

Burney Letter

Vol. 8 No. 1

The Burney Society

Spring 2002

Personal Recollections of King's Lynn

by Ruth Hayden

It was when my father was vicar of King's Lynn in the 1950's that I first became aware of Fanny Burney. As I have learnt more about her, I have been struck by similarities of events that my family shared with the Burneys.

First, we lived in the Vicarage which was built on the site of the house in which Fanny stayed in her teenage years. Secondly, Mrs. Delany, whose friendship Fanny valued when she was Second Keeper of the Robes to Queen Charlotte, and who is mentioned many times in Fanny's diaries, was my collateral ancestor, for my father Canon R.L. Whytehead was a direct descendant of Anne Dewes, Mrs. Delany's sister.

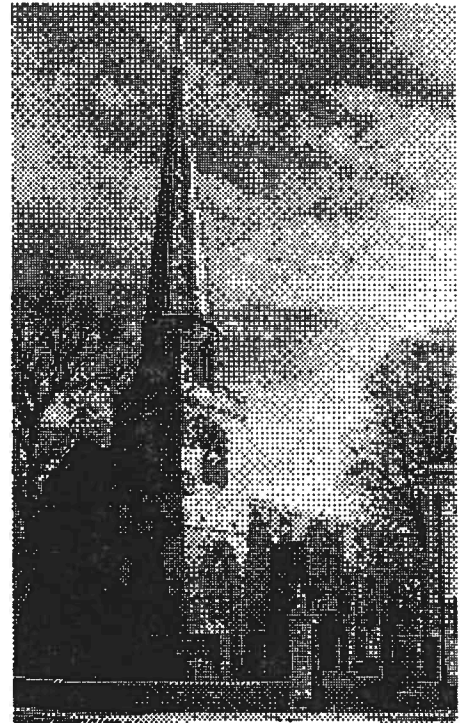
The Vicarage is a large commodious house c. 1830 and stands opposite the west door of St. Margaret's church, in the Saturday Market Place. Here Fanny had stayed in her step-mother, Mrs. Allen's house: there is a plaque in the wall recording this.

Elizabeth Allen was a vivacious woman and had been a friend of the Burneys. Her husband had been a successful wine importer, and as such moved in the town's top echelons of society. On Esther Burney's death, Charles married Elizabeth Allen in 1767. She had three children of her own, so Fanny's family circle increased.

Charles and Esther Burney arrived in Lynn in 1750 (known then as Lynn Regis) driven out of London by overwork and ill health. He was drawn to Lynn by an offer from the local MP Sir John Turner, so keen to persuade Charles to accept the position of organist at St. Margaret's church, that he increased the salary from £20 to £100.

Fanny was born in lodgings in 1752 in Chapel Street, near the beautiful and large St. Nicholas Chapel where she was baptised. Later the Burneys moved to the High Street to a larger house in a more prestigious position. This was an indication of Charles' increasing standing in Lynn society. He was a welcome addition to the Lynn community, for he was a talented musician and had established himself in London as a performer, teacher and composer.

Please see **PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS**
on p. 3



St Nicholas Chapel, King's Lynn, Norfolk, in which Frances Burney was baptised, now in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust. Reproduced with permission.

June conference a Sell-out

by Paula Stepankowsky

The response from Burney Society members to the June "Celebrating Frances Burney" conference and dedication of a memorial in Poets' Corner has been overwhelming--so much so that more people have asked to register for the two-day conference than the space available at Westminster

Abbey can accommodate.

The first day of the two-day conference, scheduled for June 13 and 14 in London, will be held at Westminster Abbey, while the second day will be held in the lecture theatre at the National Portrait Gallery, which has more room than does the Abbey.

The Abbey rooms can seat about 70 people for the conference and can

accommodate a further 30 for the reception, Abbey officials tell us. We are hoping we will be able to add a few more places, but as of this writing, we have not heard back from Abbey officials about whether this is possible or not under the fire code.

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It should be noted that conference planners took two write-in surveys as well as hand votes at two meetings, one in the U.K. and one in North America, to make sure the space available at the Abbey was large enough to accommodate all who wished to come. However, some members who had not planned to come, as well as some new members, did register, causing space to fill up before the end of March.

As a result, conference planners have begun a waiting list for the full conference on a first-come, first-served basis. Since the National Portrait Gallery theatre has 138 seats, and we must offer seats to the public as a condition for using the theatre, members who cannot get into the Thursday program at the Abbey can attend the Friday program at the NPG for £20 each.

While the second day of the conference does not include any meals or refreshments, it does include seven talks, a performance of Dr. Charles Burney's music by the period quartet, the Windsor Box & Fir Company, as well as a dramatic performance of selections from Frances Burney's plays by actors Ian Kelly and Karin Fernald. The Burney Society business meeting will end the day on Friday.

All members may, of course, attend the actual Evensong and dedication ceremony at the Abbey, which begins at 5 p.m. and is free and open to the public. It is only the conference space during the day Thursday and the reception space on Thursday evening that is limited, as of this writing.

All members who sent in a registration form too late to get in will be notified and their checks returned. They will also be asked if they want to be on the full-conference waiting list or buy a Friday-only ticket instead.

In some cases, members may want to remain on the waiting list, as well as buy the Friday option. Should a full-conference space become available, they could then pay the difference between the cost of the Friday ticket and the full £60 conference fee.

Please note that after mid-April, any changes in registrations will be handled by Jean Bowden, Primrose Cottage, Gracious Street, Selborne, Alton, Hampshire, GU34 3JB, U.K.; email: JeanKBowden@care4free.net phone: 01420-511432. Lucy can be reached by email at all times at lucy@magruder.org.

If any members registered for the conference find they cannot attend for some reason, we would be grateful if they would let Jean know so their

place can be offered to the next person on the waiting list.

Conference organisers are glad the event has proven so popular, but regret any inconvenience or disappointment caused to members by the early close in registration. We are doing our best to make at least part of the conference available to all who want to attend.

Burney Letter

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

President: Paula L. Stepankowsky
Editor: Lorna J. Clark

Address correspondence regarding newsletter articles to Dr. Lorna Clark, 2111 Fairbanks Ave., Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1H 5Z2.

Membership in The Burney Society is available for \$15 (US) annually in the United States and Canada, and £9 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: Lucy Magruder, P.O. Box 1267, Tubac, AZ, USA 85646 (or lucy@magruder.org). In Great Britain, write Jean Bowden, Primrose Cottage, Gracious Street, Selborne, Alton, Hampshire, England, GU34 3JB.

Call for Agenda Items

The first-ever joint meeting of both the British and North American branches of The Burney Society will be held Friday, June 14, at the National Portrait Gallery in London.

The formal business meeting of the two-day conference surrounding the dedication of the Burney memorial in Westminster Abbey will be held between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m., following the day's other activities.

Members who would like to propose items for the agenda should send notice to Paula Stepankowsky, Burney Society President, 1407 24th Ave., Longview, WA 98632 USA, or email: p_stepankowsky@tdn.com

Photographers Wanted

The dedication of a window to Frances Burney d'Arblay in Poets' Corner at Westminster Abbey is an historic occasion which we would like to record on film.

We are looking for volunteers with photographic skills and good cameras to help us record this event. There may be

lighting restrictions, but we would like to capture as much as we can without disturbing speakers and Abbey staff.

If you are willing and able to help, please contact Lorna Clark at LClarkLJ@aol.com

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

On returning to this country from Egypt and with my husband in the Royal Navy and about to go to sea, our two small children and I, through the generosity of my parents, spent about 18 months in this late Georgian house. We enjoyed games of hide and seek, hunt-the-thimble and in the entrance hall danced Sir Roger de Coverly, all activities which Fanny too might have participated in with her brothers and sisters on the same site.



Sweetpea (3" high) embroidered by Mrs. Delany on her court dress. From a private collection, reproduced with permission.

In the garden, which was bounded one side by the wall of a fine Hanseatic barn, in use when Lynn was a busy port in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, we played badminton on the lawn where the Burney family perhaps played battledore and shuttlecock. Adjacent to the house was a high wall built with blue-grey bricks used in the seventeenth century, which was probably all that remained of Mrs. Allen's house.

The children and I explored the town, as there was plenty of interest to see in this remarkably historic and once prosperous port, with many old buildings which existed in Fanny's time.

Near the Vicarage was Hampton Court, built in the seventeenth century, its four walls timber-framed and forming a square. John Hampton was a baker, who had made his fortune by making ships biscuits—"hard tack"—to feed the sailors on their long voyages. Built in the same century was the architectural treasure, the Custom House, a building of great

beauty reflecting Lynn's Dutch connections. Dominating the Saturday Market Place was the exceptionally large parish church of St. Margaret's, founded in 1101. Owing to the collapse of the spire in 1741, much of the structure was rebuilt three years later, so it was new when Charles arrived as organist. He was shocked at the state of the organ and installed a new German Snetzler organ, which is still in use today. He deplored the musical insularity of the Lynn people, commenting that they had "total ignorance of the most known Common Musical Merits." He organised subscription concerts in the Town Hall and recitals by visiting organists to St. Margaret's.

How pleased would Charles be at the success of the King's Lynn International Festival of Music, which was started in my father's time, by the musically gifted Lady Fermoy, lady-in-waiting to Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, who attended concerts in both St. Margaret's and St. Nicholas. Musicians came from all over the world. I well remember the honour of being introduced to the composer Ralph Vaughan Williams, who had come to St. Nicholas to hear one of his compositions being played. Looking back at the occasion now, I liken it to my being introduced to G.F. Handel in the eighteenth century!

Fanny's early years were spent in this bustling prosperous port, where coal, timber and wine were imported, and whose exports were grain. In 1744, harbour lists show Lynn ships trading with Riga, Danzig (Gdansk now), Sweden, Oporto, Lisbon, Leghorn, and North Carolina. How much, I wonder, did this quayside activity influence Fanny's elder brother James in his choice of joining the Royal Navy?

But there were hardships too: when Fanny was five years old, the congregation complained to the Lord High Admiral that of 400 Lynn sailors, 250 had been press-ganged into the Royal Navy, making it impossible to man the merchant fleet adequately, and so causing the price of coal to rise. This involved other costs: the Overseers of the Poor now had to provide relief for the wives, children, and sometimes the elderly parents of the impressed men.

No doubt, Fanny listened to conversations between her parents and later her step-mother about the Town's events, which provided her, in her early years, with a colourful background for her attentive memory and keen sense of observation to absorb; she may have drawn on some of these experiences later in her fiction.

A more personal link I had with Fanny was through the friendship she had with the elderly Mrs. Delany (1700-88) whose company Fanny found so refreshing when they were both at Windsor. Mrs. Delany, amongst her many attributes was a prolific letter writer. Fanny is mentioned many times in this correspondence.

My sisters and I grew up with the realisation that Mrs. Delany was special, for my father had inherited a large panel of needlework, which was the overskirt of Mrs. Delany's Court dress, which she had designed and embroidered herself, depicting flowers both large and small. Early in our lives we

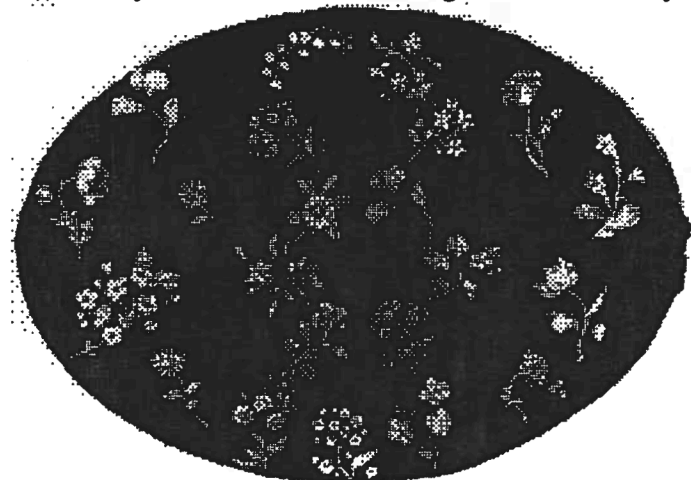
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PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS

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understood that this needlework, framed and measuring 4'7" x 3'4", which hung on a wall wherever we lived, was a treasured possession in the house, as my father instructed us that if the house should catch fire, we must first rescue his sermons and "The Delany" as we referred to this magnificent embroidery.



Flowers on court dress, designed and embroidered by Mrs. Delaney. From a private collection, reproduced with permission.

The dress of black silk was cut up and framed about 200 years ago; it was typical of the style of the mid-eighteenth-century, with stomacher, an overskirt with its rococo border, and a petticoat which fronted the skirt. Two pages of drawings show that Mrs. Delany drew some of the flowers before embarking on the needlework. Small flowers, each about 3" high, were worked on the bodice, sleeves, and on the overskirt, in many coloured silks, mostly in long and short stitch; though some of the species are repeated, there will be a twist of a tendril that makes each one individual. The richly embroidered hemline of the petticoat encrusted with large flowers and leaves, has more large ones scattered above, as if nonchalantly thrown, yet placed by Mrs. Delany's skilful hand in such a way as to be in perfect balance, one with another. The plants include winter jasmine, hawthorn berries, sweetpea, love-in-the-mist, anemone, lily-of-the-valley, tulips, forget-me-not, convolvulus, hare-bell, roses and many others.

The skirt of the dress though full, was not exaggerated in size, as worn by some of the more fashionable ladies, but this was typical of Mrs. Delany's sense of moderation. I think we can assume that Fanny must have seen and admired this dress when visiting Mrs. Delany in her house in Windsor.

George III and Queen Charlotte were devoted to Mrs. Delany, and by their many calls on her, indicated the pleasure they derived from her company. Mrs. Delany had hoped that Dr. Burney, whom she liked and knew, would be appointed Master of the King's Band, the vacancy having recently occurred. In the event this did not come about, and it seems that, as compensation, Mrs. Delany suggested to the Queen that Fanny should be made Second Keeper of the Robes. We

know now how wretchedly restricting Fanny found this appointment.

Fanny first met the King when she was staying with Mrs. Delany at Windsor and he unexpectedly walked into the sitting-room. Fanny, who was of a shy disposition, was thrown into confusion, and was, as she herself admitted "in midst of all my flutter."

Similarly to Mrs. Delany in her house, my parents had informal visits from royalty, for Sandringham, where in those days the royal family spent Christmas, was only a few miles from King's Lynn.

The Queen Mother, recently widowed, used to call, to their delight. Once when my mother answered the doorbell she found the royal chauffeur, who said that Her Majesty was in the town and would like to call in five minutes time—though my mother with the advantage of years displayed more composure than Fanny. On another informal occasion, my father took the Queen Mother round St. Margaret's church, showing her the Snetzler organ installed by Dr. Burney.

Enjoying coffee with my parents, including to their amusement taking a lump of their rationed sugar (rationing of certain food continued for a few years after the end of WW2), the Queen Mother used to admire the Delany embroidery—perhaps because there is a portrait of Mrs. Delany painted by Opie, by command of the King for Queen Charlotte, which hangs now in our own Queen's private apartments at Windsor Castle.

The Queen Mother was so good at putting people at their ease, and with my father a ready-talker (he was Honorary Chaplain to George VI and then to our Queen), conversation flowed freely. This was not, however, the experience of Queen Charlotte, for she told Mrs. Delany of the difficulty she had in persuading people to be less tongue-tied. So Mrs. Delany instructed Fanny, "I do beg of you when the King and Queen speak to you not to answer in mere monosyllables. The Queen often complains to me of the difficulty with which she can get conversation as she not only has to start the subject but commonly entirely to support them. She says there is nothing she finds so hard to get. She is always best pleased to hear the answers that are made to lead on to further discourse."

As my research into Mrs. Delany's life has deepened, it is delightful to recall these memories and to have been associated in these ways with the Burney family, memories which have highlighted my interest in the lives of two remarkable women of the eighteenth century.

Acknowledgements

Fanny Burney, Her Life by Kate Chisholm

Faithful Handmaid by Hester Davenport.

King's Lynn. The First Thousand Years Blue Badge Guides
Ruth Hayden, a descendant of Mrs. Delany's sister, Anne Dewes, is author of Mrs. Delany: Her Life and Her Flowers, published by the British Museum Press in 1980, now in its third edition. She writes articles and gives lectures on Mrs. Delany's remarkable talents. She was asked by the Bristol Museum to choose all Mrs. Delany's flower collages exhibited in New York, and in Bath, where she now lives.

British Officer Volunteers Sought

by Paula Stepankowsky

The Burney Society is seeking a new secretary-treasurer and a new vice president for the British branch, as long-time volunteers and founding members Jean Bowden and Maggie Lane are stepping down in June.

Jean, who has served as secretary-treasurer of the British branch since the society's founding, is retiring after eight years of service.

Maggie Lane is stepping down as British vice president to take up a new position as the secretary of the British Jane Austen Society. Maggie also took up her position when the society was founded in 1994.

The election for both positions will be held Friday, June 14, the second day of the two-day London conference associated with the dedication of a memorial to Frances Burney d'Arbly at Westminster Abbey.

You can nominate either yourself or someone else for the positions, as well as obtain a job description, by contacting Jean Bowden, Primrose Cottage, Gracious Street, Selborne, Alton, Hampshire, GU34 3JB, England. Jean's e-mail is JeanKBowden@care4free.net.

Both officers should, if at all possible, be able and willing to attend the annual meetings of the British branch, held in June each year.

Performances of Interest

Some special events of interest will take place soon after the conference in nearby venues

Maggie Lane, author of *A City of Palaces: Bath through the Eyes of Fanny Burney*, will be leading a walking tour of Bath on the morning of Sunday, 16th June. For those who wish, after a break for lunch there will be an opportunity to see Mrs. Delany's court dress by courtesy of her descendant, Mrs. Ruth Hayden, who has kindly invited members to her home in Bath. Those interested in joining the walk should contact Maggie Lane before the end of May. Phone +44(0)117 9684983, or e-mail mlane@bgs.bristol.sch.uk

On Saturday 15th June 2002, at 8 p.m. at The Theatre, Leatherhead, Surrey, a performance of *Evelina in Society* adapted by Maureen Lyle, with tenor John Kerr, mezzo-soprano Michelle Dick, and orchestrated by Steven Divine.

On Sunday 16th June 2002, at 7.30 p.m. in the Templeton Room, Juniper Hall, Mickleham, near Dorking, Surrey, Hester Davenport talks about *Fanny Burney at the Court of King George III*.

For more information and tickets for the performances above, please telephone 01306-881717

North American Members Meet in Toronto, Canada

by Paula Stepankowsky

While all eyes are on The Burney Society's London meeting at this point, North American members of the society will also meet for their annual meeting Friday, Oct. 11, 2002 in Toronto, Canada.

The meeting will be held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Jane Austen Society of North America, an organisation many Burney Society members also belong to.

The main speaker will be Betty Rizzo, editor of the forthcoming Vol. 4 in the series of *Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney* being published by McGill University Press. Dr. Rizzo is also the co-author of *Christopher Smart: An Annotated Bibliography, 1743-1983*, and of *The Annotated Letters of Christopher Smart*. She is also the author of *Companions Without Vows: Relationships Among*

Eighteenth-Century British Women.

The Toronto meeting will be held at the Toronto Hilton, the site of the JASNA meeting. The specific time has not yet been set, but it will be held during the dinner break between the end of the JASNA meeting and the beginning of JASNA's evening activities.

More details about the meeting will appear in the fall issue of the *Burney Letter*.

Report on Seattle AGM

by Lucy Magruder

Michael Wheeler, our speaker at the Burney Society AGM in Seattle last October 2001, started off with a quiz for us. He asked: "who wrote the novel with the opening lines: "It was a dark and stormy night?" All I could think of was: "well, it certainly is not now." Our meeting room was light and airy. Seattle provided us with a whole weekend of beautiful, sunny fall weather. This was the first time The Burney Society has met for brunch rather than our usual dinner, and it seemed to be a pleasant arrangement for all.

After brunch, there was a brief business meeting and an update on the Burney window dedication and conference. With the passing of Dr. Joyce Hemlow, Burney Society Patron who led the Burney Project at McGill University in Montreal for many years, members of the Society at the Seattle meeting voted to set up some sort of permanent memorial in honour of Dr. Hemlow, whose biography of Burney and twelve-volume set of Burney's later *Journals and Letters* are a monument to eighteenth-century scholarship.

While nothing can be finalised until British members of the Society also vote, the consensus among North American members was that the memorial should take the form of an annual or bi-annual literary prize given to young scholars for papers exploring some aspect of Burney's life and works.

In other business, North American members will plan their first meeting at a time separate from the Jane Austen Society of North America in 2003.

Because that Society is meeting in England in the fall of 2003, the Burney Society in North America would not meet again, following the 2002 Toronto meeting, until 2004 in Los Angeles.

Therefore, Burney Society members from Montreal, including Elaine Bander and Stewart Cooke, have offered to organise and host the North American conference for the Society in the spring of 2003. A key component of that conference will be the Burney Papers Project at McGill University. Scholars there are involved in editing the *Early Journals and Letters*, those dating from the years before the Hemlow edition begins (in 1791). When their work is complete, the

entire run of Frances Burney's journals will be available in published form for the first time.

When the business meeting concluded, Dr. Michael Wheeler, Professor of English Literature at the University of Southampton and then Director of the Chawton House Library, spoke on "Getting Started with Frances Burney." Reading Burney for the first time can be a surprise, after reading some of the more, may I say "delicate" novels, those at the time considered suitable for women. Compared with Austen, for example, Burney's novels are more rambunctious and definitely more blatantly political. [*The full text of Dr. Wheeler's talk will appear in The Burney Journal*].

After the talk, we were able to view a slide presentation of the latest work and developments of the Chawton House Library, the Centre for the Study of Early English Women's Writing (1660-1830), on Dr Wheeler's portable computer.

Speaking of things technological, our next meeting is probably the most important event we can imagine for our Society. And, it has been put together with so much help from computers on members' desks, that it is impossible to imagine how we could do it otherwise. Lately, there have been several conversations a day across the miles to England, to Washington State and to Arizona with many other destinations in-between.

Planning continues for the memorial ceremony and Burney conference in June at Westminster Abbey. (Please see "June Conference," p. 1).

The Conference registration form also included a place for membership renewal. If you are renewing only, please send your form and membership dues (for North America) to Lucy Magruder, Secretary-Treasurer, P.O. Box 1267, Tubac, Arizona, USA 85646; or (in the UK and elsewhere) to Jean Bowden, Secretary-Treasurer U.K., Primrose Cottage, Gracious Street, Selborne, Alton, Hampshire, England GU34 3JB.

There will be a separate mailing during the summer for the Burney Society AGM in Toronto on October 11, 2002.

Most certainly, this is an exciting year for Frances Burney (1752-1840). On June 13th, it will have been 250 years since she was born.

Celebrating Frances Burney

*An Historic Event: Dedication of Poets' Corner Memorial
250th Birthday Celebration & Conference*

*June 13 and June 14, 2002
Westminster Abbey
National Portrait Gallery
London*

In the eight years since the founding of The Burney Society, gaining recognition for the achievements of Frances Burney as a novelist, diarist and playwright has been a main goal. On June 13, 2002, we will achieve an important part of that goal with the dedication of a memorial window in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey.

A two-day international conference featuring speakers from the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia and Italy will be held in conjunction with the dedication. There will also be a performance of music composed by Dr. Charles Burney performed by the Windsor Box & Fir Company, a period music quartet, as well as a performance of selections from Burney's plays by actors Ian Kelly and Karin Fernald.

Program Summary

Thursday, June 13
Westminster Abbey
8:30 a.m.--9 p.m.

Registration 8:30-9 a.m.

Morning Sessions

Theme: Journals

Joyce Hemlow and The Burney Project
—Lars Troide, McGill University

Giving Voice to Nobody: Fanny Burney and the Authority of Authorship in the Early Journals
—Leslie Robertson,
University of Alberta

Making a Name for Herself: Reading Burney's Journals and Letters as Literary Product
—Noel Chevalier,
University of Regina

Break

Theme: Family

Matter for Comment and Observation: Frances Burney Before Evelina
—Linda Katrizky,
University of Florida

Erasing the Stepmother Story: Frances Burney and Elizabeth Allen
—Marilyn Francus,
West Virginia University

The Family in the Novels and the Novels in the Family: Frances and Sarah Harriet Burney, Sister-Novelist
—Lorna Clark, Ottawa, Canada

Man of Feeling: From Alexandre d'Arblay's Strength to Albert Harleigh's Weakness
—Kevin Jordan,
University of Florida

Lunch

Theme: Novels

Reading Frances Burney
—Justine Crump, Oxford University

Monkeys, Bullfinches, and Dogs in Frances Burney's Fiction
—Barbara Seeber, Brock University

Persuasion and Power: The Significance of the Mentor in Frances Burney's Novels
—Helen Cooper,
Bournemouth University

Burney's Comic Genius
—Audrey Bilger,
Claremont McKenna College

Break

Theme: Plays

Retrenchment and Authenticity in Burney's Love and Fashion
—Alex Pitofsky,
Appalachian University

Burney's Tragedies: The Last Frontier

—Peter Sabor, Laval University

Break

Evensong in the Abbey, 5 p.m.

Dedication of Memorial Window

Reception in the Cheynevgates Room

Toast to Frances Burney

—Kate Chisholm and Ian Kelly

Patron Memorials

Friday, June 14

National Portrait Gallery

Ondaatje Lecture Theatre

Theme: Life

Fanny Goes Dipping: Evelina Does Not

—Hester Davenport, writer

The Trajectory of Romance: Burney and Thrale

—Betty Rizzo,
City College of New York

Johnson, Burney and Embarrassment

—Freya Johnston,
Cambridge University

Break

Theme: Works

Miss Ellis and the Actress: For a Theatrical Reading of The Wanderer

—Francesca Saggini,
University della Tuscia

Frances Burney and Professional Men: From Dr. Lyster to Mr. Naird, The Surgeon

—Brian McCrea,
University of Florida

Real Illness, Now? Or Only a Pretext?: Pretext?: Malady in

Frances Burney's Novels

—Victoria Kortess-Papp,
Laval University

The Inimitable Miss Larolles: Burney and Jane Austen

—John Wiltshire,
La Trobe University

Lunch

Music by Dr. Burney and His Contemporaries

—The Windsor Box & Fir Co.

Burney People in Fact and Fiction: Dramatic Readings from Burney's Plays

—Ian Kelly and Karin Fernald

Business Meeting of the Burney Society

The Burney Society Membership Form 2002-2003

To join the Burney Society, or renew your membership, please fill out this form and return it, with your cheque, made payable to the Burney Society, for the 2002-2003 dues year (which runs from 13 June). In the US and Canada, please send US\$15 to Lucy Magruder, Secretary-Treasurer, P.O. Box 1267, Tubac, Arizona, USA 85646. For those elsewhere, please send £9 to Jean Bowden, Secretary-Treasurer U.K., Primrose Cottage, Gracious Street, Selborne, Alton, Hampshire, England GU34 3JB.

Tax-deductible donations are also welcome. Thank you for your support.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State / Province _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

Membership Dues _____ Tax deductible donation: _____ Total: _____

The Walcot Street Gravesite

With the realisation of one of the Burney Society goals (the placement of a memorial to Frances Burney in Westminster Abbey), members' energy can turn to another long-standing goal: the restoration of her gravesite. Ian Kelly reports from Bath on the status of that project.

by Ian Kelly

I first became aware of the "cenotaph" (so called as it marks no grave) that bears Madame d'Arblay's name at the same time as I first encountered her works, as dramatist and novelist. The cast of Alan Coveney's first Bristol production of *A Busy Day* visited the Walcot churchyard for, I am embarrassed to admit, a televised publicity piece. Like so many who know Bath, I had noticed the altar-shaped tombstone, as it stands in a prominent position—at the centre of a triangle of railed grass by Walcot Street church, on one of Bath's main thoroughfares.

Five or more years later, *A Busy Day* having just closed in the West End, I found myself there again, in the company of Paula Stepankowsky. I was at that time living near Bath, and was a likely and enthusiastic candidate to liaise with the church authorities about the future of the ill-tended cenotaph and the currently unmarked grave of Fanny Burney and her son, some fifty metres down the hill.

The situation is as follows: early in the century (in the last century, as we must now say) and without the consent or knowledge of the Burney descendants, the tombstone, the second to mark the grave of Fanny and her son Alexander, was moved to its current location. It forms an impressive centrepiece to this prominent Bath site, but the situation is hardly ideal, for a number of reasons. The graves themselves are in the graveyard attached to the funerary chapel, which is separated from the church and main graveyards by Walcot Street and a smaller lane. Apparently, the possibility of moving the bodies with

the tombstone was abandoned at the time when two bodies were discovered rather than one (a strange misreading of the tombstone in the first place which clearly lists both deceased). The single gravesite was left unmarked. The mortuary chapel, whilst still owned by the church, is now administered by Bath City Council and is used for art exhibitions and as a youth centre. Some members of the society have therefore expressed concern about the future of the site, as well as the potential for disrespect to all the graves.

The Society has in the past raised two linked issues over the future of the grave concerning the suitable marking of the actual site of the bodies, and the preservation and even explanation of the tombstone itself. Paula asked me to investigate the position of the church and the Bath City Council over possible schemes to reunite tombstone and graves, and mark one or both, as appropriate.

Happily, Bath City Council insists that it has no plans for any redevelopment of the land, or change of use for the chapel. In point of fact, it would be all but impossible without the consent of the church, and Bath's strict planning regulations render it even less likely. The site of the grave, though unmarked, is clear enough from photographic evidence of the site of the tombstone before its removal. Sadly, the site of General d'Arblay's grave is lost forever, as no trace remains of the slab which once lay by the side of the chapel (which dates from later in the nineteenth century). Dr. Kopsch, the current vicar of Walcot Street has not yet confirmed, but in theory the church has no

objections to the Society restoring the cenotaph by the roadside, or marking it with a plaque—similar to that erected by the Jane Austen Society in 2000 to explain the tombstone of the Rev. George Austen. Jane Austen's father was buried in January 1805 in the crypt of Walcot Church, but his memorial stone was moved, in the 1960s, to the same small enclosure east of the church where the Burney cenotaph stands.

If the Society and family are happy with the idea, the work ahead seems to be threefold. First, the single site of the graves of Fanny Burney (Madame d'Arblay) and Alexander d'Arblay should be marked, with a suitable inscription. This in itself would help safeguard the future of the graveyard and perhaps encourage Bath City Council to keep it open, or include it on tourist maps. Secondly, the cenotaph might be restored. Thirdly, an explanatory plaque, similar to the one paid for by the Jane Austen Society, could grace the side of the road behind the churchyard railings on what is a major tourist walking route, as well as a busy road. The plaque could give some information about Fanny Burney as well as directions to the actual gravesite, often accessible, two minutes' walk away.

Ian Kelly played Frank Cleveland in Frances Burney's play, A Busy Day, in London's West End. He is currently appearing in Noel Coward's Relative Values, touring around England prior to opening in the West End. His biography of Antonin Careme The First Celebrity Chef appears next year.

Letters to the Editor

From Wymondham, Norfolk, Burney Society member Ruth Frazer writes:

27 November 2001

For the last 18 months or so, off and on, I've been trying to persuade the Maddermarket Theatre in Norwich to stage one of Fanny Burney's plays in June next year, to mark her 250th birthday. As she was born here in Norfolk, I thought it might be of some interest to them and to theatre-goers in the county. Bad news, however; I've just received their brochure for 2002 which makes no mention of Burney. (And it doesn't help that the June production is another eighteenth-century comedy, and a rather hackneyed one at that--*The Beaux' Stratagem*.)

As if to rub salt in the wound, they are also staging, for one night only, an evening of readings and music entitled *Jane Austen's England*. And the date they've chosen for this? Would you believe Thursday 13th June 2002!

Needless to say, I am somewhat disappointed!

Later, our member has more news to report:

16 March 2002

I thought I'd share with you the frustration I've had trying to get hold of a copy of *Camilla* through the Norfolk Library service. You'd think that, as Burney was born in the county, her books might be easily available, but you'd be wrong! I tried the Library's website, which lists several copies of *Camilla*, but when I tried to reserve one I kept getting told that it was in the reference library only, and not available for loan.

When I called in at the local branch library I was asked whether it was a book about "Prince Charles's Camilla"! After I'd explained, they told me the same story--apparently, it is because she was born in Norfolk that her novels are regarded as reference works! Eventually, they found an edition in four volumes which they said they could let me borrow--I'm still awaiting it and will be interested to see the publication date of this particular edition. But meanwhile I've gone to the local bookshop and ordered a copy for myself, of the 1999 OUP edition!

I wonder if readers in Hampshire have similar difficulty getting Jane Austen's works from the library!

Yours,
Ruth Frazer

18 March 2002

P.S. Since writing, I've received the copy of *Camilla* I reserved from my local library, which turned out to be a 1966 facsimile reprint of the original 1796 edition. But only Volume One! However, fascinating to read the complete list of subscribers in the front, which I had not seen before.

The Burney Letter welcomes input from members. News, announcements, letters, stories, or suggestions should be sent to the editor, Dr. Lorna Clark, 2111 Fairbanks Ave., Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1H 5Z2, or by e-mail at: lelarklj@aol.com

Members' News: Recent Publications

by Lorna Clark

A selection of Frances Burney's *Journals and Letters*, edited by Peter Sabor and Lars E. Troide has just been published in May 2001 in the UK by Penguin, and is now being published by Penguin Putnam in the U.S. An internet discussion group is doing a "group read" of this book, on a list owned by Ellen Moody and Joanne Pope, and moderated by Joan Wall. The discussion will continue until June; to subscribe, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/EighteenthCentury/?yguid=4116918>. At the

bottom of the page, there is subscription information and you will see another address:

<http://www.JimandEllen.org/18thcentlit.list.html>. You can subscribe from that page.

Also forthcoming is Volume 4 of the series of *Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney* under the general editorship of Lars E. Troide. The volume benefited from the Aid to Scholarly Publications Programme of the Canadian Federation for the Humanities. Volume 4 covers the years 1780-81, when Burney was beginning work on *Cecilia* and enjoying the

friendship of Mrs. Thrale and Samuel Johnson, until the death of Henry Thrale led to the break-up of the Streatham Circle.

The editor of the volume, Betty Rizzo, writes that it "records two distinct and quite disparate themes in Burney's life. First there is, under Hester Thrale's aegis, Burney's triumphant debut in society which is far more splashy than Evelina's. As a young unmarried woman who yet has written a popular novel, she has to be

Continued
on next page

on her guard against inappropriate addresses and blatant flattery. But she could not have managed better or more discreetly as she visits Bath, Brighton, and the important salons in London, making acquaintance of everyone important, most of whom flocked to meet her. This was a great opportunity and provided the material for *Cecilia*, which she was writing throughout the period."

"Secondly, there are the disasters at home which had to be hidden: Burney's stepmother's unpleasantness and demands; Charles's disgrace, his

relegation to Edinburgh where he finished his degree, but failed for a long period to return home, worrying the family; James's republican temper which threatened his naval career; and, yet not identified as a disaster but causing Burney much agony, Susan's preparations to marry Molesworth Phillips. There was also the constant pressure on her to be elsewhere than she was. Hester Thrale fretted unless she spent her entire time with the Thrales; she was always wanted at home, where, however, she could not write, and she needed to spend time at

Chessington, where indeed she did write *Cecilia*. It was a time of great growth and great stress."

The subsequent volume, Vol. 5, is also in the works and may be completed a year from now. Co-edited by Lars E. Troide and Stewart J. Cooke, it contains Burney's heartache over a young clergyman, George Cambridge, which was the subject of an address by Dr. Cooke to the Burney Society dinner in Boston in October 2000 (and subsequently published in *The Burney Journal*).

Janice Farrar Thaddeus (1933-2001)

by Jan Fergus and Ruth Perry

Our society has lost a fine scholar and loyal friend. Janice Farrar Thaddeus died unexpectedly on December 23, 2001, of a cerebral hemorrhage. Her fourth book, *Frances Burney A Literary Life*, had been published by Macmillan (England) and St. Martin's (U.S.) the previous year, and she was working on several Burney projects at the time of her death, one on the proofs of *Cecilia*, and another on a previously unpublished poem of Burney.

As a poet (her prize-winning volume, *Lot's Wife*, was published in 1986), she was especially well positioned to understand and represent the centrality of writing to a woman who was also a wife and mother. Like Burney, she came from a literary household. Her influential and charming father, John Chipman Farrar, founded the publishing house Farrar, Straus (and the Breadloaf Writer's Conference), and her mother, Margaret Petherbridge, invented the modern version of crossword puzzles and edited puzzles for *The New York Times* for fifty years. Literary friends of the family included Stephen Vincent Benet and Thornton Wilder.

A committed feminist scholar, she urged in an ASECS paper in the early '80s that to call Burney "Fanny" rather than "Frances" was to diminish her, a position that has proved influential. Partly as a result of her strenuous advocacy, the memorial window at Westminster Abbey to be dedicated in June, 2002, will read "Frances Burney."

Her biography of Burney was only one of her many important biographical essays on women writers. She entered

into the experience of the women she wrote about both at crises in their lives and at mundane moments as well. See especially her "'Hoards of sorrow': Hester Lynch Piozzi, Frances Burney d'Arblay, and Intimate Death" (1990) "Mary Delany, Marriage, and the Controlling Mind" (1994), and "A Spirit Free and Female: Eva Maria Garrick" (1986).

Her other books were works of very early feminist recovery. *When Women Look at Men* (Harper and Row, 1963), edited with John A. Louwenhoven, included selections from such eminent writers as Gertrude Stein, Kay Boyle, Pearl Buck, Bette Davis, Lenore Marshall, May Sarton, Willa Cather, Emma Goldman, Margaret Mead, Margaret Sanger, Edith Wharton, Dorothy Parker. Marjorie Hope Nicolson's 1937 address as dean at Smith College is quoted thus: "The fundamental reason that women do not achieve so greatly in the professions as do men is that *women have no wives*." She edited the notebooks of writer and activist Lenore Marshall (*Invented A Person: A Personal Record of a Life*, 1979), who, in addition to founding SANE, was a prolific writer of fiction and poetry. Thaddeus deciphered the notebooks, maintained the chronology, and organized the notes; Muriel Rukeyser added a forward.

Her undergraduate degree was from Barnard and she worked with the late James Clifford at Columbia for her Ph.D. She then taught English literature and the writing of poetry at Barnard for thirty years and came to Harvard in 1986 to lecture in the History and Literature Program. Four years later, she was appointed director of studies for that program, overseeing curriculum and a faculty of more than 50 teachers and 150 to

200 students each year. For her dedication to her students, Thaddeus was awarded the Phi Beta Kappa teaching prize. She retired in 1999.

In 1991, Janice Thaddeus was elected to the executive board of ASECS. She was also elected twice to the executive board of the Poetry Society of America.

In everything she did she maintained the most scrupulous rectitude. Nowhere is this more visible than in her elegant and incisive command of language. Her care and accuracy is evident in her books, her articles, and her poems. As Pat Bruckmann has pointed out, Burney's niece represented her aunt in words (quoted in *Frances Burney: A Literary Life*,

223) that have a special resonance in describing our late, beloved, and deeply missed colleague.

A passion for writing . . . innate conscientiousness, strength of mind, self denial, rectitude of principles, precision of judgment, keenness of apprehension, depth of feeling and warmth of heart formed the basis of her character; to which was added generous appreciation of the merit and character of others; discriminate selection, humorous clear-sightedness, every power of heart and intellect.

Book Review

by Wendy Thatcher



In *Johnson's Women*, Norma Clarke has written a "collective biography" of many of the women who were important literary figures in eighteenth-century England. They range from novelists to scholars to playwrights to biographers; what they shared was a friendship with Dr. Johnson and--at different times throughout the century--an important role in the literary life of their time.

In writing this book, Clarke aims to put right notable omissions from Boswell's account of Dr. Johnson. Clarke takes issue with Boswell, in particular, because of his tendency to relegate women to the footnotes. A notable exception is a dinner party Johnson attended at Mrs. Garrick's, the widow of David Garrick, on May 14, 1784. Johnson describes the dinner to Boswell in the following way: "I dined yesterday at Mrs. Garrick's with Mrs. Carter, Miss Hannah More, and Miss Fanny Burney. Three such women are not to be found; I know not where I could find a fourth, except Mrs. Lennox, who is superior to them all." Johnson added that "Mrs.

Montagu is a very extraordinary woman; she has a constant stream of conversation and . . . it has always meaning." By this time, in what was to be the last year of his life, Johnson was estranged from Mrs. Hester Thrale, or she might have been mentioned as well.

Of course, another reason Boswell deals lightly with Hester Thrale and Fanny Burney was that they were his rivals for the ownership of Johnson's memory. Clarke quotes an entry from Burney's journal about Boswell, referring to him as "that biographical, anecdotal, memorandummer."

With chapters structured around each of the Mrs. Garrick's guests, one on Charlotte Lennox, and another joint chapter on Mrs. Thrale and Mrs. Montagu, Clarke tracks the careers of these women, their relationships to each other, to Johnson and to the literary establishment--the patrons, the printers, and the reading public. She is interested in the factors that fostered or hindered their development as writers, how they saw themselves and how they have been viewed by posterity. These chapter divisions are very loose, as Clarke digresses frequently and often mentions one of these celebrated women before--and after--the chapter named after her. This leads to some confusion as dates are few and far between. Frequently, important dates are mentioned only once, or in unexpected

places, so that readers without a knowledge of the precise chronology may well be confused. For instance, we never learn when Mrs. Montagu was born until the beginning of the following chapter on Hannah More, which begins with a paragraph on Mrs. Montagu that includes her birth date (1720). The same confusion arises with Clarke's use of names, as a person that might have been mentioned just once reappears again several chapters later with no explanation or reminder.

Nevertheless, the book provides an overview of the connections between these writers, who either spent time together, as at Mrs. Garrick's, corresponded, or criticised each other--either directly, or in print. Some of the women fare better than others. Elizabeth Carter comes across as truly admirable while Hannah More, despite her successful plays, seems little more than a sycophant, ingratiating herself with the Garricks. Whereas writers such as Fanny Burney, Mrs. Montagu, and Mrs. Thrale kept the record of their own lives, much of what happened to Charlotte Lennox, for instance, is speculation.

Elizabeth Carter is the first, as her friendship with Johnson dated back to 1737 when they were both contributing to the *Gentleman's Magazine*. What first surprises one is the level of trust her father had in her, "encouraging her to do whatever she thought it was best to do."

At an early age Carter, who had been educated in all the classics, was submitting poetry and articles to the *Gentleman's Magazine*. She soon began spending winters in London, starting in 1735 when she was only 17. She was also a scholar who spoke nine languages, and was later to distinguish herself with her translation of Epictetus, which was to be the standard version into the 20th century. In 1737, however, when Carter and Johnson first became friends and colleagues, Johnson was still an unknown. His *Dictionary* did not appear until 1756, and his edition of Shakespeare until 1765. Clarke surmises that Johnson's championing of these women writers stems from his own experiences as an outsider, and she includes his famous letter to Lord Chesterfield, who was supposed to have supported the *Dictionary* project:

Seven years, my Lord, have now past since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties of which it is useless to complain. . . without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a Patron before . . .

In the chapter on Carter we are first introduced to the wealthy Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu, a patron par excellence. She was known as "Queen of the Blues," as the Bluestockings were the group, initially composed of men as well as women, whom she hosted at her salons, where wit and the art of intelligent conversation were practised into the night, fuelled by tea, lemonade, and biscuits. Throughout her life she was to offer encouragement--both monetary and otherwise, to writers. Some, like Elizabeth Carter, respected her but stubbornly guarded their independence, while others, like Ann Yearsley, the milkwoman poet, came to resent her interference.

There was a great deal of cross fertilization. It was Elizabeth Carter who encouraged Mrs. Montagu to write, and Johnson's edition of Shakespeare which was the incentive for Mrs. Montagu's own *Essay on Shakespeare*, which came out in 1769. In fact, Montagu, Johnson and Charlotte Lennox all produced works on Shakespeare, from different perspectives.

Similar to the role played by Mrs. Montagu as patron of the literary arts was that of Mrs. Thrale for Dr. Johnson himself. Johnson was to stay with the Thrales off and on for about 20 years, and he was a godsend for Mrs. Thrale. Although she had been well educated, she had more or less been sacrificed by her parents in her marriage to Henry Thrale, who had money but who did not share her interest in literature. Over the course of her marriage, Mrs. Thrale gave birth to 12 children, of whom 8 died; this figure excludes numerous miscarriages. Fortunately, because of Johnson's presence, the Thrales' home at Streatham became a centre or gathering place for writers, artists, and musicians. By the time of the famous dinner at Mrs. Garrick's in 1784, however, Johnson had severed all ties with the widowed Mrs. Thrale, because of her unseemly attraction to the Italian tenor Gabriele Piozzi, a Catholic and a foreigner.

The chapter on Burney may well be a disappointment to Burney devotees because of its brevity and because it does not really say anything new. In fact, Clarke focuses primarily on Burney's public persona, noting that Burney "knew the market value of meekness." We see a fair amount of the proper lady, but little of the witty, ironic voice which emerges from the pages of the diaries. Burney met Johnson just after *Evelina* was published in 1778. Johnson, then still an intimate at the Thrales, was let into the secret about the authorship of *Evelina* early on, and Burney quickly became a favourite of Johnson's.

Clarke notes that Johnson understood the aggression that lay behind

Burney's demure social manner; and even drew vicarious pleasure from it, seeing parallels to his own time spent toiling without recognition. He encouraged Burney to take on Mrs. Montagu: "Down with her, Burney! . . . Attack her, fight her . . . You are a rising wit, and she is at the top; and when I was beginning the world, and was nothing and nobody, the joy of my life was to fire at all the established wits. . . . So at her, Burney,--at her, and down with her!" Instead, Clarke notes that "shyness and slyness" were Burney's preferred weapons.

Somewhat to Burney's discomfort because of the attention Johnson drew, as much for his appearance and idiosyncratic behaviour as for his fame, Johnson became even fonder of her with time. In 1782, when everyone was speaking of Mrs. Siddons at a party, Johnson noted "that from one corner to another they are talking of that jade Mrs. Siddons! Till, at least wearied out, I went yonder into a corner, and repeated to myself Burney! Burney! Burney! Burney."

A good part of the chapter on Burney focuses on her friendship with Mrs. Thrale. Mrs. Thrale, although deemed a good friend, almost a sister, by Fanny, revealed her own ambivalence about Burney, noting that "her conversation would be more pleasing if she thought less of herself." Clarke notes the dangers inherent in relationships based on patronage. Fanny, proud of her name and of being the daughter of the distinguished Dr. Burney, was wary of "being domesticated" with Mrs. Thrale.

Another section of the chapter on Burney is a comparison with Dorothea Gregory, who lived as a companion in the household of Mrs. Montagu. Dorothea was the daughter of Dr. Gregory, author of *A Legacy for Daughters*. One of the issues Clarke examines is what these two young women owed their fathers, as both men had worked hard to rise in a society that was more interested in birth than merit. Both daughters functioned as

"amanuenses, secretaries and scribes" for their fathers, but both were secretly writing novels. Unfortunately, Dorothea Gregory's works have been lost.

Although Burney was determined to be the "proper woman" and Clarke documents her attempts, she also includes a fair amount of background information on the kind of romances the proper women writers were struggling against. Clarke quotes Richardson, who referred to women such as Pilkington, Phillips, Manley, Haywood, and Behn, as the "set of wretches."

While Hannah More had made £600 profit on one of her plays, Clarke notes that Dr. Burney took charge of the publication of *Cecilia*, Burney's second novel published in 1782, and he sold the copyright for a mere £250 as "his concern was for the prestige and honour that came from the widest circulation of her name; he was not concerned to secure her financial independence."

Like other Burney biographers, Clarke is very critical of Dr. Burney's role in encouraging Fanny to accept the appointment at court as Second Keeper of the Robes: "Like the Belfield family in

Cecilia, the women in the Burney family were to be sacrificed for the men." In fact, though Johnson had died several years before, it was Johnson's old friends who finally convinced Dr. Burney that Fanny's health was in jeopardy; and after five years at court, she was finally permitted to leave, fortunately with a pension of £100 per year. One aspect that Clarke does not really cover is Fanny Burney's various bouts with ill health, brought on by the pressures and anxiety related to writing and publication. Of course, we really only see in any depth the period of her life that corresponds with Johnson's.

In the final chapter of the book, Clarke evaluates the role Johnson played in the lives of each of these women as his own role evolved from outsider to spokesperson for the literary establishment. In this chapter, we learn in capsule form what happened to them after the death of Johnson. The saddest story, perhaps, is that of Charlotte Lennox, the author of *The Female Quixote* and *Shakespeare Illustrated*, and the first translator into English of many

Greek plays; she disappeared into oblivion. While she was briefly an insider, even being "crowned" by Johnson with bay leaves in 1751 at the Devil tavern, she was an extremely difficult person and was apparently trapped in an abusive marriage; and, after the 1750s she was constantly in need of money. She emerged briefly, getting financial assistance in 1792 from the Royal Literary Fund and again about 10 years later. Unfortunately, many of the details of her life have been lost, but she appears to have died in poverty

While some readers may not appreciate Clarke's habit of "popping in and out" of the writers' lives, her book provides valuable information on the social identity of these women writers and how they dealt with money pressures, publication problems, their families and with each other, both on a personal and an intellectual level.

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