

The Burney Society UK Newsletter Christmas 2021



Two rows of figures, the upper one of 10 knights labelled 'Antient painting on the Tomb of Edmund Crouchback, in Westminster Abbey'; the lower row with 6 saints and angels labelled 'Paintings in the east window of Westminster Abbey' and the two on the right 'Paintings in the west windows of Westminster Abbey'. 1783 Etching with hand-colouring
© The Trustees of the British Museum

Season's Greetings to all our members

Dear Burney members,

The Committee would like to wish you a happy festive season despite current restrictions and uncertainties. We are busy planning our June 2022 London conference, which we hope will take place in person, from Saturday 11th to Monday 13th June, culminating in a commemoration of the 2002 unveiling of the Frances Burney window. Our President, Prof Peter Sabor has kindly agreed to give a Keynote paper on the conference theme.

The first item in this newsletter is the call for papers. In line with the conference theme 'Windows on the Burneys' we are encouraging a range of scholarship on the Burney family and their circle. To encourage a global participation at this in-person event we are happy to receive proposals for pre-recorded papers from those who are uncertain if they will be able to travel to London this coming June.

David and Janet Tregear, early Secretary and Treasurer of the UK Burney Society, provide a delightful insight into the early days of the Society and the 2002 Conference, including the Frances Burney window. This is followed by a review of Prof Maurizio Ascari's illuminating talk 'The Monumentalisation of Dr. Burney in Westminster Abbey: A Study in Strategy'. The next item reflects on the relationships between members of the Burney family and illustrious members of eighteenth-century society, reviewing a talk on 'The Need for Friendship: Frances Burney and Samuel Johnson's Non-Literary Relationship' by Prof Nigel Wood at the Johnson Society Luncheon.

We are pleased to announce that the 2022 BSECS Annual conference includes a Burney panel and close this newsletter with a Christmas Day extract, from the pen of Frances Burney,

Miriam, Trudie & the Committee

◇ Family interactions ◇ Fame & memorialization ◇ Literary recognition ◇ Opportunity and restraint ◇

◇ Creativity
◇ Royalty and patronage
◇ Politics

Windows on the Burneys

Burney Society UK London Conference 11-13 June 2022
Keynote by UK Society President Professor Peter Sabor

CALL FOR PAPERS

Proposals are invited for papers of twenty-minute duration which illuminate the Burneys and their circle. Whilst we have provided some key words to stimulate ideas, we look forward to papers from a range of perspectives. We will celebrate the 13 June 2002 unveiling of the Frances Burney window in Poets Corner, with an Evensong and wreath laying in Westminster Abbey on 13 June 2022. Venues include The Foundling Museum and St Bride Library in central London, and Chawton House in Hampshire.

Further information and a downloadable proposal form is available from our website <https://burneysociety.uk/conferences> Please email the proposal form, and any queries, to Trudie Messent at ukburneysociety@gmail.com by 1 March 2022. Submissions from graduate students are especially welcome and, given the current situation, in-person and pre-recorded papers will be considered. Participants will be notified by 1 April 2022. Conference registration is £140 with a 50% reduction for unfunded full-time students.

◇ Social networks ◇ Rebellion ◇ Conformity ◇ Religion ◇ Scholarship ◇ Exploration ◇ Education ◇ Place ◇



◇ Patriarchy ◇ Image ◇ Empire ◇ Print ◇ Scandal ◇

Reminiscences of David and Janet Tregear on their early involvement with the Burney Society

Our first contact with Burney matters was 1998, in Oregon, where we met Paula Stepankowsky as a great friend of local journalist, Rick Seifert, with whom we were staying for a few days of a holiday. At that time Paula was on the staff of the Wall Street Journal and Editor of the JASNA News. We recall her expression of hope for Fanny Burney's memorial in Westminster Abbey and we were not surprised by her success in 2002, of which she told us, with an invitation to the Westminster conference.

Paula Stepankowsky and Stewart Cooke at the 2002 Conference
Photo courtesy of Stewart Cooke



From Sussex the special journey to London gave an anticipatory nudge forward. Arrival at the conference centre by the Abbey, did not disappoint. It was delightful to be shown around the Abbey and to be surprised by the slab over the remains of Aphra Behn. The solemn tones of Evensong that afternoon, joined the dedication of the memorial pane in one of the windows around Poets' Corner. It was good to be reminded of the family connection by the substantial stone monument to Charles Burney, nearby. How happy it will be, 20 years later, to have the Dean's promise for another Evensong, fulfilled.

The second part of the Conference at the National Portrait Gallery for us was preceded by tea-time in the lower café, with Nigel Nicholson (author and publisher, that year, of a short book on Francis Burney) Burney Society business was starting by the time the three of us arrived at the upper room. We were aware the position of Secretary/Treasurer was vacant due to Jean Bowden's retirement, yet no list of successors was evident. Even more surprising was the suggestion by Paula, of our names for this position. Just after our professional retirements, it seemed at once acceptable.

Jean's previous experience and help with the paperwork, certainly eased the initial burden, together a stellar Committee (including Bill Fraser, Karen Fernald, and Kate Chisholm, now Bundock, Helen Cooper, and, later, Hester Davenport) This wonderful team let us carry on for the next 8 years, for which, many thanks to one and all.

David and Janet Tregear

Prof. Maurizio Ascari 'The Monumentalisation of Dr. Burney in Westminster Abbey – A Study in Strategy' Review by Trudie Messent

The paper by Prof. Ascari, following our 2021 AGM, provided a fascinating insight into issues of private and public fame in relation to Charles Burney's commemorative tablet in Westminster Abbey. This paper was particularly appropriate as we plan to visit the memorials to Dr Charles Burney and Charles Burney jr. when we visit Westminster Abbey on 13 June 2022, primarily to lay a wreath at the window dedicated to Frances Burney in Poet's Corner, on the twentieth anniversary of its unveiling.

Prof. Ascari explained that he had carried out extensive research on funerary monuments of numerous literary figures within Westminster Abbey, as yet unpublished, but for this paper he would focus on the Burneys, describing it as 'a study in strategy, or in what is now called 'literary posture'', investigating 'the relation between private and public, its representation and its blurring'.

Ascari recounted Dr. Burney's use of 'the trope of monumentalisation to encourage Frances in her literary pursuit, while warning her of the intoxicating power of success' after Frances was identified as the author of *Evelina* by writing to her "I have never yet heard of a novel writer's statue: yet who knows? ..."

Prof. Ascari went on to posit a 'communicative triangle' between 'the woman novelist, her public and her father, who is presented as the author's ultimate, supremely authoritative addressee', suggesting that Burney's prefaces may 'trace such a strong link between paternity and education' partly because Frances was home educated, and possibly 'as a strategy to captivate readers' by playing the role of daughter.

Dr. Burney's place in 'the history of British culture' through his numerous publications and his inclusion as the only contemporary 'artist' in James Barry's painting *The Thames, or the Triumphs of Navigation* was explained.

After his death in 1814, Dr. Burney was interred in the burial ground of Chelsea College, having been appointed organist to the Chapel of Chelsea Hospital in 1783. Prof. Ascari reflected that, given her father's public profile, it was unsurprising that Frances was keen to erect a memorial to him, writing to James in September 1816, that she did not want it to be 'neither seen nor known' as it 'ought to be a public mark of our filial Gratitude and duty'. Prof Ascari noted that in October 1816, Charles jnr., a clergyman with some influence, was able to inform his sister in October that the Dean and Chapter of Westminster Abbey might be prepared to place a memorial to their father, close to that of Henry Purcell, in the north aisle of the choir. Prof Ascari went on to describe the discussions between the siblings on the form of the monument, with the request from Frances that it should include a harp being vetoed on the grounds of cost. Although Frances had suggested Charles Jr, wrote the inscription in Latin, Prof Ascari quoted from the explanation Charles put forward when he declined, stating that: 'to a polished English musician, only a polished English inscription would be proper'. (Burney, *The Journals and Letters*, Vol IX, p.253)

Frances Burney then undertook the task of writing the inscription, Ascari noting that Frances wrote to Esther on 25 October, stating, 'I must do the best I can; which, also, shall be the simplest'. (Ibid. Vol. IX, p.253) Prof Ascari went on to analyse the inscription, commenting that whilst Frances was elated to have the memorial placed in the Abbey, she was 'irritated that the authorities required to see a draft of the epitaph before giving their permission'. (Ibid. Vol. IX. p. 252)

Prof. Ascari concluded by comparing the epitaph in the Abbey to the quote on the title page of the *Memoirs of Dr Burney* in which Frances, using 'an excerpt from her youthful dedication of anonymous *Evelina*', now 'free from the pressure of Charles and the Abbey authorities – Frances has now reverted to her former choices: 'built on the noble fabric of self- acquired accomplishments'. (Burney, *Memoirs of Dr Burney*, Vol III, p. 436)

Our thanks to Prof. Ascari for this informative and thought-provoking paper.

'The Need for Friendship: Frances Burney and Samuel Johnson's Non-Literary Relationship'
Talk by Prof. Nigel Wood at The Johnson Society Luncheon, 12th December 2021,
at St. Ermin's Hotel, Westminster

Review by Miriam Al Jamil

The Johnson Society of London holds an annual wreath-laying ceremony at Dr. Johnson's memorial in Poet's Corner, Westminster Abbey followed by a luncheon, at which this year's speaker was Prof. Nigel Wood. Several Burney Society members are also members of the Johnson Society and were present at the talk, of special interest this year for its Burney subject.

Prof. Wood is interested in the nuances of Johnson's friendship with Frances Burney, after Hester Thrale brought her into the Streatham circle. He noted that for Johnson friendship was a necessity, a lifeline which enabled him to develop his thoughts in a way not possible while on his own, and it always had the potential for mutual benefit. Burney was reticent and embarrassed and always in her father's shadow. Her letter to Samuel Crisp of 28 March, 1778 reveals that Johnson could be irritating but their friendship survived until his death in 1784 shortly after their last meeting.

Prof. Wood quoted several of Johnson's writings on friendship, the first stating that friendship

'..requires not only that its candidates should gain the judgement, but that they should attract the affections; that they should not only be firm in the day of distress, but gay in the hour of jollity; not only useful in exigencies, but pleasing in familiar life; their presence should give cheerfulness as well as courage, and dispel alike the gloom of fear and of melancholy' ('The Requisites to True Friendship', *The Rambler* 64, October 1750).

He was acutely aware of the fragility of friendship and the dangers that time and absence posed:

'The most fatal disease of friendship is gradual decay, or dislike hourly increased by causes too slender for complaint, and too numerous for removal.—Those who are angry may be reconciled; those who have been injured may receive a recompense: but when the desire of pleasing and willingness to be pleased is silently diminished, the renovation of friendship is hopeless; as, when the vital powers sink into languor, there is no longer any use of the physician' ('Uncertainty of Friendship', *The Idler* 23, September 1758).

A question during the subsequent discussion centred on Aristotle's distinction of three types of friendship, those based on pleasure, utility and virtue, which were almost certainly well known by Johnson. A useful discussion on this can be found here:

'...In philosophical discussions of friendship, it is common to follow Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VIII) in distinguishing three kinds of friendship: friendships of pleasure, of utility, and of virtue. Although it is a bit unclear how to understand these distinctions, the basic idea seems to be that pleasure, utility, and virtue are the reasons we have in these various kinds of relationships for loving our friend. That is, I may love my friend because of the pleasure I get out of her, or because of the ways in which she is useful to me, or because I find her to have a virtuous character. Given the involvement of love in each case, all three kinds of friendship seem to involve a concern for your friend for his sake and not for your own'.

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/friendship/> [accessed 15 December 2021].

Prof. Wood's talk touched on elements of the relationship between Johnson and Burney within the limited time available, and as is often the case, gave a wealth of ideas to follow up and think about.

Burney panel and Burney member involvement in BSECS 2022 Online Conference 5 – 7 Jan 2022

This online conference is free to members of BSECS and affiliated organisations. Registration is free and is open until 4th January 2022 via the link below. Registration will also give access to recorded papers for a short period.

<https://www.bsecs.org.uk/conferences/annual-conference/conference-registration/>

We are particularly pleased to announce that this conference includes a Burney panel:

FRIDAY 7 January 2022 SESSION II 1600-1800 (GMT)

27 Burney Panel: Revealing Lives through Memorialisation, Music and Literature

Chair: Miriam Al Jamil

Penelope Cave Mary Cooke's Book: Engaging with an album of Georgian piano music.

Mascha Hansen Sarah Harriet Burney and the Shakespearean Heroine.

You may also be interested in panel 17 which includes papers by our Chair, Miriam Al Jamil, by Alison Daniell, who serves on our committee, and by Angela Escott, a Burney Society member.

WEDNESDAY 5 January 2022 SESSION III 1600-1800 (GMT)

17 Women's Studies Group 1558 – 1837 Panel on Indifference and Engagement

Chair: Trudie Messent

Carolyn D. Williams 'The pretty chair and all the pretty ribbons flying about!' The Gotham Election' (1715) by Susanna Centlivre (c. 1669-1723) and 'The Election' (1802) by Joanna Baillie (1762-1851)

Alison Daniell 'Too many restrictions could not be thrown in the way of divorces...though they might bear a little hard on a few...it was evidently for the good of the whole': Attitudes to Women's Petitions for Divorce by way of Act of Parliament 1801-1831.

Miriam Al Jamil 'Beautiful scraps without ever making a picture': The labour of Mary Dawson Turner and her daughters in the promotion of a connoisseur and man of learning.

Angela Escott The Environment and Commercial Prosperity considered in Hannah Cowley's Scottish Village and Oliver Goldsmith's Deserted Village.

This conference includes many panels which may be of interest to Burney members, but I would like to draw your attention to this panel on Women Writers.

FRIDAY 7 January 2022 SESSION I 1300-1430 (GMT)

24 Women's Studies Group 1558 – 1837: Women Writers

Chair: Carolyn D. Williams

Amelia Mills Reclaiming the 'Carte de Tendre'. Madeleine de Scudéry, Paul Tallemant, and Aphra Behn.

Karen Griscom 'Loud Sounds of Joy': Music in Aphra Behn's Pindaric Odes.

Gillian Williamson Elizabeth Inchbald: A Life in Lodgings.

Excerpt from the 1786 Journal of Frances Burney

Christmas Day. Miss Planta and I went together to the Chapel Royal this Morning where we attended two complete services. The first concluded with a sermon by Dr. Wilson, one of the Cannons, after which we received the Sacrament from Dr. Lockman, Senior Cannon, & Mr. Majindie, - and then, returning to our seats, stayed on, after the communication service was over, till the arrival of the Royal Family; when the Prayers, read by Mr. Fisher, began again: and were ended with a sermon by the Bishop of Lichfield. After which, every body left the chapel except the Royal Family, of whom the King, Queen, Princess Royal & Princess Augusta, remained to take the Sacrament.

Immediately after so awful a solemnity, to go through the whole service a second time was just what I liked. The Mind, by this sacred Ceremony, is fitted solely for devotion, & I was happy in recapitulating Prayers & praises here rather than in my Chamber. - The sermon of the Bishop was excellent; plain, simple, devout, instructive; written manifestly for the Royal Ears, yet carefully & without disguise levelling them, on this holy occasion, with other Creatures of the Dust, alike & throughout the World dependent, frail, & unimportant.

When I came Home, I read some of my Queen's Gift, - Ogden's Sermons: *some* may sound odd, but they are so short, that a common sermon, would at least comprise Three. In quantity. I mean, not in matter; for indeed they are admirable. - Were they not approved by D^r. Johnson? - My Susan must let me lend her a Volume: perhaps Mr. Lock may have them in my Library.

Extract. Frances Burney, *The Court Journals and Letters of Frances Burney, Vol. 1, 1786*. Edited by Peter Sabor. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2011) Journal entry, pp. 300 – 301.

Membership

Although our normal membership year runs from 13 June each year, any membership subscriptions which are paid from 1 January 2022 will be valid until 12 June 2023. Membership forms are downloadable from our website <https://burneysociety.uk/membership>

For any Burney Society UK membership enquiries please email Trudie Messent at ukburneysociety@gmail.com

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

Miriam and Trudie, Co-Editors