

The Burney Society UK Newsletter Winter 2017



Edward Dayes, 1763-1804, *Queen Square, London, 1786*. Watercolour with pen and black ink over graphite. Yale Centre for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection. Accession Number B1977.14.4639.

Season's Greetings to all our members

Burney Society UK Research Bursary

The Burney Society UK is very pleased to invite applications for a Research Bursary for the 2017-18 academic year. The Bursary is open to a doctoral student or an independent scholar who is a member of the Burney Society UK and is currently researching any aspect of the life and work of Frances Burney and/or any of her family and/or wider circle. (To become a member of the Society, go to <https://burneysociety.wordpress.com/category/membership/>).

An award of £300 will be made towards travel, accommodation and living expenses for a research visit to a UK library, archive or similar research facility. The successful candidate will be expected to deliver a paper on their work at a future Burney Society UK AGM or, if that's not possible, to write a report for the Society's newsletter.

To apply, please send a CV and a completed application form (which includes a statement of research of no more than 1000 words that makes clear its relation to Burney and/or members of her family and/or her wider circle) by email to burneysocietyuk@gmail.com. Application forms can be found on the Society's website (www.burneysociety.wordpress.com).

Deadline: 31st March 2018. The winner will be announced in May and the successful applicant will generally be expected to undertake the research trip by the end of December 2018 at the latest.

Society Events

Burney Society UK Symposium 2018

'Making Connections: Burney, Johnson, Thrale & Walpole'

Monday 2 July 2018 at Dr Johnson's House, Gough Square, London EC4A 3DE

Tickets are £25 to include refreshments, lunch and wine reception. Tickets are now available via Eventbrite. Tickets are limited to 30 so please book early to avoid disappointment.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/burney-society-uk-symposium-2018-tickets-41383599460>

This is a Burney Society UK Event, to which all Burney & Johnson Society members are welcome. Please note that this venue has no step- free access or lift and the Symposium will be held on the top floor. Toilets are in the basement.

Please see Burney Society UK website for updates: <https://burneysociety.wordpress.com/>

Provisional programme

- 10.30 Registration, coffee.
- 10.50 Welcome and introduction: Miriam Al Jamil
- 11.00 Keynote: Peter Sabor, *'From Johnson's Fanny and Queeney to Mme d'Arblay and Lady Keith: The Arc of a Sixty-year Friendship'*.
- 12.00 Sophie Coulombeau: *'Life is a Magic Lanthorn: The Lives of Hester Thrale Piozzi'*.
- 12.30 Cassie Ulph: *'After Mrs. Thrale. Hester Piozzi in Later life'*.
- 1.00 Lunch
- 2.00 Lorna Clark: *'All the dear Burneys, Little and Great'*.
- 2.30 Gillian Skinner: *'Burney, Walpole and the Tragedy of Incest'*.
- 3.00 Break
- 3.30 Francesca Saggini: *'Francis Burney and the Elusive Muse'*.
- 4.00 Kate Chisholm: *'Why Dr Johnson can be bad for you'*.
- 4.40 Break
- 4.40 Celine Lupp McDaid, curator of Dr Johnson's House: Summary
- 4.50 Reception. Thanks and Round table discussion
- 5.30 Close

Annual General Meeting 2017

The 2017 AGM was held on Saturday 7th October 2017 at Notre Dame University.

Following the AGM there was a talk by member Daniel Waterfield titled "'My brain is on fire!' Religious toleration after The Gordon Riots in Burney's Cecilia.'

Daniel has kindly made a transcript of his talk available for members to read.

This transcript and AGM Documentation, including the Chairman's Report, Minutes and advance information on the 2019 Burney Society UK Conference are all available on our website:

<https://burneysociety.wordpress.com/2017/09/23/agm-saturday-7-october-2017/>

Burney Society UK Social media sites

We would like to make members aware that information on the Burney Society UK can be found on:

- **our website** <https://burneysociety.wordpress.com/>
- **our Facebook page** <https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=frances%20burney%20-%20the%20burney%20society%20uk>
- **our Twitter account** <https://twitter.com/burneysocietyuk?lang=en>

Membership

For any Burney Society UK membership enquiries please contact our Membership Secretary, Deborah Jones, by email at deborahjark@aol.com

Did anybody see?

Nick Drake's play *All the Angels*, about Handel's struggle to stage the premiere of *Messiah*, features none other than one teenaged Charles Burney. Told about this by Handel expert Ruth Smith, I bought a copy and hungrily read the (rather short) scene in which Burney appears. The main characters were Handel, of course, Susannah Cibber, the singer, a curious Irishman Crazy Crow, who acts like the chorus in a Greek play, and whose actor also covers the parts of Charles Jennens, librettist, and William Cavendish, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Charles is portrayed as a musical youth rather star-struck by the famous composer, and asking his advice about such matters as chromaticism. I wish I had seen the play at the Globe Theatre in December 2016. David Horovitch played Handel and Laurence Smith, Burney. Did any of our members see it? Do write in and tell us.

By Deborah Jones

Production link <http://www.shakespearesglobe.com/theatre/whats-on/sam-wanamaker-playhouse/all-the-angels-2016>

Our picture challenge from the Autumn Newsletter 2017



James Barry, *Commerce, or the Triumph of the Thames*, 1777 - 84 & 1801. Oil on canvas, 360cm x 462cm. Reproduced by kind permission of the Royal Society of Arts, London

Many thanks to Burney members who were inspired to contribute their ideas about the Barry mural in our Autumn newsletter, which shows Charles Burney swimming among the nymphs in his full academic robes!

Roger Massie wrote:

This mural, with its stupifyingly phallocratic light-house message, well illustrates what Fanny and her like were up against. It is true that Charles and his fellow Captains of Industry and the Arts look thoroughly embarrassed. Themselves relatively modestly attired, they do not know where to look, while drowning in the midst all that dripping female flesh - their Muses, perhaps?. Are life-boats at hand? Do I make out the features/attributes of that scandalous French scribbler, Mme De Stael, who allegedly surprising Napoleon in his bath, declared "Genius has no sex"?

I look forward to sharp-eyed fellow Burneyites furnishing names.

What indeed do our readers feel Frances was up against? And was there a French tradition of women surprising men in their baths? (what about Charlotte Corday?) Would Charles be amused?!

And from Karin Fernald, who provides more names:

What fun to see Charles Burney in the water helping to prop up Poseidon or Neptune. The serious person in front, doing as it were the heavy lifting, is Captain James Cook; followed by Sir Francis Drake and behind him Sir Walter Raleigh, in hat and feather. Or it might be the other way round. This is a Triumph, as the artist proclaims, and you can't have a triumph without music, hence Dr Burney. Besides which, Dr.B writes about Ancient Greek music in his History of Music so it is most appropriate to have him supporting Poseidon/Neptune. Furthermore, Dr.B's eldest son James had sailed with Cook. Let us all look out for more Burney-related pics!

We love the points about James Burney and Captain Cook, and are still wondering how flattered Charles would have been about Barry's decision to make him swim, while Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Montagu are on dry land elsewhere in the series of murals.

William Pressly, probably the most well-known writer on Barry's murals can be seen talking about them and in front of them in the Great Room at the RSA here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GfCxqfgW4LU> [accessed 8 December 2017]



Detail. James Barry, *Commerce, or the Triumph of the Thames*, 1777 - 84 & 1801.



Detail. Peter Paul Rubens, *The Disembarkation of Marie de' Medici*, 1622-26, Louvre.

Pressly writes that the inclusion of Charles Burney, a good friend, 'earned him nothing but ridicule'. (...) 'Presumably his friend was as surprised as everyone else to find himself amidst a bevy of naked nereids'. (William L. Pressly, *James Barry's Murals at the Royal Society of Arts: Envisioning a New Public Art*, Cork: Cork University Press, 2014, pp 104-106) Pressly notes that Barry ventured further than Rubens had in his *The Disembarkation of Marie de' Medici*, 1622-26, by placing Burney in the water next to the Nereids, instead of in a detached space, 'ultimately paying a high price for his breach of decorum'. (ibid)

Barry painted the six canvases gratis. In his words, the unifying purpose of his paintings for the Society of Arts was to illustrate 'one great maxim or moral truth, viz. that the obtaining of happiness, as well individual and public, depends upon cultivating the human faculties. We begin with man in a savage state ... and we follow him through several gradations of culture and happiness, which, after our probationary state here, are finally attended with beatitude or misery' (*Account*, 1783, reprinted in *Works*, p.322)

In the picture, The Thames, portrayed as a classical river god seated in a chariot facing left, is guided by navigational instruments either improved or invented by Englishmen and propelled by the illustrious seamen (identified by Karin). Mercury, God of Commerce, flies above, and nereids bring manufactured goods to trade with the four continents; Europe offers wine and grapes, Asia silks and cotton, America furs, and Africa slaves. Charles Burney appears beside Sir Walter Raleigh. Barry made many changes as the project developed. The naval tower that combined mausoleum, observatory and lighthouse, is supported by sailors riding sea horses. It was added in 1801, as his response to the competition to design a monument to Britain's naval victories.

An interesting reference to the mural can be found many years later. James Stanier Clarke and John M'Arthur published a memoir *The Life and Services of Horatio Viscount Nelson*, (London: T.Cadell and W.Davies, 1809) which included a print of Benjamin West's painting of *The Apotheosis of Nelson* as a frontispiece. In the following year, Robert Southey's article in *The Quarterly Review* criticised West's image, stating that 'the famous situation of. Dr. Burney with his harpsicord [sic] in the Thames appears perfectly reasonable when compared with this accumulation of incongruities.' The article goes on to express the hope that 'such gross allegories' would one day be seen as unacceptable to true taste. 'The invisible world is not within the artist's province'. (*Quarterly Review*, Vol.III, February 1810, p.219). You can read the article here: <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.c031993833;view=1up;seq=235> [accessed 8 December 2017]

Winter 2017 Picture challenge.

Here is some information about our current picture challenge. It can be found full size heading this newsletter:



Detail. Edward Dayes, 1763-1804, *Queen Square, London*, 1786. Watercolour with pen and black ink over graphite. Yale Centre for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection. Accession Number B1977.14.4639.

"Queen Square" is one of a series of four views of London squares that Dayes produced at the outset of his professional career. He exhibited views of Queen Square and Bloomsbury Square at the Royal Academy in 1787; these, along with his views of Hanover and Cavendish Squares, were engraved in 1787 and 1789. Queen Square, first laid out in the early eighteenth century, is located just east of Russell Square and was distinguished for its open prospect of the countryside, looking toward Hampstead and Highgate to the north...

All four of Dayes's views suggest social tensions underlying the ordered, placid appearance of the squares, which in reality had a reputation for violent crime, particularly robbery, and were seen as potential sites for the gathering of disruptive crowds; as recently as 1780, foot patrols had been stationed in Queen Square during the Gordon Riots... " Eleanor Hughes, 2007.

You can read more on the following site:

<http://collections.britishart.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3645702>

Which 'social types' are depicted in Dayes's painting?

Whose statue was placed there and why?

What is the Burney connection with Queen Square? (There may be more than one!) Below is a clue.



Picture clue

Arthur Devis, 1712–1787, British,
Mr. and Mrs. Hill, between 1750 and 1751,
Oil on canvas,
Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection,
recto, framed
Accession Number B1981.25.226

Please let us know your thoughts on this by end of March 2018 burneysocietyuk@gmail.com

We will post them in the next newsletter.

If you have any other item to contribute to our next Newsletter, or any comments or questions, we would be delighted to hear from you. Please email us at burneysocietyuk@gmail.com