Burney wrote it. The full range of Sir Roderick's misogyny is rehearsed by the admirable Clive Francis, while Old Waverley, Jack Waverley, Miss Wilmot and others expose the folly of his woman-hating. Lovers of Burney owe Sam Walters a large debt for producing her comedy in its entirety at last, and for showing that a play she herself could never see performed works so effectively on the stage.

#### 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 by email to [pitofskyah@appstate.edu](mailto: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](mailto:tregear david@hotmail.com)

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# Fanny flourishes at the Orange Tree

**By Hester Davenport**

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For Burney enthusiasts within reach of Richmond the production in the round of *The Woman Hater* at the Orange Tree Theatre was an event to be anticipated and relished. It is true that members attending the opening performances felt some nervousness on the author's behalf (theatre in the round is thrilling when it works, embarrassing when it doesn't), and at least one Burneyite anxiously scanned the faces of the audience opposite – were they smiling? would they laugh? They were and they did, and applause at the end was generous. Peter Sabor's critique above well expresses what we all felt, admiration both for play and performances, mixed with regret that the director had not made some judicious cuts and found a way of rendering the opening situation clearer (a prologue as at Montreal would have been ideal). So how would hard-bitten theatre critics respond? Would they give it a mauling?

First off were John Thaxter in *The Stage* and Nicholas de Jongh in the *Evening Standard* (24/12/07). Both gave it 3 stars, but while Thaxter praised the performances and called it "an evening to cherish," de Jongh – surely perversely – thought that the production gave the comedy "an excessive farcical gloss while imparting a misplaced air of jollity to the darkish content." Benedict Nightingale in the *Times* (31/12/07) went the other way, finding "lots of invention and talent but not the hilarity they could and should have generated." Nor did he like the combination of "Jane Austen plus jeans" in the costuming. Nevertheless he too awarded the production 3 stars, and on the same day Paul Taylor in the *Independent* called the play a "sparky, shrewd comic drama" despite an opening which combined "the tortuous convolutions of the first scene of Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* ... with the brain-knotting dynastic complications of his Wars of the Roses cycle." Three stars again. Rhoda Koenig in the *Independent's* companion Sunday paper (6/01/08) thought that the play came up "fresh as a daisy" and commended the "sprightliness of the acting."

Then came the resounding endorsement of the *Guardian's* revered critic, Michael Billington (8/1/08). Awarding 4 stars he hailed the play as a "genuine discovery" and a "glorious revival," relishing Lady Smatter as "a great comic creation" to set beside Mrs Malaprop, and labelling Burney "the missing link between Sheridan and Wilde." The sourest of the critics was Michael Caines in the *Times Literary Supplement* (11/01/08) who found little pleasure in a play of "lifeless exposition and kitchen-sink approach to characterization" (whatever that last phrase means). Yet Dominic Cavendish in the *Daily Telegraph* (14/01/08) thought that "Burney's comedy fizzles with affectionate appreciation of the egotistical eccentricities of both men and women." Opinions were therefore divided, but positive overall, and subsequently *The Woman Hater* played to full houses.



Jennifer Higham as Miss Wilmot in *The Orange Tree* production of *The Woman Hater*.

At the end of the run two further Burney events were also sell-outs. On 25 January Karin Fernald, well-known in the Burney Society, staged two performances of *The Famous Miss Burney*. Karin has

been a fine ambassador for Fanny, presenting her solo show around the world with a script which draws on the journals, novels and letters. On this occasion it was adapted to give special emphasis to Fanny's theatrical interests. For a solo actor performance in the round is demanding, not least from the danger of dizziness, but Karin (who planned her own show) used judiciously-placed chairs and other props, and held the audience amused and touched by Fanny's story.

The following Saturday, 26 January, the theatre had arranged a morning seminar on Burney, chaired by Sam Walters, which again sold out. Kate Chisholm was the main speaker, presenting a lucid and sympathetic account of Fanny's life, punctuated by extracts from the journals, letters and novels. These were superbly read by the professionals, notably Sam Walters recounting Evelina's visit with the Branghtons to the opera, and Auriol Smith the disastrous performance of *Othello* by a group of strolling players in *Camilla*. If only these could have been recorded! When he heard that Peter Sabor was coming over from Quebec especially for the occasion Sam snapped him up at once to join Kate, and Peter engaged the audience with lively discussion of Fanny as would-be playwright. Hester Davenport also talked a little of Fanny's court life. A play-reading of the first act of *The Witlings* followed, with Karin as the acquisitive Mrs Sapient, but it was hard to understand why, with Auriol Smith who played Lady Smatter in attendance, nothing of her was included – surely the point of doing it.

The matinée performance which followed was pure delight. The actors were all now comfortable in their roles and the play simply zipped along. Perhaps the first part was still a little long, perhaps some members of the audience were bemused by the plot, but the second part sparked hilarity in bucketfuls. As the critic of the *Independent* concluded: "If [Lady Smatter] were reviewing *The Woman Hater*, she would say that 'As Prior or was it Cowley, or was it Spenser? so aptly put it, "better late than never."'" Just so!

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## Juniper Hall

### Continued from p. 1

Juniper Hall itself, a slightly derelict Hanoverian pile tucked away at the bottom of Boxhill, would be easy to miss if you were hurrying along; England is, after all, dotted with far statelier homes. That would be unfortunate, for Juniper Hall is not simply a house with a history, it is a house with a past. Among those who lit up its drawing room (which is still kept in a style that somewhat approximates the period, the fixtures and details relatively unchanged) are the Comte de Jaucourt, a distinguished former deputy and constitutionalist; his lover, the Comtesse de la Châtre, who was not a lady “whose austerity was oppressive”; Lally Tollendal, “large, fat, with a great head, small nose, immense cheeks,” wrote Susanna Phillips, “un très honnête garçon,” as Talleyrand said of him, “et rien de plus”; his lover, the Princesse d’Hénin, a former lady-in-waiting to Marie Antoinette, and the doyenne of Parisian society; General Alexandre d’Arblay, Lafayette’s chief of staff, a “true militaire, franc et loyal,” as Mrs. Phillips described him; Louis de Narbonne, a grand seigneur, handsome, witty, rakish, rumoured to be Louis XV’s bastard (he probably was); and, finally, the lodestars of the constellation, Baronne de Staël-Holstein (née Necker), the first woman of European letters, a feminist avant la lettre, and the Bishop d’Autun, Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, the courtier’s courtier, a diplomatist and intriguer without equal.

A stellar gathering by any standards, of whose charm, intelligence, and lineage there could be, as the genteel English phrase goes, no question. They easily bowled the local *bien pensants* like the Lockes of Norbury Park and the Burneys for a duck. “There can be nothing imagined more charming, more fascinating than this colony”; “a society of incontestable superiority”; “these people of a thousand”; “they are a marvellous set for excess of agreeability”; “English has nothing to do with elegance such as theirs.”

Likewise, the huntin’ and fishin’ and shootin’ fraternity of Surrey had never seen anything like this fine feathered bunch. They were frankly indifferent if not suspicious; wasn’t Talleyrand the devil incarnate himself? (Horace Walpole, hardly the huntin’ and fishin’ type, described him as “that viper who has cast his skin.”) Even Miss Burney was prejudiced against him at first, writing: “Monsieur de Talleyrand opened last night with infinite wit and capacity. Madame de Staël whispered to me: ‘How do you like him?’ ‘Not very much,’ I answered. ‘Oh, I assure you,’ cried she, ‘he is the best of men.’ I was happy not to agree.” She soon changed her tune, however, saying a few days later: “It is inconceivable what a convert M. de Talleyrand has made of me. I think him now one of the finest members and one of the most charming of this exquisite set.”

Miss Burney’s relations with the displaced chatelaine of Juniper Hall were more telling, though – the two came from entirely different worlds. On the Continent Mme de Staël, who studied under Goethe and Schiller at Weimar, was an author to be reckoned with, her study of Rousseau, which appeared in 1788 when she was only 22, having established her reputation overnight; Burney, whose novels-of-manners anticipate Jane Austen, depended on a small allowance provided her as a lady in

waiting to George III’s queen. Mme de Staël was an aristocrat who once said, “mankind begins at baron”; Burney came from a family old as the hills and infinitely more respectable. Although plain, if not downright ugly, Mme de Staël’s dark, slightly protruded eyes revealed her true character, overflowing as they did with a brilliance and passionate nature she readily displayed in the drawing rooms of Paris, “a torrent of words,” according to Byron; in an age renowned for conversation, for esprit (best captured recently in the film *Ridicule*), she was exceptional, fascinating, the first among equals. Fanny Burney had also shined, and in her London days she had been the darling of Dr. Johnson and hobnobbed with Sheridan, Burke and Garrick; now she was demure, a spinster, seemingly content to gaze in wonder at these proud peacocks, all the while long noting their every word and action.

Overwhelmed to find one civilised Anglaise, Mme de Staël proceeded to shower great admiration and affection on the author of *EVELINA* and *CECILIA* (her own novels were yet to come), attracted as she was to excellence in all forms; despite her grande dame airs, aristocracy of the intellect took precedence over all else, and she cultivated Fanny diligently. She begged her to spend “a large week” at Juniper Hall. Fanny welcomed the younger, maturer woman’s attentions, was indeed swept off her feet by her fellow author and bluestocking. And why not? Days passed at Juniper Hall seemed idyllic, spent in good food and conversation, charades and bridge, and readings. Mme de Staël read from her work-in-progress, *DE L’INFLUENCE DES PASSIONS SUR LE BONHEUR DES INDIVIDUS ET DES NATIONS* (which was finished there), or Voltaire’s *TANCRÈDE*.

There was also the occasion of Lally Tollendal’s after dinner reading of his tragedy, *LA MORT DE STRAFFORD*. As usual, it had been a wonderful if frugal repast but, at the end of it, M. d’Arblay had vanished. “He was sent for after coffee several times that the tragedy might be begun; and at last Madame de Staël impatiently proposed beginning without him: ‘Mais cela lui fera de la peine,’ said M. de Talleyrand good-naturedly, and as she persisted, he rose up and limped out of the room to fetch him; he succeeded in bringing him.”

Most odd how someone so veddy English as Fanny Burney should miss an instance of ironic courtesy, a species of humour at which Talleyrand excelled. In fact, she was blind to countless nuances all around her, connections that were right under her very nose, such as Mme de Staël’s tempestuous affair with Narbonne. Her father, the teacher and historian of music Dr. Burney, was not so unaware of these soundings, writing: “Madame de Staël has been accused of partiality to M. de Narbonne – but perhaps all may be Jacobinical malignity.” Though shocked, Miss Burney clung to her impressions, writing back, “I do firmly believe it a gross calumny. She loves him even tenderly, but so openly, so simply, so unaffectedly, and with such utter freedom from all coquetry, that, if they were two men or two women, the affection could not, I think, be more obviously undesigning. She is very plain, he is very handsome;

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## Juniper Hall

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her intellectual endowments must be with him her sole attraction. She seems equally attached to M. de Talleyrand. Indeed I think you could not spend a day with them and not see that their commerce is that of pure but exalted and most elegant friendship. I would, nevertheless, give the world to avoid being a guest under their roof, now I have heard even the shadow of such a rumour.”

(Mme de Staël had been equally attached to M. de Talleyrand, writing years later that “the three men I loved most in my youth were N[arbonne], T[alleyrand], and M[ontmorency].”)

From that moment on, Fanny Burney made her excuses, avoiding “our Juniperians,” especially Mme de Staël. Mme de Staël was confused and hurt by Miss Burney’s sudden aloofness. She was also frankly irritated by Fanny’s prudery. Calling on her one day, she was told by Susanna Phillips that Dr. Burney could not spare Fanny, to which she responded, “Is a woman a minor for ever in your country? It seems to me your sister is like a girl of fourteen.”

Fanny Burney had another consideration in mind when she dropped Mme de Staël, Talleyrand and Co. – she and d’Arblay had fallen in love. Not only was he a single man not in possession of a good fortune, but with the Jacobin Terror threatening to spill across the borders and perhaps the Channel, all French aliens were suspected of being fifth columnists. Moreover, she had her position to consider, the pension she received from the Royal Family. She had to steer clear of them and it was only after the most delicate negotiations with her father and Royal intermediaries that she and d’Arblay were able to marry in the little Norman church of Mickleham.

Still, her behaviour is in cold contrast to Mme de Staël’s, who constantly, and often recklessly, risked her life attempting to save friends from the tumbrels. But then she, like Talleyrand, thrilled to intrigue. When Napoleon asked him whether Mme de Staël was a good friend, he replied, “She is such a good friend that she would throw all her acquaintances into the water for the pleasure of fishing them out again.”

Then suddenly, almost as soon as it had started, it all ended, with the coterie dispersed. Talleyrand, expelled for subversion, bought a passage on the *William Penn* to America with Mme de Staël’s money (in transit he met Benedict Arnold!). A true Machiavel, he was never at a loss, never missed the main chance, going from strength to strength, stealthily engineering Napoleon’s rise to the head of the Directory and later, after his fall from grace with the jumped-up Corsican, outmaneuvering Castlereagh, Metternich and the allies at the Congress of Vienna, in the end having obtained what he’d always wanted for France, a constitutional monarchy. He eventually wound up as Louis-Philippe’s Ambassador to the Court of St James, and lived long and well enough to witness another uprising, in 1830, observing that “those who did not live before the Revolution can never know how sweet life could be.” Upon hearing of Talleyrand’s death, a diplomat was reported to have said, “What did he mean by that?”

With a new swain in tow, Mme de Staël managed to return to her native Geneva, rejoining her dull Swedish husband, Baron de Staël; her ardour for Narbonne had cooled (Narbonne, who became Napoleon’s aide de campe, was killed at the Siege of Torgau in Saxony). Talleyrand proved not to be a good friend, undercutting her with Napoleon. For much of the rest of her “miserable gypsy life” she was on the move, from Russia, to Sweden, to London, finally returning to France after Waterloo (her greatest novel, *CORINNE*, and the seminal work, *DE L’ALLEMAGNE* [1813], which was greatly responsible for introducing German literature and philosophy to the French intelligentsia, much the way Voltaire’s *LETTRES PHILOSOPHIQUES* had done for England, appeared in exile). The satisfaction of outfoxing Napoleon’s policemen and prosecutors was short-lived – the hounding, the itinerant way of life had broken her health and she died much too young at 50. “She is a woman by herself,” said Byron, “and she has done more than all the rest of them together, intellectually – she ought to have been a man.”

Fanny Burney, newly married at 41, would live happily ever after. While she never saw Mme de Staël again, she looked back on those Juniper Hall days with fondness, writing, “Ah what days were those of conversational perfection, of wit, gaiety, repartee, information, badinage and eloquence.” More in character was her tidy little comment on finding a cache of Mme de Staël’s letters to Narbonne which her husband had kept for his old comrade: “Lettres brûlantes à brûler – a fine moral lesson too.”

Though Jonathan Miller has said that “the English would wade through a lake of pus to get to a country house,” few bother to make the pilgrimage to Juniper Hall today. Talleyrand and Mme de Staël are barely remembered now or, rather, their significance is underplayed; Fanny Burney, naturally, has a devoted following, and half the roads and lanes in the area seem to be named after her and her relatives. Cooper’s book is sadly out of print, and to those who might recollect his name or subject matter, France means hols in Dordogne, the Revolution New Labour. It’s somehow fitting that the only hint of Juniper Hall’s past is a plain brown, hard to read plaque on the gateway which was donated by the European Union’s cultural commission in 1992.

*George Rafael is a part-time writer whose work can be found in Art Review, Archipelago, Art Review, the First Post, London Magazine and Salon. Under his full name he has published biographies of Salvador Dali and Miles Davis. He is at work on an essay about La Rochefoucauld. This article was first printed in Archipelago: An International Journal of Literature, the Arts, and Opinion, www.archipelago.org, vol. 3, No. 4 (Winter 2000), pp. 68-71. It has been reprinted with the kind permission of the writer George Rafael and editor Katherine McNamara.*





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# Fund-raising for plaques at St Swithin's church in Bath

**By Bill Fraser**

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Our Canadian and American friends would find the procedures for gaining approval by the diocese for work to be undertaken in an Anglican church somewhat tortuous and frustrating – patience and control are essentially required!

My first attempt at a low key level to gain the Archdeacon's "De Minimis" approval was rejected and the proposal referred for full faculty consideration by the Diocesan Advisory Committee who would only give it consideration with the involvement of architects. Fortunately, Chedburns, the architects for the St Swithin's restoration project (who are also the architects of work in my own church of St Mary Charlcombe) have generously proposed to give their services free of charge. Even after a formal submission to the Diocesan Advisory Committee accompanied by drawings and photos, some questions were raised especially about the stone to be used. In addition, the firm providing the original quotation decided to withdraw as they lost their stone-mason. However they recommended Mr Tony Brown who had already carried out work for St Swithin's.

Tony is a knowledgeable and dedicated craftsman who teaches at a local college. I had an interesting and encouraging visit with him at the church. His quotation for the work is £5200 for the Mme d'Arblay plaque and £1800 for Sarah Harriet. Both plaques would be inscribed on white marble. The d'Arblay plaque would follow the photograph of the original in the Austen Dobson edition of the diaries and would include the carved moulded top section (739 letters). Sarah Harriet would follow the simple inscription suggested in my previous report (100 letters). I am certain we would end up with replacement plaques of which we and the church will be proud.

The UK committee considered this proposal at our meeting in February and agreed that, although we need to raise more money to achieve it, the completed work would be of significantly greater quality. We felt we should set this objective and hope that our North American and Canadian colleagues will work with us to achieve it. I am approaching St Swithin's to suggest that they might consider a contribution. An additional part of the project would be the production of a Burney leaflet for St Swithin's which would describe the five family members commemorated at the church. This could be made available at the church and also at the Tourist Office and at the Library. I am asking Maggie Lane if she would write the brochure for us.

I hope you will all think that this is a worthwhile project which will enhance a wider understanding of the Burney family and its achievements. I look forward to any comments or suggestions.

Email: [ww.jfraser@btinternet.com](mailto:ww.jfraser@btinternet.com), or by mail via the Secretary/Treasurers.

*[Editor's note: The plaques to Sarah Harriet and Frances Burney (Madame d'Arblay) in St. Swithin's Church in Bath disappeared many years ago when the church was being refurbished and have never been found. Previous issues of the Burney Letter have reported on efforts to find them and outlined the proposed wording on new plaques to replace them. For a listing of these and other stories in the Burney Letter, see the Burney Centre website, [www.arts.mcigll.ca](http://www.arts.mcigll.ca) / burneycentre, under Other Publications.]*

## UK Meeting in June

The UK Branch will hold its AGM at Parham ([www.parhaminsussex.co.uk](http://www.parhaminsussex.co.uk)) on Sunday 15 June 2008. Some 23 (of a possible 30) members will have exclusive tours of the House including sight of portraits of Fanny Burney and General d'Arblay, followed by lunch and a talk on the Bluestockings and their influence on Burney by Markham Ellis of Queen Mary College London, then the AGM and tea in the Great Kitchen, departing about 4 p.m. There many delights to be seen at Parham, an Elizabethan Manor House, with notable gardens, that was the home for part of the 1939-45 War to units of the Canadian Armed Forces and some of their children. For further details, please contact David and Janet Tregear, Secretary/Treasurers, 36 Henty Gardens, Chichester, West Sussex, UK PO19 3DL.

## Richard Thrale

**By Kate Chisholm**

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*It is with great sadness that we report the death of Richard Thrale last October, aged 76. Richard took a great interest in the Burney Society from its birth in 1994 and was a loyal and enthusiastic reader of The Burney Letter.*

*Richard was a descendant of Henry Thrale, and I like to think resembled him in physical stature and in his genial, hospitable nature. It was very fitting that the Order of Service for his funeral in St Alban's Cathedral included some words of Samuel Johnson from Idler No 23: 'Life has no pleasure higher or nobler than that of friendship.'*

*As the chairman of the Johnson Society of London from 1991 to 2002 he always ensured that the monthly meetings were organised with impeccable efficiency, but also with great friendliness. Richard would always arrive first and leave last, ensuring that new members were greeted warmly. Even after his retirement as chairman, Richard could always be relied on to welcome guests and to ensure the smooth running of the annual Christmas luncheon.*

*At the last meeting he attended, Richard gave the vote of thanks (after a talk by Sheila O'Donnell of the British Museum on Johnson's portrayal in caricature). He spoke with characteristic thoughtfulness and insight into what had made the talk so interesting. His presence is much missed.*

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# The Burneys in Paris

## June 2010: ‘Women and the Revolution’

By Kate Chisholm

The next stop in the Burney Society’s progress through the key (and most beautiful) cities in the life of Frances Burney will be **Paris**. A two-day conference, on Thursday 10 June and Friday 11 June, is being organised by the committee of the UK branch in association with Professor Frédéric Ogee and Sophie Vasset of the Université-Paris Diderot. Our keynote speakers will be Professor Ogee and Professor Peter Sabor, from the Burney Centre at McGill University. We hope to focus on Frances Burney’s years as Madame d’Arblay, the wife of the French chevalier, Alexandre Jean-Louis Piochard d’Arblay, with particular emphasis on women and the Revolution, as journalists, victims, witnesses.



*The Saint-Paul Metro station, closest to the Université-Diderot on rue Charles V in the Marais*

Burney herself could be described as the ‘first woman reporter’ for her eyewitness accounts of Paris under Napoleon and the preparations for the Battle of Waterloo. In her novel, *The Wanderer*, published in 1814, she writes not so much about liberty, France and revolution, but the impact that the turmoil in France had on English society and especially about its implications for women. Her heroine Juliet Ellis suffers from a lack of identity, from her confused, unprotected status as neither single nor married. She is frustrated in all her attempts to assert her independence and in many ways prefigures what will happen to female opportunities in the coming century.

Burney has been seen as the archetypal Georgian female novelist, but she is much more than that. How does she compare with journalists like Mary Wollstonecraft and Helen Maria Williams, who travelled to the French capital in the early 1790s to see for themselves what ‘revolution’ meant? What do her diaries from that time tell us about social relations at the turn of the century? Why did she rebuff the French *salonnière* Madame de Staël? How important are her diaries for our understanding of medical history? What’s the story behind Monsieur d’Arblay before he met Fanny?

We hope to have papers in both French and English, with translations, and to cover a broad range of topics from both sides of the Channel and the Atlantic. A day trip to Joigny is planned, travelling by train from the Gare du Lyons (journey time: 1 hour 20 minutes). There will also be a guided walk through the areas of Paris that Fanny and Alexandre would have known (although be prepared for disappointment: none of the houses where they lived survived the rebuilding programme of Baron Haussmann).



*Restaurant on rue Charles V, perfect for a conference dinner,*

Our venue will be the university’s Institut Charles V, which is on the rue Charles V in the heart of the Marais district (nearest Metro stop, Saint-Paul). The Institut was once an old furniture factory, and our lecture room will be on the fifth floor with windows on both sides looking out over the rooftops of Paris. There is a lift, but be prepared to get fit during the conference. You will also need to remember to bring with you a friendly credit card; the Marais is brilliant for shopping.

We are planning a drinks reception on the Friday evening, followed by a conference dinner to be held in a local restaurant. (A similar dinner arrangement will be made for the Thursday evening.) There are plenty of small hotels locally; a recommended list will be provided.

It would be helpful at this stage for those who are interested in attending to let the UK organisers know, via a short email to David and Janet Tregear: [tregear.david@virgin.net](mailto:tregear.david@virgin.net). Our numbers will be limited to the size of the restaurant hosting our conference dinner (between 55 and 60 delegates).

# Two Unhappy Beauties

By Hester Davenport

One of the pleasures of belonging to the London Library is the discoveries to be made on its shelves of old books. Recently I was very pleased to come across an Edward Burney illustration in an 1801 edition of the poems of George Lord Lyttelton, a poet not much read now. There are several Burney illustrations but the one that drew my eye was the frontispiece, showing an elegantly-dressed girl sitting dejectedly by her toilet table, a work-basket and a pile of books at her side.



Frontispiece to the Poems of George Lord Lyttelton, London: 1801. From a copy in the London Library, with kind permission..

The picture is designed to illustrate the first poem in the collection, “Soliloquy of a Beauty in the Country,” written it is said while the poet was a scholar at Eton. Poor Flavia is cooped up in the countryside and, having retired to her room tired of “ev’ning chat and sober reading,” she lays her “drooping head” on her arm and plaintively laments:

“Ah! what avails it to be young and fair,  
To move with negligence, to dress with care?  
What worth have all the charms our pride can boast,  
If all in envious solitude are lost? ...  
Now with mamma at tedious whist I play,

Now without scandal drink insipid tea,  
Or in the garden breathe the country air,  
Secure from meeting any tempter there;  
From books to work from work to books I rove,  
And am, alas! at leisure to improve. —  
Is this the life a beauty ought to lead?  
Were eyes so radiant only made to read?  
These fingers, at whose touch ev’n age would glow,  
Are these of use for nothing but to sew?...”

Edward Burney shows the solitary girl arrayed as for a fashionable assembly blazing with light. Her head is dressed with a towering ostrich-feather but, matching her mood, it droops towards the lone candle, while nearby a snoozing cat accentuates the quiet and boredom.

Could the scene be an echo, conscious or unconscious, of a similar illustration done in his own youth to illustrate his cousin Fanny’s *Evelina*? That water-colour, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1780 at the beginning of Edward’s career and discovered by chance at an antiques fair, shows Evelina with her head likewise leant wretchedly on her arm, her work abandoned and a book lying idle. She too is in the country, at her guardian Mr Villars’s house away from the delights and anxieties of the London life she had been leading. Of course Evelina is no Flavia, yearning for flirtation, but the similarity may have appealed to her cousin. Twenty years have passed and the artist grown in technical sophistication, but he retains his eye for a pretty young woman, marooned in a life devoid of admirers.



Edward Burney’s illustration of *Evelina*, a watercolour (1780.). From a private collection, with kind permission of the owner.

[Burney Society members who were at the Windsor conference last summer will have seen the *Evelina* water-colour and may be interested to know that it is now on permanent loan to the Chawton Women’s Library near Alton in Hampshire.]



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# Report on 2007 AGM

By Paula Stepankowsky

North American members of the Burney Society gathered on Oct. 5, 2007, to hear a talk on Frances Burney's relations with the women writers who were her "foremothers" by Betty A. Schellenberg, Professor of English at Simon Fraser University

The annual general meeting, which was a brunch in North America this year, was held at the historic Fairmont Hotel in Vancouver.

During a short business meeting preceding the talk, reports were given on the Windsor Conference held in July, the *Burney Letter*, *The Burney Journal*, the Hemlow Prize and the upcoming publication of the 2002 Westminster Abbey conference papers.

President Paula Stepankowsky reported that there are 105 members of the society in North America. In a report received from Treasurer Alex Pitofsky, the Northern American savings account had \$7,056 in it, while the checking account contained \$2,951, before the payment of the money owed for the brunch and the Vancouver meeting.

Prof. Schellenberg, a specialist in eighteenth-century studies, gave a talk entitled "Why Burney 'Forgets' Her Foremothers," discussing the ambivalent attitude toward novel writing held by Burney and her fellow authors, including Jane Austen. The complete text of Prof. Schellenberg's talk will appear in *The Burney Journal* for 2008. The Burney Society holds a brunch or dinner in North America in years when its United Kingdom branch holds a conference. In 2007, the UK branch organized a conference on the Court Journals at Windsor Castle, which is described elsewhere in the newsletter.

In 2008, the Burney Society in North America will hold a conference in Chicago on Oct. 2 and 3, 2008 at the Newberry Library.

## Chicago Conference 2008

The fourth biennial conference of the Burney Society in North America will be held on Oct. 2 and 3, 2008 at the Newberry Library in downtown Chicago.

In keeping with the urban venue of Chicago, the conference will explore the topic "Frances Burney and the City." Helen Thompson, Associate Professor of English at Northwestern University, will be the plenary speaker.

The conference will also include breakout sessions and panels, a dinner on Thursday evening and an always popular reading from one of Burney's plays directed by Juliet McMaster.

The Burney Society meeting in Chicago will again dovetail with the annual meeting of the Jane Austen Society of North America, which will begin on the afternoon of Oct. 3 following the conclusion of the Burney Society conference. This scheduling will allow members to attend both meetings if they choose.

JASNA will meet at the Westin Michigan Avenue in downtown Chicago. Burney Society members may wish to book rooms at the hotel for the duration of both conferences.

The price for the Burney Society conference hasn't been set yet, but members who have paid their dues for the forthcoming 2008-2009 dues year will receive registration information in the mail.

For more information about the Burney Society and how to become a member, please visit our website at <http://dc37.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/burney>. You may also wish to visit the Burney Centre website at <http://burneycentre.mcgill.ca>.

## Call for Papers Frances Burney and the City

The Burney Society of North America will hold its fourth biennial conference in Chicago, Illinois, on October 2 and 3, 2008 at the Newberry Library. The conference hotel, the Westin Michigan Avenue, is conveniently located just a few blocks away.

In keeping with the urban venue of Chicago, the conference will explore the topic "Frances Burney and the City." We invite proposals for papers, panels, or roundtables that discuss any topic related to representations of urban life in Burney's novels, plays, letters, and journals. Participants may focus on a particular city: London, Paris, Bristol, or Brighton for example or on Burney's treatment of urban phenomena that recur in her portrayal of several cities. Papers might also contrast Burney's vision of the urban with the rural or explore aspects of urban life: employment, leisure, shopping, entertainment, economics, architecture, religion, crowds, or time. Alternatively, papers could set forth ideological interpretations of Burney's representation of urban life and investigate class structures, gender boundaries, or racial issues.

Please send one-page proposals for papers and panels to Catherine M. Parisian at [cmparisian@verizon.net](mailto:cmparisian@verizon.net), or 45 Stoney Glen, Nellysford, VA 22958 by May 1, 2008 (electronic submissions preferred). Please note any audio/visual requirements in your proposals. Submissions from graduate students are especially welcome. Participants will be notified by May 15.

For more information about the Burney Society and how to become a member, please visit our website at <http://dc37.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/burney>. You may also wish to visit the Burney Centre website at <http://burneycentre.mcgill.ca>.

## Call for Nominations

Nominations are being sought for officers and board members for the Burney Society in North America for the coming two years.

Positions open to election include president, vice president, secretary-treasurer and two board positions. Current office holders and board members may also run for re-election.

Elaine Bander of Dawson College in Montreal is serving as the chair of the nominating committee. Anyone who would like to nominate either themselves or another person for a position should contact Elaine at [ebander@dawsoncollege.qc.ca](mailto:ebander@dawsoncollege.qc.ca).

Members will vote on officers and board members at the annual meeting scheduled for Oct. 2 and Oct. 3, 2008 in Chicago. UK members hold their elections separately.

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# Report on ASECS 2008

By Marilyn Francus

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There were two sessions sponsored by the Burney Society at ASECS on March 27-30, 2008 in Portland, Oregon. Alex Pitofsky (Appalachian State University) chaired a session on "Frances Burney and the Law." Melissa Ganz of Stanford University spoke about "Freedom and Fetters: Burney's *The Wanderer* and the Problem of Contractual Consent"; Lila Miranda Graves of the University of Alabama, Birmingham, analyzed the status of evidence and the law in "*Evelina* and the Problem of Evidence." The session concluded with Nicole Reynolds of Ohio University, who discussed the representation of suicide in Burney's novels in "Frances Burney's Suicides."

The second session, "Agony Aunts and Confidantes in Burney and her Circle," was chaired by Marilyn Francus (West Virginia University). Margaret Anne Doody (University of Notre Dame) discussed "Frances Burney and Hester Thrale: A Fascinated Friendship," followed by Joanne Holland (McGill University), who presented "Cherished Confidante, Failed Mentor: Frances Burney, Mary Delany, and an escape to Windsor." Lori H. Zerme then discussed chaperones in "Guardian, Mentor, Matchmaker: The Complex Work of Chaperones in Frances Burney's *Evelina*," and Linda Zionkowski (Ohio University) presented "Ask Austen," on giving and receiving advice in Austen's novels. Both sessions were well attended, and the papers elicited lively comments and discussion.

Frances Burney was well-represented throughout the conference, on panels ranging from "The Eighteenth Century: New Ecocritical Perspectives" to "Female Playwrights of the Long Eighteenth Century: Their Struggles and Successes" to "Critiques of Economic Reason in the Eighteenth Century." The presenters and papers included Ann Campbell (Boise State University) on "Burney and Imagined Marriage Law: The Case of *Cecilia*"; Mary Carter (Emory University) on "Burney's *Evelina*: A Young Lady's Reentrance into the Natural World"; Ken Ericksen (Linfield College) on "Frances Burney: The Wit of *The Wiltings*"; Anita Nicholson (Cornell University) on "Transitional Figures: Burney, Zoffany, and Edgeworth's Literary and Visual Representations of the Anglo-African"; Alex Pitofsky

(Appalachian State University) on "The Politics of Masculinity in Burney's *Edwy and Elgiva*"; Natalie Roxburgh (Rutgers University) on "Critique of Political Economy in Frances Burney's *Cecilia*"; and Kathleen E. Urda (Bronx Community College) on "Embarrassing Us Into Empathy: Social Humiliation and Its Effects in *Evelina*." Alvaro Ribeiro (Georgetown University) spoke about Dr. Charles Burney in "The Revd Thomas Twining's and Dr. Charles Burney's Dreads and Antipathies at being thought what is called a 'pushing' man."

## Call for Papers ASECS 2009

The Burney Society will be sponsoring two sessions at ASECS on March 26-29 in Richmond, VA 2009.

Nancy Johnson will be chairing "**Frances Burney in Dialogue**".

Frances Burney wrote in a vibrant social milieu, whether it was her family, their extended London circle, the court of Queen Charlotte, the world of French émigrés, or the literary domains of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Britain. This panel welcomes papers on any instance of Burney in dialogue with other persons (family, friends, acquaintances) or with other texts (philosophical, dramatic, legal, literary). Papers may address any of Burney's journals/letters, novels, or plays.

In a second panel, Audrey Bilger will be chairing "**Beauty and the Politics of Appearance in Burney and Her Circle**."

This panel will examine ideas about beauty and physical appearance in the works of Frances Burney and other late 18<sup>th</sup>-century writers. The topic lends itself to a variety of approaches, and papers may focus on depictions of female and/or male beauty; on ugliness, deformity, and other departures from ideals of appearance; on race; on youth, middle age, and/or aging; on cosmetics and paint; on conduct book commentary; etc. Papers featuring Burney and late 18<sup>th</sup>-century writers through Austen are welcome.

The deadline for submissions has not yet been posted but it is usually around September 15. For more information people could visit the conference website <http://asecs.press.jhu.edu/2009annualmtg.html>.

## Refereed Journal Volume 9 Published

By Paula Stepankowsky

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Volume 9 of *The Burney Journal*, the first in the society's 14-year history to be refereed, has been sent to all members.

At 164 pages, Vol. 9 is also the largest issue the society has published in its history, making up for the fact that the journal wasn't published in 2006 as

it was going through the process of achieving refereed status.

*The Burney Journal* has a three-member editorial team: Marilyn Francus of West Virginia University as general editor, Stewart Cooke of Dawson College as managing editor and Alex Pitofsky of Appalachian State University as marketing editor.

The editorial board includes

Audrey Bilger of Claremont McKenna College; Kate Chisholm, an independent scholar; Lorna Clark of Carleton University; Hester Davenport, independent scholar; Margaret Anne Doody of the University of Notre Dame; Juliet McMaster of the University of Alberta and John Wiltshire of La Trobe University.

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## Seeking works by Edward Francisco Burney

### By Patricia Crown

For a catalogue of the art works of Edward Francis (or Francisco) Burney (1760-1848):

I would be grateful to receive any information about his drawings and paintings – location, description, subject matter – that are not in public collections. There are many drawings by Edward Burney in private collections; some have been offered for sale in galleries in recent years. In an effort to make the catalogue as complete as possible, it is necessary to know about the

existence of works in private collections. The owners' names will not be published without explicit permission. The catalogue, with an extended essay about his career and his relationship to the Burney family will be published by The Walpole Society, as part of its series of volumes on British art and artists.

Any information will be gratefully received by: Patricia Crown, 819 Edgewood, Columbia, Missouri 65203 USA or e-mail to: crownp@missouri.edu.

## Burney Collection Available On-line

Michael Kassler writes from Australia to announce to members that the Burney Collection, an invaluable collection of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>-century newspapers is now available online. First gathered by Charles Burney, Jr. (1757-1817), he may have started by collecting the newspapers left behind at the coffee-house run by his aunts. Its significance as “the largest and most comprehensive collection of early English news media” was recognised when arrangements were made to donate it to the British Museum after his death. The originals are held at the Colindale branch of the British Library; microfilm copies were available at various research libraries around the world.

Michael points out that, “The present digital collection, that helps chart the development of the concept of ‘news’ and ‘newspapers’ and the ‘free press,’ totals almost 1 million pages and contains approximately 1,270 titles. Many of the Burney newspapers are well known, but the pamphlets and broadsides also included have remained largely hidden.

Readers who are interested should check with the closest research library to see if they have access. With a library card, they could then access the Burney Collection from the comfort of their homes.

### Soon to be Published

Michael Kassler's most recent book on the musician A.F.C. Kollmann is “in the Press and soon to be published” by Ashgate Press.” Kollmann dedicated his first major treatise, *An Essay on Musical Harmony* (London, 1796), to Charles Burney, Mus.Doc., and the two remained in contact almost up to Charles Burney's death. The frontispiece of the book has a reproduction of Kollmann's letter to Burney presenting him with a copy of the first number of *The Quarterly Musical Register*. Further details to be found at <https://www.ashgate.com/shopping/title.asp?key1=&key2=&orig=results&isbn=0%207546%206064%208>

## Spanish Member Defends Thesis

Carmen María Fernández Rodríguez read her doctoral dissertation entitled “La aportación de Fanny Burney y Maria Edgeworth a la novela inglesa comprendida entre los años 1778-1834” in A Coruña University on the 28<sup>th</sup> November 2007. This academic work studies the contribution of two eminent female writers to the British novel of the period and is inscribed within the studies of eighteenth-century women's literature, a quite unexplored field in Spain.

Instead of privileging the study of works such as *Evelina* (1778) or *Castle Rackrent* (1800), the dissertation focuses on Burney's and Edgeworth's whole narrative work, comprising fiction (this includes novels and “tales” of different sort in Edgeworth's case), essays and pedagogical writings. There is the aim to update two canonical writers traditionally linked to Jane Austen and scarcely known in Spain. Fernández's dissertation insists on the necessity to surpass stereotyped images in both writers on behalf of exposing and defending Burney's and Edgeworth's enormous technical and thematic diversity from a feminist point of view which also takes into account (post)structuralism and traditional philological instruments.

Fernández contextualises and examines how literary criticism has considered these writers since their entrance into the British literature and then proceeds to show the current reception of their work. Burney and Edgeworth are seen as vocational and professional writers, with an acute ethical sense and active

participants in the literary world as chroniclers of the Empire and the Industrial Revolution, when tastes were shifting from Augustan to Victorian. They left their mark on male and female writers and were compared with the classics in literary reviews, such as the *Monthly Review*. Burney and Edgeworth adopted divergent positions towards the novel; Fernández studies the epitexts of their works by relating them to the female protagonists. In terms of narrative technique, a complete examination is made of the narrative voice and point of view, irony, the relationship between the narrator and the narratee, intertextuality or symbols. In the thematic aspect, nine points are selected, so that a whole panorama of Burney's and Edgeworth's views concerning society in general and the feminine sphere in particular is presented. Themes are varied and range from feminine identity, women's education and erudition, the relationships between the sexes, masculine alterity, maternity, the world of art and labour or multiculturalism.

From this study, it is possible to proceed to deeper points and to revise traditionally upheld ideas, such as the one of Edgeworth as a masculine writer or a writer more concerned with the masculine than with the female sphere. Fernández pays special attention to the differences between Burney and Edgeworth, and to the necessity to individualise and analyse writers separately without conditioning one to the other.

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# New York Equity Premiere of Frances Burney's comedy *The Wiltings* May 2008

The Magis Theatre Company, praised by the New York Times for its theatrical skill and daring, will bring Burney's neglected dramatic work to the stage in mid-May of 2008 at the West End Theatre on 86th Street and West End Avenue in New York City.

Magis continues its tradition of bringing less-produced work to the public with this comic masterpiece, overlooked for more than 200 years. Already earning the prize of "best theatrical

presentation" at Times Square's Artery Festival this past summer, the Magis Company promises an evening of wit, humor, and the thought-provoking situations and characters that show Burney at her best. Visit their site at [www.magistheatre.org](http://www.magistheatre.org) for more information or call 212 592 0127 to be put on their mailing list now.

## *Hemlow Prize in Burney Studies*



*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 or members of the Burney family. The essay, which can be up to 6,000 words, should make a substantial contribution to Burney studies. 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 2008. Essays should be sent, by email attachment, to the Chair of the Prize Committee, Audrey Bilger, Associate Professor of Literature, Claremont McKenna College, [abilger@cmc.edu](mailto:abilger@cmc.edu). Submissions must be received by July 1, 2008.*

### **National Portrait Gallery Features Bluestockings**

An exhibition of "Brilliant Women: 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Bluestockings" is currently running at the National Portrait Gallery in London, England, from 13 March to 15 June 2008. According to the website, the exhibition "explores the impact .. [of] a group of celebrated women writers, artists and thinkers who forged new links

between gender, learning and virtue" in 18<sup>th</sup>-century Britain. The Bluestockings are celebrated "for breaking the boundaries of what women could be expected to undertake or achieve." Further details are available on the website at [www.npg.org.uk](http://www.npg.org.uk).

The booklet of Exhibitions, Talks, and

Events for March, April, and May at the NPG apparently features the Edward Burney portrait of Frances Burney on its front cover, a feature noticed by Philip Olleson, the director of the Susan Burney Project at Nottingham University.

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# Windsor Conference July 2007: Reprise

[Editor's note: The Windsor Conference in July 2007 was a resounding success whose memory does not fade with time. Last issue, we covered the conference as a whole, all the special events that made the program so remarkable. This issue, David Tregear gives an overview of the intellectual fare. His succinct summary of the papers recalls the variety, interest and stimulation provided by the two-day conference.]

## By David Tregear

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The attendees at the Conference were greeted in the Vicars' Hall of Windsor Castle, by Andrew Carter, Warden of St. George's House. Although the Castle had been a Royal Castle since 1070, and had been used by Queen Elizabeth II as her residence for the last 40 years, Vicars' Hall had been built in 1415 for the use of clergy of St. George's Chapel, itself built in 1348. The Castle housed the College of St. George, a body parallel to the Knights of the Garter, in St. George's House. Since 1966 this house and its Trustees have hosted about 60 Consultations a year on topics of current interest with the object of doing good in the wider sense. Before this modern use, the Hall was said to have been the venue for the premiere of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in 1598, with (it is said) William Shakespeare in the cast.

Kate Chisholm announced that at a later stage, a draw would be held for the raffle, organised by Bill Fraser, and she mentioned the production of FB's *The Woman Hater* in November at the Orange Tree, Richmond.

Hester Davenport then gave an illustrated introduction to the main subject of the Conference, FB's life at Windsor. We were taken on a visual tour of Windsor and the Castle in FB's time. It was a happy coincidence that the day of the conference, 6 July, was the same date on which FB had presented to George III, a copy of *Camilla*. The Vicars' Hall could be seen in Canaletto's view of 1747, but changes had occurred since then, although as FB remarked in a letter, most of the necessities and many of the superfluities of life could be purchased in the town of Windsor as in the metropolis.

Flora Fraser, whose most recent biography, *Princesses*, dealt with the daughters of George III, spoke of these claustral Princesses, whose letters are still preserved in the Round Tower. She had found them to have been sisters under the

skin with the *English Gentlewomen* (a previous book of hers) whose main features were conduct and endurance as well as state. In 1786, when FB arrived at Windsor, the three eldest sisters were 20, 18, and 16. The three younger sisters were 10, 9, and 3 years. Their father did not wish any of his daughters to marry, enjoying their company rather possessively. The Princesses called themselves the Sisterhood, and despite numerous amatory adventures with Equerries, the longer they remained unmarried, the more ordinary each Princess became. The mother of the Princesses, Queen Charlotte, was an omnivorous reader in three languages and her literary enthusiasm lay behind FB's appointment. The King's seven sons had varied commitments to literature, yet their elder sisters each developed accomplishments in letters and drawing. The King's illness of 1788 was a cause of Royal Family distress, of which Flora Fraser had found more evidence in the Harcourt papers than in FB's Journal, due, perhaps, to FB's closer contact with the Queen than with the Princesses, who nevertheless confided in Lady Harcourt, speaking of their titles as 'tin cans tied to their tales' Their father, meanwhile, after reading *King Lear*, commented that he himself had only three Cordelias!

After FB left Court, she maintained, while in England, annual visits to the Princesses, who expressed themselves always grateful for her care.

Lady Roberts, the Royal Librarian, then, with the aid of two screens, showed something of the illustrations of the Court life in the period of FB's appointment. There is a composite portrait of all fifteen of the Royal children, born between 1762 and 1782. Queen Charlotte had painting lessons while young, and this background led her to encourage her daughters' education. Despite the Royal couple's simple domesticity, satirised by Gilray and others, the King was an avid art collector, through expert help as he never travelled abroad. With George III's

encouragement, the Royal Academy was founded at Somerset House, the opening of which was attended by FB. Queen Charlotte's considerable collection of books including all of FB, was sold on the Queen's death.

Jane Spencer examined some of the links between FB and Samuel Johnson, whose early praise had shown FB the way to writing as a profession rather than reliance upon patronage. His stylistic influence led to *Cecilia* being praised as Johnsonian and 'nervous' (i.e. forceful), more serious than the usual woman's novel. Cecilia looked at patrimony, and the plot has much to do with 'name-clauses' in legal documents. In the novel the three father-figures are all seen as less than adequate, compared to the towering figures of the literary establishment. John Dryden had first claimed ancestry from authors as seminal as Chaucer and Shakespeare, with whom he had aimed to become worthy. Fielding was regarded as the father of the English Novel, yet literary inheritance was not usually accorded to women writers. Samuel Johnson had charged FB to "be a good girl" at the age of 27, and he had compared her to Richardson and Fielding. Later criticism, notably from Macaulay, took SJ's style as too pompous, classical and out of fashion, thus out of place in a novel. This criticism is followed by Catherine Gray, who thinks FB a blind worshipper of SJ with too many latinisations, and a dull passive voice. Yet FB actually adapted SJ's style, and she often carried serious attitudes in to lively reportage, through the narrator's objective comments and comparison of expression in various characters. In *Rasselas*, SJ had made young women sound too grand in dreams of their life ahead; for Cecilia a reliable choice in life became a choice of husband, from which a place in the world can be found. Then it

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may be realised that change is nothing when it has been made, afterwards the next change is looked for, and the last word is resignation.

### Editors' panel

Peter Sabor was introduced by Bill Fraser as the leader towards a much wider audience than ten years ago (a result of an excellent web-site); he explained the considerable public interest awakened by the impending publication of the complete *Court Journals*. One previous edition of these documents had devoted only twenty pages to FB's five years "confined servitude." During the time she had written three complete plays (with some grim themes), and her Journals covered three major historical events: the attempted assassination, the trial of Warren Hastings, and the King's illness. There were also basic problems with previous editions, notably that of Charlotte Barrett, who had used a corrupt text and had bowdlerised and censored it in an authorial way using gluepot and scissors. Barrett's press had also taken liberties with the text in aiming to polish and present, taking out about 50%. The new edition aimed to return to FB's own words. In the *Court Journals* for 1786, it had become clear that these had been written up by FB in 1787 (Samuel Johnson had remarked the refrigeration of the mind by interruptions!) whereas her letters of that year were more immediate.

Stewart Cooke spoke of 1787 as a year of tedium for FB.

Lorna Clark had concentrated on 1788, during which FB was dull and unhappy yet finding a more mature and more complex voice. She had been saddened by the death of her friend Mary Delany, and upset by the way in which Stephen Digby had treated her. She had also attended the trial of Warren Hastings, and in November the King's illness had started. FB had an obsessive urge to record – to survive, to give a pattern to life's random events, shaped by hindsight and informed by the hyper-sensitivity of her own reactions. This was illustrated by the dramatic reconstruction in the shape of a "dialogue" with the Colonel that seems to have been intuitive rather than based on evidence. Over a period of three weeks,

the representation of Stephen Digby inviting himself to tea and then gradually asserting authority in a gothic manner, is presented as a set-piece of detached recollection. In the dreary conditions of court, the writing up of her diary was used by FB as an opiate. Playwriting (tragedies) after this would seem a natural consequence.

Geoffrey Sill dealt with pp. 3822 and 3823 from the MS Journal (in the Berg Collection, New York). The copious amendments and pastings had not made his editorial task easy. It was difficult to say if the struggles mentioned in these pages had been physical or mental. The paper that she had given to Digby may have stood for her heart.

Nancy Johnson's paper was presented by Gordon Turnbull. In the year 1790, FB has become a recluse lost to all domestic comforts, with friends' existences only in memory. Despite these feelings, FB gives lively accounts of the two main events of the year. Her report of Digby's marriage to Charlotte Gunning dwells on the informal setting in an ordinary room at a work-table. Although FB had to meet the Digbys in public, his attempt to keep up 'friendship' was unwelcome to FB. The Queen got FB tickets for the Trial, so that a report could be made to the Royal household (dozing had to be resisted during this report). Any interest that FB had in politics was personalised, her own feelings of support for Warren Hastings had to contend with the powerful personality, yet loved regard she had for the chief prosecutor, Edmund Burke.

### Saturday talks

Mascha Gemmeke introduced us to a German playwright, Schroder whose prodigious output included 150 adaptations of English plays, mostly from Shakespeare, with the endings changed from tragic to pleasant. Schroder had flourished at Bad Pyrmont, a spa town whose first hotel, built in 1772 had been patronised by the Hanoverians. One of his own plays had parallels with *Evelina*.

Tara Wallace spoke of her visit to Granville's home, and of the way in which Pope had praised Granville's victory while remaining discreet on the King's illness. In line with this sensitivity, FB had in her plays, written mythical English history, rather any direct criticism

of Royalty.

Cathy Parisian spoke of her constant collecting of every available edition or impression of FB's works, which could lead to a serious search for variations showing differing interpretations of the text. For example in a 6<sup>th</sup> edition of *Cecilia*, which had belonged to Swindon Public Library, she had found a print of a portrait of Cecilia.

On Saturday morning, 7 July, Audrey Bilger looked at the way in which the Court journals came to an end, on 7 July 1792. This was an interim ending, part of a process of her creation of an imaginary whole. FB called her Journals "memorials," a legal expression which fits well with the petition she had prepared (with her father's help) to leave Royal service. There was also the evidence of FB's plays set in unruly (i.e. pre-Habeas Corpus) societies, which tended to show her serving a sentence. Even after leaving the Court, FB informally gathered witnesses in her favour, until the acquittal of Warren Hastings in 1795. Her praise of the King in the *Memoirs* of her father (1832), may well show that George III's remark, "It is but her due," had been an influence on the Queen, whose servant FB was at the time of the petition, towards FB's release.

Joanne Holland concentrated on 1786 and the assassination attempt. The assailant had hidden a knife in a rolled-up petition, and the King's first words had been, "Do not hurt her, she has not hurt me." Although the contents of the petition showed that the assailant was a lonely person who wanted marriage, she was confined to Bedlam until 1828, yet some of her writings were published by Shelley. In FB's Journal, the attempt was thought by her to have been a large part of the cause of the King's illness. George III had told his Queen of the attempt abruptly, at which she had at first, been silent, while the Princesses had wept. In predicting further attempts, Frau Schwellenberg's reaction had not been of comfort. At the time the Prince regent had been in Brighton with Mrs. Fitzherbert, and although he had ridden at once to Windsor, he had not been allowed to see his father. These episodes showed FB as an imperilled heroine not at once relieved by

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her Memorial who might have remained in service until the death of the Queen or her own death.

Bill Fraser, a collateral descendant of Charles Rousseau Burney, introduced Patricia Crown who showed us some examples of the art of Edward Francisco Burney, that in his day were said to be innumerable and beautiful.

The last speaker was Margaret Doody. She focussed on FB's play *Edwy and Elgiva*, in which FB had largely identified with the captive heroine. The weak character of the ruler, opposed by the strong abbot, might have been thought to have shown FB as anti-Catholic, yet she had written in support of émigré s including French clergy. After the prolix and over-stated Prologue, the speaker wondered if pitiable characters might truly be tragic if they were male. Females

might eventually be forgiven if they had endured torments en route; a view preferring pity to terror that accorded with the then fashionable revised end to King Lear. On a large scale, socially autocratic power could become a cause of tragedy. There were connections between the play and *Camilla*, where the comedy of every day life was seen with errors committed in a retrievable way, perhaps a Harlequin-esque breach with convention.

## The Hermitage Sold to a New Owner

### By Lorna Clark

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Those who attended the Windsor Conference and went on the subsequent tour of Surrey will recall our visit to the home lived in by Frances Burney and Alexander d'Arblay soon after their marriage.

Some months after their summer wedding (on 28 July 1793), when they were staying at Phenice Farm about a mile from Bookham, they learned that a house, garden and orchard in town adjoining Fair Field was available for rent. They moved in November 1793 into what was then a long narrow cottage with a parlour, dining-room and scullery on the main floor, opening onto a garden and orchard.

Here *Camilla* was written (according to tradition under a tree in the garden) and *Edwy and Elgiva*, the only play produced during Burney's lifetime, was readied for production; a more successful production was the birth of their only child, Alexandre d'Arblay, on 28 December 1794. Here, M d'Arblay worked in his garden and rested from his labours by composing songs to play on his mandoline, "in defiance of the poor Instrument's wanting two capital strings" (whose deficiency was later kindly supplied by Charles Burney). Frances described those idyllic early years of their marriage:

"He works in his garden, or studies English and mathematics, while I write. When I work at my needle, he reads to me; and we

enjoy the beautiful countryside around us in long and romantic strolls, during which he carries under his arm a portable garden-chair, lent us by Mrs. Lock, that I may rest as I proceed."

Needing more room, the d'Arblays began building on a plot of land within Norbury Park in 1796; it was from the Hermitage in November 1797 that they moved to Camilla Cottage. The years spent in the countryside of Surrey may well have been the happiest in Frances Burney's long life.

The owner kindly made the house available to Burney Society members on the tour; we visited the ground-floor rooms where Burney would have sat as she worked or listened to the strains of the mandoline, and where Alex would have romped with his father and taken his first steps.

Soon after our visit, the house was placed on the market. Described as a "delightful 18<sup>th</sup> century residence" in the heart of Bookham, the original cottage has been enlarged. The property now has four bedrooms, four reception rooms, a verandah, conservatory and detached coach house with a lovely garden to the rear. The asking price was £1.15 million. From our British correspondent, Michael Moughton, who led the tour and greatly enlightened it with his matchless local knowledge, we have learned that the final selling price was £1,112,500 (roughly \$2,225,000 US).



Image of back garden of The Hermitage. Photo courtesy of West Surrey Property Advertiser

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# *Fanny Burney and Spain: The View from Universidade da Coruña.*

By Carmen M<sup>a</sup> Fernández Rodríguez.

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When more than a year ago I learned that there was a Burney Society devoted to one of my favourite authors, I wrote to Dr. Lorna Clark asking for some information about it. She kindly answered my e-mail and sent me the last number of *The Burney Letter*. As a doctoral student from Universidade da Coruña, I would like to show my gratitude by offering some information on the translation of Burney's work into Spanish.

By way of introduction, I would explain that eighteenth-century Spanish audiences were used to reading French books and translations from French more frequently than works in English or translated from English. Classics, such as Daniel Defoe and Henry Fielding, entered Spanish literature through translation. On the other hand, the Spanish Enlightenment was more limited (scientifically and intellectually) than the English one. Of course, there were important figures, such as Josefa Amar y Borbón, who firmly believed in education, but we do not find a remarkable awareness of the condition of women until the end of the nineteenth century with writers such as Concepción Arenal or Emilia Pardo Bazán (by the way, both Galicians).

*Evelina* appeared in Spain when English classics by Fielding and Tobias Smollet were already known. The text was anonymously translated into Spanish in 1825 together with *El leproso de la ciudad de Aosta* by Xavier de Maistre, a French writer opposed to the French Revolution, in a volume printed in Paris by Rigoux. Seven years later, a new edition appeared in Madrid translated and corrected by D.R.M. for the publishing house Boix and there was another translation in Paris for the publishing house Parmantier with no date. Unfortunately, I have not had access to the 1825 translation, but I can quote the censors' evaluation when D. Isidro Eleuterio de Alcalá submitted *Evelina, o la entrada de una joven en el mundo* to them:

no sólo extraña que haya españoles que se ocupen en traducir escritos extranjeros tan inútiles, superficiales y vanos, por cuya sola razón no debe permitirse la impresión de este género de composiciones, sino que, además, la de *Evelina* se opone indirectamente al dogma y directamente a las buenas costumbres, por todo lo que no debe imprimirse ni publicarse dicha novela.<sup>1</sup>

The original manuscript, of course, was never returned to him.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, some Spanish publishing houses began to translate English fiction. One of the most remarkable ones, Espasa-Calpe, inaugurated its "Colección Universal" with non-contemporary literature of Spanish, French, English, German, Italian and Russian authors at reduced prices. They were mainly novels, dramatic works and works of historic or philosophic character for the middle classes. Espasa-Calpe published *Evelina* in two volumes with an introduction by the founding editor of the Everyman's Library series of affordable classics, Ernesto Rhys, and was translated under the feminine pseudonym "Maribel" in Madrid 1934. In the introduction dating

back to 1909, Burney is portrayed as Charles Burney's intelligent scribbling daughter. Rhys translates and paraphrases an extract from Burney's original preface explaining that the novel only presents a young girl's views, and he includes one quotation from Alexander Pope's *The Temple of Fame* (1715). Rhys highlights Austin Dobson's edition of Burney's letters and, finishes by stating that *Evelina* represents Miss Burney herself. The Spanish version is not a faithful translation and contains many omissions, for example, when characters are commenting on where to have fun in London:

"What signifies asking them girls? Do you think they know their own minds yet? Ask 'em after any thing that's called diversion, and you're sure they'll say it's vastly fine; – they are a set of parrots, and speak by rote, for they all say the same thing; but ask 'em how they like making puddings and pies, and I'll warrant you'll pose 'em. As to them operas, I desire I may hear no more of their liking such nonsense; and for you, Moll," to his daughter, "I charge you, as you value my favour, that you'll never again be so impertinent as to have a taste of your own before my face. There are fools enough in the world, without your adding to their number. *I'll have no daughter of mine affect them sort of megrims. It is a shame they a'n't put down; and if I'd my will, there's not a magistrate in this town, but should be knocked of the head for suffering them.* If you've a mind to praise any thing, why you may praise a play, and welcome, for I like it myself" (121-2).<sup>2</sup>

¡Qué ocurrencia, preguntarles a las chicas; Creéis que saben siquiera lo que les gusta? Habladles de todo lo que se llame diversión, y todo les parece precioso. Son un par de papagayos que repiten todo lo que oyen. En cambio, preguntadles si saben hacer *puddings* o empanadas, algo útil, y no sabrán qué contestaros. Y en cuanto a las óperas..., que no les oiga yo decir que les gusta semejante estupidez; y tú Moll (a su hija), guárdate de manifestar gustos semejantes en mis narices; bastantes chiflados andan por el mundo para que tú aumentes el número de ellos. Debe gustarte la comedia, el teatro, para dar gusto a tu padre (185).

Cultural and academic institutions, including the university, play an important role in the popularisation of a writer, and, in Spain, our awareness of eighteenth-century female writers is quite recent. The male canon has been privileged and sponsored by literary history and Spanish studies on women's literature usually

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focus on contemporary writers. Therefore, eighteenth-century female authors constitute a field in which there is still much to be done. Literary establishments and history assume some responsibility in this process of re-evaluation, as María Jesús Lorenzo points out:

Our definition of English literature as an academic discipline has to do necessarily with the corpus of works on which we write articles and make statements, with the texts we discuss in the class and that are included in bibliographies and anthologies, i.e. those texts that we, as teachers, use as working materials. Such a definition must not be searched for in what authors have done, but in the multiple actions that generations of teachers, researchers, writers, publishers and audiences have taken for decades on behalf of English literature.<sup>3</sup>

It is true that old ladies are omitted and silenced in literary manuals, but the research on Burney is alive and has gained some ground. Asunción Aragón Varó has written a dissertation thesis on Burney, “*El problema de la identidad en las novelas de Frances Burney*,” (1996) apart from the articles “Frances Burney: a Pioneer of ‘The Women’s Novel’” in 1994 and “Mujer y literatura en el siglo XVIII” in 2003. However, Burney needs promotion since some Spanish publishing houses (such as Cátedra with excellent introductions by specialists) translate English classics for students, so they have ready access to Daniel Defoe’s or Lawrence Sterne’s work. *Evelina* is not a favourite one and the publication of Charlotte Lennox’s *La mujer Quijote* (2004) and James’s Boswell *La vida de Samuel Johnson* (2007) is good news. The writer’s particular appeal at the moment is very important: two translations of María Edgeworth’s works have appeared in less than four years and also a book on her life. Burney is never studied individually in Spain, but together with other male and female authors of the long eighteenth century. Her diaries and letters, dramas, or the pamphlet *Brief Reflections to the Emigrant French Clergy* (1793) pass totally unnoticed, even in university courses.

As far as I know, we lack a specific publication and an association on eighteenth-century female authors, and feminist approaches to eighteenth-century women writers (no matter if they are English or Spanish) are still exotic in Spain. Our enterprise needs official support to establish forums of discussion, workshops, and to finance projects in common with other universities. Meanwhile, conferences such as the ones organized by SELICUP (Sociedad Española de Estudios Literarios de

Cultura Popular), where female writers always have a panel, or our three Congresses on Cultural Diversity in English-Speaking Countries (organized by Universidade da Coruña in 2001, 2004 and 2006) are worthy of praise in this aspect, and the same happens with our exhibition “Anglo-American Women Writers”, which offered pictures and information on Fanny Burney, Mary Wollstonecraft, Jane Austen, Kate Chopin, Rebecca West or Toni Morrison, among many others, and was opened in our Faculty of Philology during the autumn 2000. All these female artist, actresses, dramatists, poets, translators and pamphleteers constitute part of a seductive palimpsest to be discovered thanks to gender studies.

*Carmen María Fernández Rodríguez defended her dissertation on Frances Burney’s and Maria Edgeworth’s contribution to the English novel 1778-1834 at Coruña University in November 2007. She has published in the fields of translation and cultural studies and participated at national and international conferences. She has recently joined the Burney Society.*

<sup>1</sup> My translation: “it is not only strange that some Spanish translate such useless, superficial and vain foreign writings whose edition should be prohibited, but Evelina is indirectly opposed to the faith and directly opposed to the good manners. Therefore, such a novel must neither be printed nor published.”

<sup>2</sup> Quotations belong to Margaret Anne Doody’s edition of *Evelina*, Hardmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1994. The italics indicate what is omitted in the translation into Spanish.

<sup>3</sup> “English Literature and the Canon,” *All in All: A Plural View of Our Teaching and Learning*, ed. María Jesús Lorenzo Modia (A Coruña: Universidade da Coruña, British Council y APIGA, 2005), p. 85. Apart from being Head of the English Department at Universidade da Coruña, Lorenzo has published *Literatura femenina inglesa del siglo XVIII*. A Coruña: Universidade da Coruña, 1998 and has written the “Introduction” to *Vindicación dos dereitos da muller*, the translation into Galician of Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) (Santiago de Compostela: Sotelo Blanco y Xunta de Galicia, 2004), pp. 15-50. Her “Charlotte Lennox’s *The Female Quixote* into Spanish: A Gender-Biased Translation” has recently appeared in *Yearbook of English Studies* (36.1 [2006], pp. 103-114). She has also directed some research projects on the cultural relationships between England and Galicia (“Relacións culturais entre Galicia e o Reino Unido da Grande Bretaña e Irlanda no século XVIII”) and on eighteenth-century women writers (“Literatura de autoría feminina en lingua inglesa del siglo XVIII”) sponsored by Xunta de Galicia and Universidade da Coruña respectively.

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

## Dues Reminder

Burney Society Members in both North America and the United Kingdom will soon be receiving renewal notices for the coming 2008-2009 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, 2621 – 9<sup>th</sup> St. Drive N.E., Hickory, N.C. 28601. In the UK, they can be sent to David and Janet Tregear, 36 Henty Gardens, Chichester, West Sussex, England, PO19 3DL.

# BOOK REVIEW

By Erica Leighton

**Women Against Napoleon: Historical and Fictional Responses to his Rise and Legacy**, eds. Waltraud Maierhofer, Gertrud M. Roesch, Caroline Bland. University of Chicago Press, Chicago. 2007. 300 pp. ISBN No. 3593384140

This recent collection of essays, *Women Against Napoleon*, edited by Maierhofer, Roesch and Bland, attempts to examine the response of European women to the impact Napoleon Bonaparte had as he rose to and fell from power. There is a focus on Napoleon's female contemporaries, although some later women writers' comments are included.

The book opens with a strong introduction that places it distinctively in a rarely addressed area of interest: that of women's negative reaction to Napoleon. Waltraud Maierhofer outlines in detail previous studies of contemporary responses to the fast-rising conqueror as well as, in particular, the responses of women to him. Maierhofer attacks the commonly held notion of the passive woman of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, and offers examples of women actively participating in the "Wars of Liberation," even fighting and dying for their countries.

The introduction declares its two main objectives as being to broaden scholarship on the literary representation of these responses, and to contribute to recent scholarship on gender and military history (14). The main question that the contributors are faced with answering is "were there women in positions of influence or with celebrity status or female writers who opposed Napoleon, who spoke out publicly, acted or published against him?" (12). The essays assume the reader possesses a basic knowledge of Napoleonic history, as well as a cursory understanding of the German language, as several short lines and expressions appear without translation.

*Women Against Napoleon* is broken down into three sections; I) *Contemporaries with Scepter, Sword or Pen – Forms of Resistance*, II) *Forms of Aesthetics and Cultural-political Opposition*, III) *Belated Nineteenth-century and Twentieth-century Opposition: Lessons of Nationalism*. Deborah Kennedy's essay entitled "Englishwomen and Napoleon Bonaparte" gives a broad overview of the impression of the British populace, giving the writings of Mary Berry (1763-1852), Frances Burney (1752-1840), and Helen Maria Williams (1761-1827) as the main discussion points, with additional comments of Jane Austen, Hannah More, and Dorothy Wordsworth. Her outline, however, is misleading, because the focus rests mainly on Williams' and Burney's eyewitness accounts of Napoleon, and their other literary works produced in response to this period.

Kennedy successfully delivers the first impressions of these two women upon seeing Napoleon as being impressed and

awestruck, which parallels the opinion of most of the British at the start of Napoleon's military career. Williams describes the self-styled Emperor as "the benefactor of his race converting the destructive lightening of the conqueror's sword into the benignant rays of freedom, and presenting to vanquished nations the emblems of liberty and independence entwined with the olive of peace" (40). Burney, with her strikingly perceptive observations, was unimpressed with her first view of Napoleon, whom she deemed rather ordinary-looking, but was astonished by her change in perspective when she saw in him riding a horse: "a Man who knew so well he could manage his Animal when he pleased... – if urged or provoked, – he could subdue in a moment" (45). These two women, along with many others across Europe, quickly became disillusioned with the brilliant but brutal conqueror, and fought both in their public writings and in their correspondences against the instinctive and lasting impression of Napoleon as a great strategist, intelligent military leader and revolutionary.

Williams, as Kennedy points out, was the only one of these women to continuously publish during Napoleon's reign, although she suffered for it. After publishing her "Ode to Peace" in 1801, Napoleon, offended that he was not specifically mentioned in the poem, had her home searched, and imprisoned Williams and her mother for 24 hours. This was but a small reminder of the tyrant's growing power and paranoia.

Another woman to oppose Napoleon was Maria Carolina, Queen of Naples, the subject of an essay by Waltraud Maierhofer's essay, subtitled "The 'Devil's Grandmother Fights Napoleon" (57). Although she recognized Napoleon's admirable qualities and legendary charisma, she despised him for the destruction he brought to each city he conquered. Maierhofer presents a woman driven by pride and a passion for her people, who ultimately decimates her population through a series of defensive battles, and who dies in exile from the city she loved. Maria Carolina has been criticized, observes Maierhofer, for ruling with her heart, but as this essay points out, her decisions paralleled those of many of her contemporary rulers, as they fought desperately to maintain control of their land and people. Maierhofer points to Napoleon's reluctant admiration of Maria Carolina's determination and their mutual respect for each other as being unusual, due to Napoleon's total disinterest and disregard for women outside of his family.

Many of the other essays identify various ways that women found to respond negatively to Napoleon, including Heather Belnap Jensen's insightful look into Germaine de Staël's popular novel *Corinne, ou L'Italie*, published in 1807. Staël's protagonist, Corinne, discusses various works of art with her lover, and through this medium, Jensen argues, Staël is able to "declare

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her distaste for Napoleonic cultural practices... [and articulate] her anti-Napoleonic views on art and politics" (161).

What is constantly brought to light throughout this collection of essays, is the wide social range of the women who are actively responding to Napoleon, whether through private correspondences, published works, or physical actions, such as fiercely killing injured enemy troops, or working tirelessly to treat the wounded on either side. Napoleon's impact on European women is seen in more than the creation of widows and orphans left in the wake of his massive wars, and in more than the starvation, the cultural depletion, the poverty and the architectural ruins. He threatened the national identity, security and peace of families across England,

France, Germany, Italy, and elsewhere. The women discussed in these essays involved themselves by participating in all of the ways demonstrated, and their involvement is finally represented and acknowledged in this work.

*Erica Leighton completed her M.A. at Carleton University, in 2007, with a focus on Medieval Literature. She is a Research Assistant for Vols. 3 and 4 of The Court Journals of Frances Burney. Erica will continue her studies in the PhD program at the University of Western Ontario, in London. Her reading and research interests include Anglo-Saxon law, oral traditions, memory, and both dramatic and non-dramatic fiction from the Early Modern Period through to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.*

## Westminster Volume Published

### By Lorna Clark

Who could ever forget the memorable occasion in Westminster Abbey on 13 June 2002 when Frances Burney was honoured in Poets' Corner with a window placed to her memory? A dedicatory service, a two-day conference and other special events marked the occasion.

All the papers given at the conference have been gathered into a volume, which should be of interest for those who attended (as a memento) and for those who were not able to be with us. This ambitious project, the first of its kind, finally came to fruition in February 2008, in *A Celebration of Frances Burney*. A hefty discount for Burney Society members has been granted by Cambridge Scholars Press, of 30% off the listed price. You may order from the website (Login: (blank) Password: burney30 or by email to Vlatka Kolic at [vkolic@c-s-p.org](mailto:vkolic@c-s-p.org) or by mail, mentioning that you are entitled to the 30% Burney Society discount. **See flyer below for details.**

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## A CELEBRATION OF FRANCES BURNEY

BY LORNA J. CLARK

ISBN 1-84718-320-4. 220x150MM. 250 PP. CLOTH. £39.99/\$79.99. FEBRUARY 2008.

On the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the birth of the writer Frances Burney (1752-1840), a window to her memory was placed in the arched recess of stained glass that graces Poets' Corner. Novelist, playwright and diarist, Frances Burney is one of the few women accorded such an honour. She joins the likes of Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë and George Eliot who might in some ways be seen as her literary heirs. Burney's journey to recognition on the stage of the world has been a long one, crowned finally with triumph.

The service marked the mid-point of a two-day conference in which various aspects of Burney's life and achievement were canvassed. Her journals and letters, her novels and plays (both comedies and tragedies), her life, family and context were all given serious scholarly treatment.

This volume includes the papers presented at the conference, which cover the many facets of a remarkable career and represent the broad spectrum of scholarly approaches to the entire opus of Frances Burney. It shows how far Burney has come from being dismissed as a minor precursor to Jane Austen to being recognized in her own right as a powerful, complex and influential writer, whose works had considerable impact on her own and subsequent generations.

**Lorna J. Clark** is Research Adjunct Professor at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. Editor of *The Letters of Sarah Harriet Burney* (1997), she has contributed to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* and the *Encyclopedia of British Women Writers* (Rutgers) and has published on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writers such as Jane Austen, Frances Burney, Mary Shelley and Richard Cumberland. Editor of the *Burney Letter* since 1999, she is currently working on an edition of *The Romance of Private Life* by Sarah Harriet Burney for Pickering and Chatto as well as two volumes of *The Court Journals of Frances Burney* for Oxford University Press.

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**MEMBERSHIP DUES REMINDER**

To join the Burney Society, or to renew your membership for the 2008-2009 dues year starting from 13 June 2008, please fill out (or simply copy) 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 US \$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.

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