

The Burney Society UK Newsletter Summer 2018



Dear Burney Member,

Welcome to our Summer 2018 Newsletter. It was lovely to see so many members at the Symposium last month. In this newsletter we have included a report on the event written by Jill Webster.

There is more news of upcoming events for your diary, our AGM in October, our 2019 conference in Lincoln and the sad news of the passing of Elizabeth Burney Parker who contributed so much to our Society.

Elizabeth Burney Parker



PARKER ELIZABETH MARY (née BURNEY) Passed away on Friday 27th April 2018. A much-loved mother to WILL PARKER and grandmother of Harvey, Titus and Angus. She will be sadly missed by all who knew her.

'This picture was taken in the garden at our old house in Stockwell, in (I think) the summer of 1988. The resolution is slightly grainy, but it's a nice photo, and I felt shows my mother as she would have liked to have been remembered.'
Will Parker (son of Elizabeth)

Elizabeth Burney Parker made significant contributions to the Burney Society, including her role as a vital member of the group who facilitated the installation in 2002 of a commemorative window dedicated to Frances Burney in Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey. (Detail above)

'The last time I saw her was in Paris in 2010; she seemed to have great spirit and energy for her age. She told me about visits she had made to historical sites in the area, and the last time I saw her, after the dinner, at about eleven o'clock at night, she was shepherding a group of people off to take the subway back to their hotel.' Lorna Clarke, May 2018.

2018 Burney Society UK Research Bursary

We are delighted to announce that our 2018 Research Bursary has been awarded to Madeleine Pelling who is a final year doctoral student at York University. Her proposed research will focus on the courtier and diarist Mary Hamilton (1756-1816), who operated within Frances Burney's circle, serving as a lady-in-waiting at the royal court and later attending the Bluestocking salons of Elizabeth Vesey and Mary Delany.

Membership fees 2018 - 2019 are now due

Membership of *The Burney Society (UK)* is open to everyone who is interested in the life and writings of Frances Burney and/or her family. The annual subscription is £20 for individuals, £25 for couples living at the same address and £15 for students. Membership is renewable on 13 June each year, the anniversary of Burney's birthday.

If you decide to join our society, you will receive the *The Burney Society UK Newsletter*, emailed to members seasonally. You will also receive two *Burney Letters* a year from the North American Burney Society and their publication *The Burney Journal* more sporadically.

To join for a year, please download a copy of our membership form [Membership Renewal Form June 2018 -2019](#) and post or email it to the address given at the bottom of the form. Please make cheques payable to the Burney Society.

We encourage membership by direct debit or standing order. If you would like to pay in this way, please email the Treasurer, Deborah Jones, on deborahjark@aol.com

Annual General Meeting 2018

The 2018 AGM will be held on **Saturday 6 October 2018** at Notre Dame University in central London.

The AGM Agenda will be posted on this website in advance. Please send any suggested agenda items to burneysocietyuk@gmail.com

Following the AGM a paper will be given by **Joseph Morrissey**, who has just published a book on *Women's Domestic Activity in the Romantic-period Novel: Dangerous Occupations* (Palgrave, 2018). Joseph will be speaking on Burney, taking his theme from the subject of his book.

Joseph Morrissey teaches English literature and academic writing at Coventry University. His main area of expertise is British Romanticism, with specific focuses on women's writing and domesticity. Joe completed his doctorate on the work and leisure activities of genteel, Romantic-period women at the University of Warwick in 2013. During his studies, he held a Chawton House Visiting Fellowship in addition to doctoral scholarships and transitioned to an Institute of Advanced Studies Early Career Fellowship at Warwick upon completion of his PhD.

Joe's monograph, *Women's Domestic Activity in the Romantic-Period Novel, 1770-1820 – Dangerous Occupations* was published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2018. This book examines how women's domestic participation shaped their personal and interpersonal experiences. Joe has also published a journal article and book chapter on Charlotte Smith's novel, *Ethelinde*. These essays discuss how Smith presents women's emotions as a pro-active form of labour in the domestic economy. Currently, Joe is working on Maria Edgeworth's novel, *Belinda*. He is particularly interested in how the text represents the experience of romantic love in relation to representations of psychological interiority. Future work will continue the emphasis on experiences of emotion by examining empathy as a function of domestic identity in the Romantic-period novel.

Abstract

Burney's presentation of women's musical accomplishment in her novel *The Wanderer* (1814) is conflicted. Social convention and the musical culture in the period are presented as a threat because they devalue the practice of music and also because they result in the exploitation of musical workers. Burney duly apportions blame to self-serving ladies of fashion, but when read against the grain her narrative also suggests that these ladies of fashion might themselves be vulnerable to the wider musical culture, since their musical practice alienates them from the pleasurable functions of music, from other people, and from their self-identities.

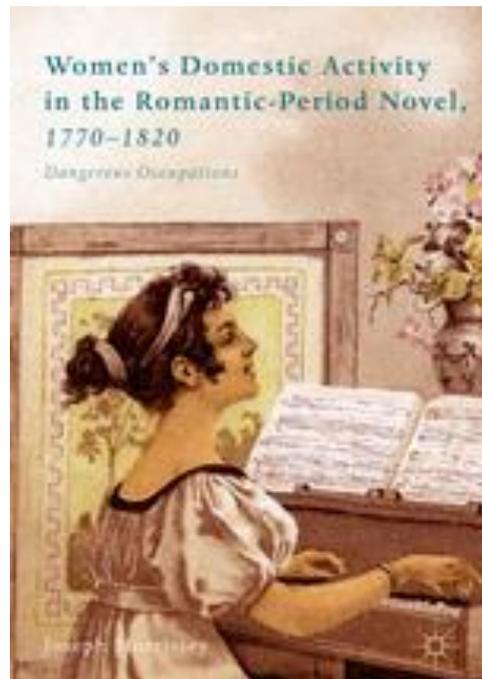
At the same time, Burney's text articulates an imagined reformation of domestic musical practices which emphasises the inherent value in music rather than its socio-cultural use-values. Nevertheless, the spectre of gendered class structures looms large, resulting in a partial collapse of women's artistic expression into feminine ideology. The boldest claim Burney makes for leisured music-making is that it could form the basis of intense interpersonal relationships, but here too the text suggests more than Burney seems to intend. Aligning accomplishment in music with the discourse of sentimentality, amateur performance in the drawing room is transformed into a profound source of human friendship, a move that is likely to stump the cognitive-affective responses of most readers, and which points to the limits of musical accomplishment in creating meaning in women's lives.

The Wanderer represents perhaps the most detailed novelistic representation of Romantic-period genteel musical practices we have available. Burney's exceptional insight into the material realities of musical accomplishment in the period coupled with the problems she encounters in squaring these insights with the ideologies put forward in the text yields a rich, multifaceted elaboration of how genteel women in the period thought, felt, and acted in relation to an activity that was an intimate part of their daily lives.

Women's Domestic Activity in the Romantic-Period Novel, 1770-1820 *Dangerous Occupations*

Author: **Morrissey, Joseph**

- Addresses needlework, musical accomplishment, reading, and the experiences of sensibility and sympathy in fiction to demonstrate how women's activity had powerful effects on diverse areas of social life
- Examines the novels of three of the best-known Romantic women writers
- Shifts the focus from the productive and cultural outputs of women's day-to-day tasks to their functions in the human experiences of joy, friendship, alienation, and desire, among others
- Examines how the polite sphere alternately fosters and constricts different ways of creating the self through domestic activity



<https://www.palgrave.com/gb/book/9783319703558>

2019 Conference of the Burney Society (UK)

Locating the Burneys: from the Margins to the Mainstream

Bishop Grosseteste University, 30 July-1 August 2019



The narrative of the Burney family's social ascent is a familiar one to scholars of the late eighteenth century. Yet the well-rehearsed tale of Charles Burney's climb from provincial poverty to relative fame and fortune in London, raising his family into the ranks of the middle classes in the process, conveniently mythologises both the Burneys and the metropolis itself. This conference will consider how the Burneys and their circle engaged with or constructed narratives of marginality and/or centrality; their relationship to marginal and/or mainstream culture and society; and the imaginative use they made of such categories. Broad interpretations of these concepts are welcomed. Further details will be available this Autumn.

Call for Papers

Proposals are invited for 20 minute (max) papers on the theme of 'Locating the Burneys: from the Margins to the Mainstream'.

Suggested topics may include (but are not limited to):

- Official, professional or establishment identities
- Social and Cultural identities
- Geographical margins: within and beyond the Metropolis
- Literary Genre(s)
- Moving between the margins and the mainstream
- Marginal figures
- Marginalia
- The Burneys in the Archive
- Burneys in relation to other authors

Abstracts of no more than 250 words should be submitted as an email attachment in MS Word to burneysocietyuk@gmail.com. You should also include a 250-word biographical statement. Please use your surname as the document title. The abstract should be in the following format: (1) Title; (2) Presenter(s); (3) Institutional Affiliation, where applicable; (4) Contact email address; (5) Abstract; (6) Biographical Statement.

The deadline for receipt of all proposals is January 31, 2019. We will attempt to notify all correspondents before February 28 regarding the status of their submission.

Report on Burney Society UK Symposium 'Making Connections: Burney, Johnson, Thrale & Walpole'

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

Miriam, Debbie, Trudie and the Committee arranged an excellent and well-attended day conference with much variety and food for thought, proving yet again that Burney was at the centre of a web of literary and cultural connections.

The keynote speech was given by **Peter Sabor**, '*From Johnson's Fanny and Queeney to Mme d'Arblay and Lady Keith: The Arc of a Sixty-Year old Friendship*'. The friendship of Fanny Burney and Hester Maria Thrale is documented in the 85 letters that remain extant and are held at the Houghton Library. From cool beginnings, a warmth of feeling and growing intimacy developed over the years, cemented by their joint disapproval of Mrs. Thrale's marriage to Gabriel Piozzi in 1784. Fanny eventually softened towards Mrs. Thrale, but Hester Maria never forgave her mother. In later years the two widowed ladies were close neighbours in Mayfair.



In the absence of **Sophie Coulombeau**, Cassie Ulph read her paper, '*Life is a Magic Lanthorn: The Lives of Hester Thrale Piozzi*'. Sophie showed how the rich and varied life of Hester Thrale was defined by men. Her first marriage was not happy but gave her the opportunity to found a literary coterie based on her friendship with Dr Johnson. She always saw her sexuality as determining her reputation & her duty. Her infatuation with Piozzi led to social ostracisation and the loss of friends and children. Hester's *Memoirs of Dr Johnson* spared little indelicate detail and brought more disapproval and opprobrium, but clearly showed that she was a writer. Shifting names, changing identities, determined by the men in her life.



Cassie Ulph then read her own paper, '*After Mrs Thrale: Hester Piozzi in Later Life*'. As well as recalling the occasion of Mrs. Piozzi dancing with a handsome young man in Bath at the age of 80, Cassie looked at her as a writer and scholar closely involved in the literary culture of the day. Her writings combine scholarship, gossip and wit, from *Lyford Redivivus* (Lyford Reanimated) to her *New Commonplace Book* and her correspondence with Lord George Fellows. She was held in esteem by her literary contemporaries. Cassie quoted a typically witty poem:

*My best regards that you may feel
Your Birthday Present in this Eel.*

Lorna Clark believes in the law of serendipity in research. Researching Sarah Burney, she discovered the prolific literary life of her younger siblings. Her title comes from a salutation from Dr Johnson to 'All the dear Burneys, little and great'. Who was little? Fanny? Who was great? Dr Burney? Johnson may well have been referring to the wider family of affectionate and supportive young Burneys, for whom Charles Burney's career as teacher, musician and writer was a fine example of how hard work and 'making & improving contacts' with publishers and editors can bring success. Charles's letters to his children (over 1000 survive) show how he encouraged them to write and persevere and use the materials of everyday life to create literature. It was a manuscript culture with a family circle engaged in literary production, all encouraging and supporting each others' work.



Gillian Skinner's '*Burney, Walpole and the Tragedy of Incest*' took us in a very different direction. Fanny's visits to Strawberry Hill in 1784 and 1785, welcome diversions from the stultifying life at Court, did not prepare her for *The Mysterious Mother* (1768) with its theme of maternal incest. A reading at Court provoked repulsion and shock in its audience; but Gillian asked whether Fanny felt a secret frisson of interest. She examined how the play influenced *Edwy and Elgiva* (1790), and concluded that unlike Walpole's Countess, Elgiva is depicted as a victim, suffering for her inadvertent sin for 'their impious union'. Eighteenth-century readers understood the underlying tale of pathos and suffering, but nineteenth-century readers were not so forbearing.

Kate Chisholm's paper, '*Beware Johnson – if you are a writer*', looked at Dr Johnson's baleful influence on Fanny's writings. Johnson saw that her talent lay in dialogue and caricature, but did not see that his powerful personality and his own magisterial use of language influenced her to become more like him in wordiness and moral judgements, to the detriment of her native comic genius. Kate asked why Jane Austen, another great admirer of Dr Johnson, could take from him what she wanted without allowing him to influence her own style, whereas, sadly, Fanny's writing could only become more convoluted and unreadable, as in her *Life of Charles Burney*. Kate asked if this was due merely to Johnson's influence, or to an intrinsic weakness of Fanny's, a propensity to be overawed by powerful older men?



Miriam Al-Jamil and **Roger Massie** shared the final slot with two brief but fascinating talks. Miriam's *From a lost house, collection and reputation: a Burney survival* dwelt on the fate of Camilla Cottage, which was greatly enlarged in the 1880s and renamed Camilla Lacey.



The Edwardian owner, a Conservative MP named Frederick Leverton Harris, became a Burney enthusiast and amassed a considerable collection of Burney prints, drawings and manuscripts, most of which were consumed by the fire which devastated Camilla Lacey in 1914. In 1937, the Evening Standard reported that some Burney memorabilia had been sold after the fire. Harris's 25 extra-illustrated folio volumes of the Journals, which had influenced his choice of memorabilia, reside at the National Portrait Gallery. So there is a slim but tantalising prospect that there are still some precious Burney/d'Arblay relics out there waiting to be discovered ...

Roger whisked us through some complex French politics in his talk, *Burney, Buonaparte, Byron and Beethoven*. His question was what were Fanny Burney's links with her three great contemporaries? Her Diaries reveal that Alexandre and Lafayette played together as boys. Napoleon resented Lafayette, a 'Republican of two worlds', and Fanny disliked Napoleon, long before the d'Arblays' 10-year incarceration in France. She said nothing about either Byron or Beethoven in her Diaries, but Charlotte Barrett called Beethoven 'a young man with curved feet'.



L to R: Miriam Al Jamil, Cassie Ulph, Lorna Clarke, Gillian Skinner, Peter Sabor, Kate Chisholm & Celine Lupp McDaid
A Busy Day indeed – and one which encouraged all those present not just to make connections with Burney's contemporaries, but to make further connections ourselves with other literary societies and the many strands of research into eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century literary culture. It was good to feel we were all reaching out, to learn, to explore and to communicate.

Report by Jill Webster
Photos: Trudie Messent

The link to Dr Johnson's House website is: <http://www.drjohnsonshouse.org/>

Upcoming Talk on Frances Burney by Miriam Al Jamil

Thursday 13 September: 19.30-21.00

'Frances Burney (1752-1840): The wit, insight and courage of a Georgian writer'

Mecure Box Hill Burford Bridge Hotel, London Road, Mickleham, Dorking RH5 6BX

Frances Burney's novels, plays, prolific journals and letters make her an important figure in 18th century literature. This talk will focus on and explore the years of her residence in Bookham and Westhumble. Frances Burney married Alexandre d'Arblay in July 1793 at St. Michael's Church, Mickleham, and spent the next nine years living a frugal but contented life nearby. The financial success of her third novel, *Camilla* (1796), was their means of survival since d'Arblay was a dispossessed refugee from Revolutionary France. The talk by Miriam Al Jamil of the Burney Society looks back at Frances' life before her marriage, at her five years as Keeper of the Robes to Queen Charlotte, and at her first novels and plays. These works shed light on 18th century society, its values and concerns, as well as the part intellectual women played in cultural life. It is only in the last few decades after serious reassessment that Fanny Burney assured her place in the canon of English Literature. This talk tells her story in her own words as far as possible.

Booking Details: Booking Essential via Dorking Halls Box Office. Max 80 people. Talk 1 hour. Refreshments available at the bar. Directions: The Burford Bridge Hotel lies below Box Hill, off the roundabout on the A24 between Dorking and Leatherhead.

<https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/visiting/event/frances-burney-1752-1840-the-wit-insight-and-courage-of-a-georgian-writer>

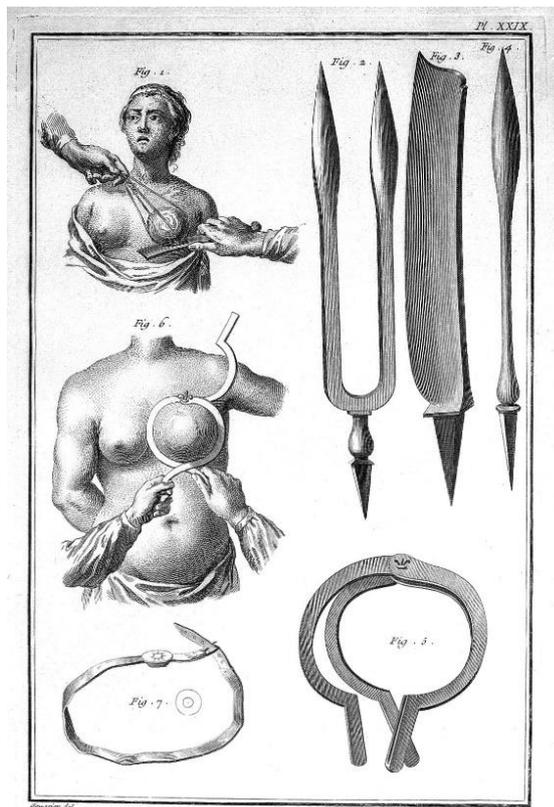


<https://enfilade18thc.com/2018/06/02/exhibition-lost-treasures-of-strawberry-hill/>

Members may be interested in this exhibition: the Burneys were friends of Walpole and visited his house.

A film about Frances Burney

Miriam Heard is a film-maker who has been in touch with the Society about the research she is undertaking for her new project on Frances Burney. 'This is my second feature film (the first, *Tierra Yerma*) about Chilean mercenaries returned from Iraq, was shot in Chile and was selected at various international festivals. I was awarded a grant by the Wellcome Trust to research this script about Fanny Burney and the mastectomy she underwent in Paris in 1811'. <https://echoartfilms.weebly.com/>



Amputation of breast with instruments,
[Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers] / par une société de gens de lettres. Recueil de planches sur les sciences, les arts libéraux et les arts mécaniques, avec leur explication. [Anon] Diderot, Denis, 1713-1784.

Credit: Wellcome Collection

Her account of the operation entered the annals of medical history, and her experience places her at the intersection of the histories of medicine, science and the female body. Her experience is incredibly cinematographic and I intend to write a thought-provoking and powerful depiction of this event and the psychological and emotional drama of its context; of the impact of cancer and Fanny's refusal to fully relinquish control of her body to the surgeons; and finally her insistence on reclaiming the sensuality of her body even when her breast, symbol of femininity, had been destroyed.

Miriam Heard is keen to share this with Society members. We are also keen to hear members' ideas and thoughts about the project!

Synopsis: Paris 1811, Europe is war-torn. Napoleon's bloody conquests spread the ideals of a new equality across the continent but England and France are embroiled in a vicious war. Fanny Burney, the famous English novelist, lives in Paris with her husband, General D'Arblay. She counts even Napoleon amongst her many literary admirers and is at the centre of Parisian cultural life. When Fanny is diagnosed with breast cancer a group of four famous doctors takes on her case: Dubois, gynaecologist to the Empress; the renowned military surgeon Baron de Larrey; and Ribes and Moreau, both eminent doctors. Querulous and arrogant, each with his own theory, the doctors argue and disagree. They know the cancer will kill Fanny, but they doubt she can survive the pain of a mastectomy undertaken without anaesthetic. Fanny insists on taking the risk and reluctantly they come together to operate. Fanny, conscious throughout the operation, speaks to the doctors, encouraging them even. Under her steely gaze they work briskly, scraping out the tumour and eventually bandaging the gaping hole in her chest. Afterwards the mood is sombre; the doctors seem altered by what they've just experienced, amazed and humbled by Fanny's extraordinary courage. Against all expectations over the following days Fanny gradually regains her strength, going on to live another 29 years.

Jottings of a Burneyite

Through my local U3A, I run a Greek drama reading group in my home. We have read and discussed our way through the whole canon of translated plays and even a few of Racine's versions. At last I felt I could ask the group if they would indulge me in leaping forward a few centuries, and take on one of Fanny Burney's, *A Busy Day* (published by Oberon Classics). They good-humouredly agreed and one afternoon we read and laughed our way through the play. Their verdict? 'Well, I didn't expect that! It was so amusing, really funny', 'Thoroughly entertaining', and 'The issues that came up were relevant to now, today'. We discussed how comic characters and themes had developed since Aristophanes and what we find funny today. One lady said that, had she seen it on stage, she would have taken it to be an Oscar Wilde. They all agreed that its time has come for a television production, and made various suggestions as to who should play whom. So, BBC, what are you waiting for?

Incidentally, I have six copies if anyone would like to use them for a group reading.

I was chatting with an acquaintance about Burney, as I tend to do, when she announced that she had a box of books, some Burney, mostly Edgeworth, and possibly some Burney manuscripts – just sent to the sale room for auction. I later spent an absorbing afternoon researching the content of the box in the auction room, and found several Edgeworth volumes and some manuscripts, but by an ancestor of my friend, a Beaufort, family of the rector of Limerick. Louise Beaufort became the fourth wife of Richard Edgeworth, father of Maria by his second wife. Hence the connection. There was a pocket guide to Oxford and its colleges, 1806, belonging to Charles Parr Burney, and two three-volume first Dublin editions of *Cecilia* and *Camilla*. I acquired the Burney volumes and have given the Oxford guide to Peter Sabor. I have an open invitation by the auctioneer to inspect any future eighteenth century works they are sent. Such joy in store!

Another time recently, I fell to chatting about Burney to the curator of the Gold Hill Museum in Shaftesbury. He asked if I could give a talk about the family to the history society there. It so happened, I told him, that I have the PowerPoint presentation of a talk I gave last year in the Holland House Centre, Crothorne, Worcestershire, called "The Brilliant Burneys: stars of the eighteenth century". I am happy to present that talk anywhere...

Finally, in a bit of shameless self-promotion, my third Julia Deane murder mystery is out: *Julia's World in Tune*. This time our heroine becomes the narrator for an orchestra's journey in Italy, inspired by Charles Burney's 1770 tour. Of course, the musicians meet with murder, theft and treachery. Available on Amazon, Kindle or ordered through bookshops. ISBN 9781983631788.

By Deborah Jones

Blake Gravestone unveiling - August 12th

at 3pm in Bunhill Fields cemetery, 38 City Road, London EC1Y 1AU.

We have been asked by the Blake Society to share information on this event with our members.

Links for information: <http://www.blakesociety.org/2018/07/21/apocalypse-unveiling-of-the-gravestone/>
<https://inews.co.uk/news/uk/william-blake-new-gravestone-bunhill-fields-cemetery-london/>

We are always keen to include articles from members. If you have an 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

Please see our website for current and archived Burney items and a downloadable membership form.
<https://burneysociety.wordpress.com/>