

## Chair Report on Panel II: 'Publication research', by Miriam Al Jamil

### Simon Macdonald, Introduction to Mrs. Meeke's catalogue entry

Our conference day at St. Bride Foundation began with Simon Macdonald's presentation of the *Minerva Literary Repository* of 1798 and his uncovering of the identity of the novelist Mrs. Meeke. She produced twenty-six novels from 1795 to 1823. Macdonald's research identifies her as Elizabeth Meeke, née Allen, Frances Burney's stepsister. We enjoyed inspecting the *Minerva* catalogue from St. Bride's Library which lists some of her prolific output. Macdonald's article on this research can be read:

Simon Macdonald, 'Identifying Mrs. Meeke: Another Burney Family Novelist' *The Review of English Studies*, New Series 64:265 (June 2013), pp.367-385.

### Paper 19 'London Review'd in Paris: The Argus Newspaper between France and Britain during the Peace of Amiens (1801-2)'

Macdonald began his paper with a newspaper clipping, from 15 December 1802, taken from The Argus newspaper:

'Madam D'ARBLAY, the celebrated Author of *Cecilia*, is said to be now living with her Husband at Bourdeaux.'

Close examination shows that the newspaper, although using typically English format, was printed in Paris as a new venture during the brief interlude of peace in 1801-2 during the Napoleonic wars, publishing thrice weekly editions until 1810. It was more successful than earlier attempts to establish an English newspaper in Paris. During the peace, there was a successful exchange of ideas across the channel, coinciding with a short period when travel resumed. The remit of this newspaper was to provide a corrected review of what it claimed was a misrepresentative London press. It was critical of British politics and colonial iniquity but uncritical of the French Government. However, the gossip, satire and poetry made it a palatable publication for the English in France.

Macdonald's discussion addressed the content, conceptual antecedents and dissemination of the paper. He outlined its reception and attack by the London Press, particularly by journalist William Cobbett who challenged the Post Office's manipulation of readers' access to the paper. The British Government were alarmed and suspicious about the paper as a vehicle of political dissent. Finally, he posed the question about whether Burney's *The Wanderer* may have been subject to similar apprehension about cross-channel cultural productions.