# The Charles Lamb Bulletin

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# New Faces: The 2003 Toast

*By* DICK WATSON

This is the text of Dick Watson's Elian toast on the occasion of the Society's birthday luncheon, held at the Royal College of General Practitioners at South Kensington on 15 February 2003.

THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE USED, as Hardy said, 'to notice such things' will have realised that at the luncheon this year the geography of the room has changed. When John Beer asked to step down from being the President, the Council did me the great honour of inviting me to take his place: it was an invitation that gave me more pleasure than almost any other that I have ever received, although in accepting it I broke a private rule—not to succeed somebody who has done it better than you can. Who will forget some of the toasts of our former President? I think particularly of John Buncle with his eyes closed, or the question of whether the new millennium began in 2000 or 2001: but year after year we have been delighted with a short, delicately crafted, beautifully written piece of scholarship. How John Buncle could have been made the subject of a solemn article! How RAE-persons would have rejoiced! But we were the lucky ones who heard it, as perfect a piece of toasting as I can think of. Not only that: as President, John Beer has had a most extraordinary, some might say preternatural, influence upon the weather. The Coleridge of 'Christabel', where the spring came slowly up that way, might have speculated on it: February used to be known as February fill-dyke, but for several years now we have exchanged our Elian greetings on the sunlit terrace.

Today the weather has changed, and other things too. Lamb would not have been pleased. You will remember, from 'New Year's Eve': 'I am naturally, beforehand, shy of novelties; new books, new faces, new years – from some mental twist which makes it difficult in me to face the prospective.' One of the endearing features of his writing is his dislike of losing friends, of farewells and partings, of the kind of experience which is so poignantly summed up in the line from his best known poem—

> All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

That word 'familiar' carries with it such an abundance of meaning, such feeling: it carries us to the heart of Lamb's experience. He loved the familiar and treasured the past. Ordinary things enriched his memory, recollections of school and childhood, of old stage plays, 'of actors who pleased my youth', of elderly relatives. You will recall that wonderful moment in 'My Relations' in which he describes an aunt, 'a dear and good one':

> The only secular employment I remember to have seen her engaged in, was, the splitting of French beans, and dropping them into a China basin of fair water. The odour of those tender vegetables to this day comes back upon my sense, redolent of soothing recollections.

This is a moment which, more portentously, and in a later century about a more self-consciously ambitious writer, would have been called 'Proustian'. In 'Remembrance of Things Past', Proust's memory of the little cake, or Madeleine, was the originating impulse, the gateway to the

whole complex edifice of memory and reflection, the labyrinth of corridors in which the feet echoed through the years. But when we think of all that, we might remember that Lamb was there first, without ever seeking to turn it into an event of great import. The split beans fell, beautifully, into the fair water.

He loved such memories, though, and the faces of his friends. To lose those friends, as he did Manning to China or Barron Field to Australia, was for him a real loss, as he makes clear in 'Distant Correspondents', with its vivid sense of the time lost between writing the letter and receiving it. His wit and his sensitivity play together on the idea of time: 'This confusion of tenses, this grand solecism of *two presents*, is in a degree common to all postage'. The person writing the letter is in the present tense, and the person receiving it is too, and the letter is the same, though it may—in Lamb's time—have been written weeks or even months before. For the problem is made more acute by distance, so that a person in Australia, such as Barron Field, would get the letter long after it was written, so that, as Lamb said, 'it is no easy effort to set about a correspondence at our distance':

> The weary world of waters between us oppresses the imagination. It is difficult to conceive how a scrawl of mine should ever stretch across it. It is a sort of presumption to expect that one's thoughts should live so far.

Nowadays, of course, we have air-mail and e-mail, and our last President is going only as far as Cambridge, and some of us will think that our thoughts might just live that far. But Lamb's sensitivity to the distance between himself and his friends, to the geography of thought, to his own sense of how small and fragile a letter is in the weary world of waters—and by implication how fragile his own actual thought-processes are—is one of the ways in which he shows that humanity and tenderness of feeling for which we admire and love him. I invite you, therefore, to rise and drink the toast to THE IMMORTAL MEMORY OF CHARLES LAMB.

# Hazlitt and John Stoddart: Brothers-in-Law or Brothers at War?

*By* STEPHEN BURLEY

IN THE 1823 PREFACE to *Public Characters* Sir Richard Phillips writes, 'The malignant passions of adversaries and public writers tend constantly to distort the history of contemporaries'.[1] To a certain extent this seems to be relevant to the case of John Stoddart. Stoddart was the editor of *The Times* from 1812-16 and it was during this period that he fought an ongoing war of words with his brother-in-law, William Hazlitt, who was writing for James Perry's *Morning Chronicle* until May 1814 and then later for Leigh Hunt's *Examiner*. In *Political Essays* Hazlitt established Stoddart, alongside Coleridge, Wordsworth and Southey, as one of the four greatest apostates of the era, denouncing him as 'a very stupid, senseless, vulgar person'[2] and writing 'he is himself, if he is anything at all, an upstart'.[3] Hazlitt was not alone in creating this derogatory image of his brother-in-law. In 1815 William Hone published *Buonapartephobia*, a satirical attack on the excessively anti-Napoleonic and pro-Bourbon stance of Stoddart's leading articles. This was followed by his pamphlet of 1820, *A Slap at Slop and the Bridge Street Gang*, a savage yet delightfully comical biography of Stoddart. Leigh Hunt in *The Examiner* and William Cobbett in *The Political Register* joined in the onslaught and helped to establish an enduring myth that envelops the character of John Stoddart which centres upon apostasy, bigotry and corruption. This myth has been perpetuated in the last three major biographies of Hazlitt: Howe states that 'after going all lengths in the one direction, [Stoddart] was shortly to display an equal readiness to go all lengths in the other';[4] Stanley Jones writes that 'when he [Stoddart] took up the editorial pen the Bourbon zeal of this stubborn, opinionated, and aggressive man became, as we have seen, outrageous';[5] and A.C. Grayling refers to Stoddart's conversion 'from excessive Jacobinism to excessive Toryism'.[6] Many of Stoddart's actions and thoughts remain difficult to justify and there are a number of truths within the portrait painted of him by Hazlitt and the radicals. But as in all myths there are also several aspects of his career that have been exaggerated, distorted and misrepresented. The standard image of Stoddart's unprincipled swing from a raving Jacobin to a virulent ultra-Tory is that of radical propaganda. There is much evidence to suggest that Stoddart's early republican beliefs have been grossly overstated: his own writings manifest a distinct level of intellectual continuity throughout his career and do not illustrate beliefs from the extremes of the political spectrum. There is no doubt that Stoddart was a man who, much like Hazlitt himself, acted in response to strongly held

[1] Sir Richard Phillips, *Public Characters of all Nations*, vol. 1 (London: W. Lewis, 1823) iv.
[2] See Stanley Jones, 'Three Additions to the Cannon of Hazlitt's Political Writing', *Review of English Studies* 151 (1984): 357.
[3] William Hazlitt, *The Selected Writings of William Hazlitt*, ed. Duncan Wu, vol. 4 (London: Pickering & Chatto, 1998) 127.
[4] P.P. Howe, *The Life of William Hazlitt*, (London: Penguin, 1949) 75.
[5] Stanley Jones, *Hazlitt: A Life from Winterslow to Frith Street*, (Oxford: OUP, 1989) 258.
[6] A.C. Grayling, *The Quarrel of the Age: The Life and Times of William Hazlitt*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2000) 96.

beliefs and principles which did not alter radically. He ought not to be condemned and indicted because those beliefs and principles were the complete antithesis of his brother-in-law's.

In 1815 Hone's *Buonapartephobia* earned Stoddart the enduring nickname of 'Dr. Slop', for his ability to 'spoon out . . . RED HOT SLOP . . . at Six o' clock'[7] every morning in the newspapers for which he wrote. This attack was augmented with the publication of *A Slap at Slop* in 1820, to which was attached George Cruikshank's 'masterly representation of the BRIDGE-STREET GANG destroying a Free press, and suspending Liberty, while SLOP is working his Press to distort and torture TRUTH'.[8] Hone's short biography is one of only two surviving accounts of Stoddart's life, and although the main thrust of the pamphlet is satirical, many of its details contain fascinating references to Stoddart's career. Hone insinuates that Stoddart was an atheist and asserts that he was a fervent Jacobin. As a student at Christ Church College, Oxford, he was under the patronage of the Bishop of Durham but, according to Hone, renounced this when 'he refused to subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles'. The writer continues:

> . . . he humbled himself before him [Godwin], beseeching permission to consider that philosopher as his Gamaliel, and to sit at his feet as the least of his disciples . . . at this time SLOP'S political fervour rose above the temperament of the most hot-blooded among the patriot's he associated with . . . [he] cut off his hair to look like a democrat, became a 'round-head', and was called Citizen S.[9]

This reference to Stoddart's early republicanism is supported by William Carew Hazlitt who mentions that 'Charles Richardson the lexicographer used to say that he could remember Stoddart when he went all lengths in Radicalism, and wore the Phrygian cap'.[10] This indeed would have been somewhat hypocritical since Stoddart employed the image of the 'red cap of Jacobinism' throughout his lead articles for *The New Times* in order to mock the sentiments of radical activists.[11] With regard to his sycophantic prostration before Godwin's feet, Charles Lamb, in a letter to Coleridge dated 8 June 1796, appears to confirm this view: 'Allen I am sorry to say is a *confirmed* atheist. Stodart or Stothard a coldhearted well bred conceited disciple of Godwin does him *no good*'.[12] Jacobinism, atheism and hypocrisy are three central tenets of Hone's attack upon Stoddart. Not satisfied with this, however, the writer continues his onslaught with striking vehemence.

> This varnished hypocrite is said to be a gentleman . . . His appearance in the SLOP-PAIL [Hone's nickname for *The New Times*] is ludicrous. Affecting a semblance to which he has no real pretension, he looks like a nightman in a cocked hat, who pulls up his frills at every discharge of muck, to show his gentility. His case is a common

[7] William Hone, *A Slap at Slop and the Bridge Street Gang*, (London: W. Hone, 1820) 20.
[8] Hone 4.
[9] Hone 6.
[10] William Carew Hazlitt, *The Hazlitts*, (Edinburgh: Ballantyne, Hansen, & Co., 1911) 341.
[11] See *The New Times*, 1 July 1819.
[12] Edwin W. Marrs, ed., *The Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb*, vol. 1 (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1978) 21-2.

> one. He rose from the bottom of society by foul self-inflation, and floats a filthy bubble among the scum on the surface.
> A minion of ministers, a parasite to despotism throughout the world, public virtue is the object of his unprincipled hate and unsparing abuse.[13]

Hone's prose is imbued with a powerful rhythm create by the unstoppable alliteration, whilst his highly vivid imagery makes his denunciation of Stoddart all the more compelling. Stoddart is a 'varnished hypocrite' whose surface gentility covers his fundamental vulgarity, and a sycophantic social climber whose 'public prostitution' has enabled him to succeed in the world. Hone's reference to 'unprincipled hate' and 'unsparing abuse' picks up on his earlier attack in *Buonapartephobia* on the severely anti-Napoleonic rhetoric employed by Stoddart in his lead articles for *The Times*. Hone's two pamphlets have done irrevocable damage to Stoddart's reputation, which has, thanks to the combined efforts of the radical press of the period, been consigned to the literary scrap heap.

Hazlitt's war of words with Stoddart was the culmination of ten years of frustration and annoyance at his brother-in-law's behaviour. As soon as Stoddart gained control of *The Times* in 1812 the tension between the two opposing journalists became evident. The controversy between Hazlitt and Edward Sterling (who wrote for *The Times* under the pen-name 'Vetus') that ran from October 1813 until its relatively amicable conclusion in January 1814, constituted a dry-run for the later duel between Hazlitt and Stoddart. Hazlitt wrote two articles, 'On the Courier and The Times Newspapers' and 'Dottrel-Catching', which openly attacked Stoddart's views, before his dismissal from *The Morning Chronicle* in May 1814, but it was not until Stoddart himself was dismissed from *The Times* in December 1816 that Hazlitt revealed the full force of his disgust at his brother-in-law's political views and public behaviour. In a series of three articles written for *The Examiner* Hazlitt caustically attacked Stoddart's political apostasy and his private character. In 'Illustrations of The Times Newspaper – On Modern Apostates' Hazlitt writes:

> . . . he [Stoddart] is a man of such a nice morality, and such high notions of honour, - thrown into daily and hourly cold sweats and convulsions at the mention of daily and hourly acts of tyranny and base submission to it; flying in to the same heats and hysterics as ever, for he has all the reason now, that he used to say he had; laying it on thick and threefold, upon the magnanimous deliverers of Europe . . . gnashing his teeth, rolling his eyes, and dashing his head against the wall . . .[14]

Here Hazlitt indulges in an attempt to bestialize Stoddart. The final image of his brother-in-law as a crazed animal picks up on the imagery employed in his reply to Vetus of 19 November 1813, in which he refers to the 'war-pack' that 'rave, foam at the mouth, and make frantic gestures at the name of peace',[15] and it also anticipates Hone's image of Stoddart's regular 'discharge of muck'. These attempts to undermine Stoddart, to cast him as one of Swift's Yahoos, imply that he is not only morally and ethically repulsive, but also that he is physically

[13] Hone 17-18.
[14] William Hazlitt, *The Selected Writings of William Hazlitt*, ed. Duncan Wu, vol. 4 (London: Pickering & Chatto, 1998) 125-6.
[15] Hazlitt, *The Selected Writings* 32.

repulsive. The heavily ironic adjectives in the phrases 'nice morality', 'high notions of honour', and 'magnanimous deliverers of Europe' suggest the essential perversion of Stoddart's mind. Hazlitt adds more to this very physical image of his brother-in-law later in the same essay.

> He blusters and hectors, and makes a noise to hide his want of consistency, as cowards turn bullies to hide their want of courage. He is virulent and vulgar in proportion as he is insincere; and yet it is the only way in which he can see himself not to be a hypocrite. He has no blind prejudices to repose on; no unshaken principles to refer to; no hearty attachment to altars and thrones. You see the Jacobinical leaven working in every line that he writes, and making strange havoc with his present professions.[16]

Here Stoddart is no more than an empty windbag who acts on self-interest rather than firm principle. Insincerity and hypocrisy are the central concepts in Hazlitt's attack, and a negative catalogue is employed to indicate his brother-in-law's lack of 'hearty attachment' to any cause. The final sentence is a cutting allusion to Stoddart's youth in which he was rumoured to be a fervent Jacobin. This fundamental apostasy and hypocrisy is epitomised by Hazlitt in a clear reference to his brother-in-law in his essay 'On Consistency of Opinion'.

> If his mind, like his body, has undergone a total change of essence, and purged off the taint of all its early opinions, he need not carry about with him, or be haunted in the persons of others with, the phantoms of his altered principles to loathe and execrate them. He need not (as it were) pass an act of attainder on all his thoughts, hopes, wishes, from youth upwards, to offer them at the shrine of matured servility: he need not become one vile antithesis, a living and ignominious satire on himself.[17]

It is precisely this image of Stoddart that has endured—he is remembered as 'one vile antithesis, a living and ignominious satire on himself'. The successful undermining of John Stoddart constituted a significant victory for the radical cause in a period of post-Napoleonic disillusionment, and the controversy surrounding Stoddart inspired Hazlitt to write some of his most powerful essays. Regardless of this, however, there is evidence to suggest that the Hazlitt-Hone stereotype contains much that does an injustice to Stoddart's character and his abilities as a writer. Information that has not been influenced by the radical myth presents a very different view of him.

Hone, in *A Slap at Slop*, and Lamb, in his letter to Coleridge of 8 June 1796, both imply that Stoddart was an atheist in his youth. Stoddart's letters to his sister, however, suggest that he was a genuinely pious young man. In an undated letter that was written before 1799, whilst attempting to persuade Sarah to take an interest in natural history, Stoddart writes, '[a] mind must be dull, & insensible which does not feel itself elevated and expanded, pleased & refined by the contemplation of that regularity, beauty & harmony, which the Creator has established in all

[16] Hazlitt, *The Selected Writings* 127.
[17] William Hazlitt, *Sketches and Essays and Winterslow*, ed. William Carew Hazlitt (London: Bell & Daldy, 1872) 372.

his works';[18] and in a letter dated 14 April 1802 he quotes from the Bible and asserts that 'we should . . . rest confident in the general good of the Almighty'.[19] Stoddart's letters to his sister expose an underlying contradiction to the image of him projected by his adversaries.

With regard to Stoddart's alleged Jacobinical sympathies there are further anomalies. He had undoubtedly read and been influenced by Godwin's *Political Justice*. His letters to Sarah are suffused with Godwinian rhetoric: in an undated letter he urges his sister 'to exert a cool judgement, & to place a firm reliance on my acting on the soundest principles',[20] and in a letter of 21 July 1801 he writes that 'it belongs to me to assist you in the exercise of cool reason'.[21] It must be remembered, however, that Godwin's philosophy was based on a fundamental quietism, rather than political activism, on individual enlightenment brought about by education, private reading and calm contemplation. It is this that seems to have appealed to Stoddart. The literary influences upon him at this time were not, however, confined to those of Godwin (whose atheism was not compatible with Stoddart's religious beliefs). The Burkean notions of 'honour' and 'duty' are also evident in these early letters to his sister. Sir Richard Phillips' short biographical sketch of Stoddart in *Public Characters* makes an intriguing contrast to that written by Hone in *A Slap at Slop*. Phillips makes no mention of Stoddart as an apostate, which is somewhat odd when Phillips' spirited denunciation of Southey is considered, nor does he refer to any early republican sympathies. Phillips ends his biography with the statement, 'The political principles which Dr. Stoddart has maintained in all his published writings, are nearly those of the late Mr. Burke, whom he often quotes with admiration'.[22] Indeed, it is also rather odd that when Stoddart was trying to establish himself as a significant literary figure in the 1790s not one of his published works contain any indication of strong republican views. In his *Remarks on Local Scenery and Manners in Scotland* he writes:

> We seem inspired with enthusiasm to fall down and worship the golden image of commerce; but reflection bids us pause, and consider whether this mighty engine may not be overworked; whether there is not some foundation in the complaints of our poets and moralists, who have deprecated the march of luxury, and dreaded the substitution of artificial wants for natural affection. Truth probably lies in the middle . . .[23]

Again a Godwinian influence is evident, yet considering that this is Stoddart's most outspoken political comment in all of his early publications it hardly amounts to evidence of Jacobinism. Indeed, in another undated letter to his sister, Stoddart writes, 'Fortunately for us we are but little

[18] Pinney Papers, held in Bristol University Library, Box B1.
[19] Pinney Papers.
[20] Pinney Papers.
[21] Pinney Papers.
[22] Sir Richard Phillips, *Public Characters of all Nations*, vol. 2 (London: W. Lewis, 1823) 457.
[23] John Stoddart, *Remarks on Local Scenery and Manners in Scotland During the years 1799 and 1800* vol. 1 (London: William Miller, 1801) 11-12.

engaged in politics'.[24] He certainly associated in radical circles in the mid-1790s, but he did so even as late as 1808, by which time he had worked as the King's Advocate in the Admiralty Court of Malta. In this light the conventional image of Stoddart's swing from the extremes of the political spectrum appears to be questionable, as most of the evidence concerning his political beliefs in the 1790s gives no indication of Jacobinism or republicanism.

Stoddart's later political journalism is at times more difficult to justify. His desire to see 'the Louvre being sacked by Cossacks to revenge the burning of Moscow'[25] is one such example, and Hazlitt was rightly outraged at this. Stoddart also had a rather childish inclination towards name-calling, and it is for this reason that he was satirised by Hone in *Buonapartephobia*: he managed to call Buonaparte 'the Corsican', 'the low-minded Corsican', 'the wily Corsican', 'the once-insolent Corsican', 'that execrable villain', 'that hypocritical villain' and 'that perjured villain', amongst many other things. These insults reached a peak in the months from March to June 1815, and it is mainly for the articles he wrote during these months that he is remembered. It is important, however, to place Stoddart's later work within the historical context of the period. He was not a racist bigot who despised the French—indeed much of his writing suggests that he was a genuine Francophile. Stoddart's animosity was directed solely against Buonaparte whom he felt could not be trusted: he held a strong conviction that peace could never be achieved safely whilst Buonaparte ruled France. Many of his contemporaries shared this belief and a fascinating letter to his sister (probably written in 1799) shows how close the reality of invasion had become at the turn of the century.[26] With Buonaparte's escape from Elba in 1815 the threat of further French imperial expansion seemed ominous and provoked Stoddart to write some of his most vitriolic journalism. When Buonaparte was finally defeated by the Allied forces at Waterloo Stoddart turned his attention to the fears of internal revolution in Britain. This again was harshly condemned by the radical writers, but such was the degree of the political ferment at the time that, to some extent, Stoddart's fears can be justified. The Peterloo massacre (1816), the Spa Fields riots (1817), the Pentridge Revolution (1817), the Cato Street conspiracy (1820), and the ongoing Luddite agitation all worked to convince Stoddart that Britain would witness a revolution as disastrous as that which the French had just experienced. It was for this reason that he supported the draconian measures of Liverpool's government. Stoddart's 'Address to the Public' appeared in the first issue of *The New Times* on 1 January 1818 and is a key document in this respect—it constitutes a courageous defense of his beliefs, and he answers, point by point, all of the accusations leveled at him by the radical press.

> Our principles on this head have been ridiculed, as *ministerial*. Be it so! If what we have written, in a warm and earnest zeal for the public welfare, has, for the last ten months, served the cause of ministers, we rejoice at it; for most solemnly, and in our consciences, do we believe, that the cause of ministers, during that eventful period, was the cause of the country. Their banner was displayed *on the outward wall*, when

[24] Pinney Papers.
[25] See A.C. Grayling, *The Quarrel of the Age: The Life and Times of William Hazlitt* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2000) 169.
[26] Pinney Papers.

> the fortress of the constitution was being assailed. To them it was necessary to rally, or to see the venerable edifice leveled in the dust.
>
> We declared our clear opinion, that when the constitution is attacked, the government, *as part of the constitution*, ought to be supported with hand and heart; with sure exertion and with fixed confidence. We saw that the constitution was in fact assailed by men utterly ignorant of the nature of Government – by men regardless of duties, moral and religious – men furious with rage, or tormented by envy, or greedy of ill-gotten gain.[27]

Here Stoddart confidently reveals his 'ministerial' sympathies and logically explains the principles behind them. His background as a lawyer becomes evident in the legalistic formulations he adopts ('most solemnly . . . do we believe') in order to imbue his prose with a sense of legal solemnity and grandeur, and to give the impression that he is delivering an oath of allegiance. The imagery that he employs is particularly impressive. In the analogy between the seditious attacks on the constitution and the storming of a 'venerable edifice' he may have had in mind Burke's description of the raid on the Versailles Palace in *Reflections on the French Revolution*; indeed, his description of the assailants as 'men furious with rage' is similar to Burke's reference to the 'band of cruel ruffians'[28] who desecrate the bedroom of Mary Antoinette. This image of 'men furious with rage' is precisely that which Stoddart has himself been branded, but as the above passage illustrates, his rhetoric is nothing but rational and meditated—it is, in many senses, a Godwinian response to his critics.

More than four years before he wrote the 'Address to the Public', Stoddart's writing displayed several similar indications of literary ability and controlled rhetoric. His article for *The Times* of 14 December 1813 is another highly impressive example. In this article Stoddart makes the important distinction between 'a Jacobin spirit' and 'a republican spirit' and asserts that 'An honest republican is a character deserving of respect'. In an attack that seems to be directed specifically against Hazlitt, Stoddart writes:

> Thinking light of crimes themselves, they are astonished that we should dwell so much on the foibles of their heroes, - the little massacres, and trifling rapes, and robberies and perjuries, and frauds so naturally incident to men of genius in this line . . . Where was their jealous love of liberty, when that low creeping fog had actually spread over the whole continent of Europe, a small part of Spain and Portugal excepted? Did they not then act the panders to base fears, and, like shrieking night-birds, predicting total eclipse, urge us to withdraw from the 'unprofitable', and 'hopeless' contest, and lie down unnerved in that more than Egyptian darkness and bondage?[29]

[27] *The New Times*, 1 Jan. 1818.

[28] Edmund Burke, *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke*, ed. L.G.Mitchell, vol. 8 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989) 121.

[29] *The Times*, 14 Dec. 1813.

This is not the ranting of Hazlitt and Hone's Dr. Slop, but rather the measured rhetoric of a highly accomplished writer. Stoddart demonstrates a keen satirical awareness in the very inappropriateness of the adjectives in the phrases 'little massacres', and 'trifling rapes', and the two subsequent rhetorical questions are suffused with highly vivid imagery and striking metaphors. Thus a very different view of John Stoddart emerges: not of one who swings from the extremes of political opinion, but who acts as a result of firmly held beliefs and principles, and who, for a prolonged period of time, demonstrates significant abilities as a writer.

There is further evidence of Stoddart's fundamental intellectual continuity in the similarities that are evident between two pieces that he wrote, one in 1797 and the other in 1817. In 1797 Stoddart translated *The Five Men; or A Review of the Proceedings and Principles of the Executive Directory of France* from the French of Joseph Despaze. Stoddart's preface demonstrates a clear Godwinian influence and an underlying sympathy towards the French nation. He writes:

> . . . the French nation is inclined to order and tranquility, to moderation and justice. If the dominion of such principles be, in some instances, unfortunately suspended; if passion and prejudice seem to keep alive the flame of national animosity; this consideration should only stimulate the friends of humanity to labour with greater earnestness in obviating the real or imaginary causes of mutual discontent. The translator has thought it his duty to render with exactness those passages which relate to the character and conduct of this country: if the charges which they contain be true, we ought to acknowledge and amend our errors; if they be false, we may the more easily pursue the talk of reconciliation, having on our side, the calmness of innocence, and the energy of truth.[30]

Twenty years later, after Stoddart was dismissed from his editorship of *The Times*, he established a literary and political journal, *The Correspondent*. It lasted for only three publications before lack of finances forced Stoddart to give up on the venture. The 'Advertisement' that he wrote for the first issue manifests striking similarities to the preface to *The Five Men*.

> . . . we hope to promote in both countries that spirit, which tends to order, to harmony, to the perfection and happiness of the social state . . . we trust, we have sufficiently proved, that we ought to consider our two countries, as not only not natural enemies, but as naturally united, for the support of the same conservative principles . . . we, Gentlemen, are the true friends of liberal ideas – but we assuredly do not call those ideas liberal, which are taught out of the bloody pages of the Revolution . . . we invite them [the readers] to a great moral and political market, where they may exchange, lend, and borrow, may learn to know each other, and may in time, as it were, amalgamate into one friendly and brotherly people. Our undertaking rests on truth as its basis: to our opponents we leave the arts of falsehood and misrepresentation.[31]

[30] John Stoddart, *The Five Men* (London: J.S. Jordan, 1797) see translator's preface.
[31] John Stoddart, *The Correspondent* (London: Longman, 1817) ii-xv.

The strong influence of Godwin is evident in both passages: in the one of 1797 the phrases 'calmness of innocence' and 'energy of truth' indicate this; in the 1817 example the reference to 'the perfection and happiness of the social state'. This is combined with an underlying Burkean influence that shows itself in the fundamental conservatism of both passages. It is precisely this rather odd amalgamation of radical and reactionary influences that has led to the misrepresentation of Stoddart's political beliefs: he combines Godwin's philosophical quietism with Burke's political conservatism. Throughout his career he could be described as a disciple of both Godwin and Burke—he does not renounce one and then turn to the other, nor does he swing from extreme Jacobinism to extreme conservatism. In his youth he no doubt sympathised with the principles of the French Revolution, but as he witnessed its increasing violence and the subsequent dictatorship and imperialist aggression he could no longer associate Napoleonic France with revolutionary France. For this he has been denounced as an apostate and as a hypocrite, but there is little doubt that the fundamental political, intellectual and moral principles of Stoddart did not alter radically from the early 1790s to the early 1820s.

Stoddart's attitude towards money is also a very contentious subject. Hone states that he is a 'minion of ministers' and that 'He rose from the bottom of society by foul self-inflation',[32] whilst Hazlitt makes frequent allusions to his 'public prostitution'. In a report to the French government dated 30 September 1817, the Marquis D'Osmond, who was acting as the French Ambassador in London, asserts that Stoddart's newspaper, *The Day and New Times*, 'enjoys government support, is paid by the Treasury and is under the immediate protection of Mr. Arbuthnot, to whose office its editor, Mr. Stoddart, goes three or four times a week'.[33] There seems to be little doubt that Stoddart's newspaper was under the pay of Liverpool's government, and although this was not unusual for the period it does go some way towards justifying the remarks made by Hazlitt and Hone. Robert Woof writes that 'money and rank in society were [the] quiet obsessions' of John and Sarah Stoddart,[34] yet there are several instances throughout Stoddart's career in which he stoically refuses to be motivated by the temptation of financial gain or social improvement. In a letter to his sister of 1802 he writes 'So much for money, of which I have always desired a moderate competency; but a splendid fortune I neither *do*, nor *ought* to wish for. Such wishes are vain, foolish, wicked. With Miss – [Fullarton] I might easily make a fortune – but not honourably. With Miss – [Moncrieff] I shall be sure of an ultimate competence joined to Virtue & Honour'.[35] This underlying sense of mild heroism with regard to his proposed marriage resonates throughout his early letters to his sister. In a letter dated 26 July 1802 Stoddart continues:

> In my former letter I explained myself so fully on the subject of Miss Moncrieff that it is useless to add anything more. I know my mother & you, as Females must feel the baseness of which I should be guilty were I to desert a Woman whose affections are fixed on me. I know you cannot advise me to do so either on grounds of pecuniary advantage, or because *her relations* act in a way I disapprove. Wealth you

[32] Hone 6.
[33] *The History of The Times, 1785-1841*, (London: The Times, 1935) 464.
[34] Robert Woof, 'John and Sarah Stoddart: Friends of the Lambs', *The Charles Lamb Bulletin* 45 (1984): 96.
[35] Pinney Papers.

> know is not the only object you have advised me to pursue. You must remember that when I had very splendid offers made to me in the West Indies, you did not advise me to accept them. That opportunity of enriching myself I voluntarily abandoned.[36]

Although the daughter of a baronet Isabella Moncrieff, Stoddart's future wife, was not rich. Stoddart had a choice of a number of wealthy women whom he could have married, among them was Anna Fullarton 'who had £20,000 and was the daughter of the distinguished Indian commander, General William Fullarton'.[37] Stoddart, however, dearly loved Isabella and in choosing to marry her he demonstrated his fundamental good nature. He was a man that acted out of principle and could not be swayed by the temptations of financial or social improvement. Thus Stoddart's attitude towards money, rather than exposing him as a sycophantic social climber, shows him to be, in William Carew Hazlitt's words, 'a thoroughly upright man'. [38]

There is finally the issue of Stoddart's relationship with Hazlitt to examine, and it is William Carew Hazlitt's version of the relationship between his grandfather and Stoddart that has been most influential.

> Mr. Hazlitt and the Doctor had never been very good friends . . . He [Stoddart] had set his face against the *threatened* alliance between the families, and was very anxious to get his sister out of the way of temptation, and marry her more suitably . . . When he had found that there was no help for it, he tried to behave with civility to his future brother-in-law, and asked him to his house, when he settled again in England.[39]

In the only surviving love letter from Hazlitt to Sarah Stoddart, written in January 1808, he mentions parenthetically that John Stoddart hates him.[40] This assumption is, however, frequently contradicted throughout a series of letters between Mary Lamb and Sarah Stoddart. Mary's letters affirm the fundamental good nature of Stoddart, who after his father's death and his mother's insanity had become Sarah's legal guardian. In 1806 he had given his consent for his sister to marry a farmer called Mr. Dowling: Mary writes that 'if Mr. D. is a worthy man he [Stoddart] shall have no objection to become the brother of a farmer',[41] and her letters suggest that Stoddart felt similarly towards Hazlitt. On 21 December 1807 Mary wrote that Stoddart 'is on very friendly visiting terms with Hazlitt',[42] and on 12 February 1808 she stated that 'he seems so friendly to the match'.[43] Mary advises Sarah that 'If you obtain your brother's approbation he might assist you, either by lending or otherwise – I have a great opinion of his generosity'.[44] This sense of Stoddart's generosity is confirmed in the journal of Margaret Hazlitt (William's sister)

[36] Pinney Papers.
[37] See John R. Barker, 'Some Early Correspondence of Sarah Stoddart and the Lambs', in *The Huntingdon Library Quarterly* 24 (1960-61): 63-64.
[38] William Carew Hazlitt, *The Hazlitts* 342.
[39] William Carew Hazlitt, *Hazlitt Memoirs*, vol. 1 (London: Richard Bentley, 1867) 165.
[40] William Hazlitt, *The Letters of William Hazlitt*, eds. Bonner and Sykes (New York: New York UP, 1978) 103.
[41] Edwin W. Marrs, ed., *The Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb*, vol. 2 (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1978) 241.
[42] Marrs 263.
[43] Marrs 269.
[44] Marrs 263.

who writes, 'In 1809 he [Hazlitt] married Miss Stoddart, and her brother offering them a cottage and garden at Winterslow, a village in Wiltshire, they went to reside there for some years'.[45] This is one of a number of examples of Stoddart genuinely trying to help his sister and Hazlitt settle comfortably into married life. The brothers-in-law appear to have been on reasonably amicable terms for the next two years. An entry in the diary of Henry Crabb Robinson dated 15 January 1812, however, reveals Hazlitt's underlying annoyance at Stoddart's persistent interference. The entry follows Hazlitt's disastrous first lecture on philosophy at the Russell Institution in London.

> He seemed disposed to give up the lectures altogether, at least in the Russell Institution. He blamed himself for yielding to Dr. Stoddart in delivering them there, and considered the size of the room, the nature of the audience, etc., as the occasions of his not succeeding.[46]

Here it seems that Robinson senses Hazlitt's tendency to blame every thing and every one for the failure of his first lecture, other than his own inexperience. But it is Stoddart who is the figure that has to take most of the blame. Robinson records that 'Dr. Stoddart had left a letter of advice to him [Hazlitt] on his lecture, which hurt him apparently'.[47] It appears that Stoddart's good intentions, although at times a little tactless, were received with disdain by Hazlitt, who perhaps resented his brother-in-law's obtrusive behaviour. Nonetheless, it is a further example of Stoddart's genuine desire to assist Hazlitt in his career.

Just after this incident in 1812 Stoddart began to write for *The Times* and there is no further evidence of the relationship between the brothers-in-law until the very public war of words between the two opposing journalists in 1814 and 1816. On 1 December 1816 Hazlitt launched a scathing attack upon Stoddart.

> . . . [the] little pert pragmatical plebeian Editor [of The Times is] an apostate from principle, a sophist by profession, a courtier by accident, and a very headstrong man with little understanding and no imagination, who believes whatever absurdity he pleases, and works himself up into a passion by calling names.[48]

Stoddart's anti-Napoleonic abuse during 'The Hundred Days' has already been discussed, but here it is Hazlitt who appears to be 'calling names'. Stoddart never retaliated to these searing attacks of 1816; indeed, he had never attacked Hazlitt personally, satisfying himself with mocking the sentiments of his brother-in-law's political journalism. There is in fact a sense that Stoddart held back somewhat in his head-to-head with Hazlitt. There are many possible reasons for this: perhaps he feared what Henry Crabb Robinson called 'the bitter irony and vehement abuse, the hyena laugh and savage joy with which he [Hazlitt] lacerates the most glorious creatures God ever made',[49] or perhaps he was more concerned about the effect that the argument would have on his sister. Either way Stoddart remained a caring and affectionate

[45] Ernest J. Moyne, ed., *The Journal of Margaret Hazlitt*, (Laurence: U of Kansas P, 1967) 109.
[46] Derek Hudson, ed., *The Diary of Henry Crabb Robinson*, (London: OUP, 1967) 12.
[47] Hudson 12.
[48] *The Examiner*, 1 Dec. 1816.
[49] See *The History of The Times, 1785-1841*, (London: The Times, 1935) 164.

relative to the Hazlitt family. In a letter written to Hazlitt's son, dated 12 February 1848, Stoddart asserts his desire 'to promote in every possible way your welfare' and refers to his 'natural affections'[50] towards William. To the very last Stoddart remained a good-hearted, generous and principled man: it is this view of him that certainly does not enter into the Hazlitt-Hone myth that has endured for the last one hundred and fifty years.

Stoddart has for too long been a literary pariah. A friend of Lamb, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Walter Scott and Crabb Robinson, a familiar face amongst the Godwin radical circles, and the brother-in-law of Hazlitt, he represents one of those pivotal figures around which much of the great literature of the period was produced. He was severely criticised and lampooned by the radicals during his editorship of *The Times*, yet not only was he highly respected by his peers, but he was also a very accomplished writer. It was Coleridge who epitomised Stoddart's worth in a letter to Godwin of 8 July 1801.

> And now for *my late acquisition of friends* – Aye – *friends*! – Stoddart indeed if he were nearer to us and more among us, I should really number among such – he is a man of uncorrupted integrity & and of a very, very kind heart.[51]

Stoddart was certainly no blustering hypocrite, and his ability to fuse the intellectual quietism of Godwin with the political conservatism of Burke indicates that he achieved a moral and political solution to the social problems of the period that few other writers achieved. This does not prove his apostasy, but rather illustrates a viable political alternative to the extremism that was a characteristic of the age.

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[50] British Library, Add. Mss. 38898, dated 12 Feb. 1848.
[51] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Earl Leslie Griggs, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1956) 744.

# The Early Friendship of Captain James Burney and Charles Lamb

*By* EDMUND GARRATT

## I

THE STRENGTH OF CHARLES LAMB'S AFFECTION for both the retired naval hero Captain James Burney (1750-1821) and Burney's family is indubitable. Evidence of their staunch friendship is indeed scattered through Lamb's published letters, *Elia* and *The Last Essays of Elia*. For instance, in *The Wedding* Lamb tells of Burney's 'flashes of wild wit', and his vain attempts to postpone the marriage of his daughter Sally to her cousin John Thomas Payne; in *Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist* Burney's wife Sarah is cast as a genteel 'gaming animal', giving no quarter, and ready to engage in a 'sort of dream-fighting'; in *Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading* Burney's son Martin is seen as representative of the 'poor gentry', unable to furnish his taste for polite literature, and instead filching 'uneasy snatches' of *Clarissa* at a market book stall.

Lamb also enjoyed visiting the Burneys' family home in London at 26 James Street. In *The Wedding* we find him sitting around Captain Burney's breakfast table, wondering at the strange vacancy following the departure of the newlyweds on honeymoon. Amid the 'crisis, betwixt tarrying and departure' Lamb recalls the sovereignty of his power to rattle off 'all manner of strange nonsense': 'excellent absurdities' led to a rubber of whist, which 'lengthened out till midnight'. An awkward moment was thus overcome, and the ease of the company restored. In remembering this poignant time, Lamb concludes his essay by celebrating the *Shandyean* melody of Burney's home. As he says, 'I do not know a visiting place where every guest is so perfectly at his ease; nowhere, where harmony is so strangely the result of confusion. Every body is at cross purposes, yet the effect is so much better than uniformity.'

Burney died shortly after his daughter's wedding in 1821. In the wake of his sudden death, Lamb playfully lamented to William Wordsworth: 'There's Capt. Burney gone! – what fun has whist now? what matters it what you lead, if you can no longer fancy him looking over you?'[1] The purpose of this article is not, however, to survey Burney's entire relationship with Lamb, but primarily to consider the source and significance of their friendship in 1803. In doing so my intention is to trace the trajectory of Burney's life, from serving in the Royal Navy to sailing on the Solent with Lamb. I will also examine the possibility that, as a result of joining Lamb's circle, Burney was introduced to Samuel Taylor Coleridge in 1804, prior to Coleridge's departure in April for Malta.

## II

Captain James Burney is chiefly remembered as a fine sailor, a maritime historian, and a whist-playing friend of Charles Lamb. Further, he was the son of the musician Dr Charles Burney, the brother of the novelist Frances 'Fanny' Burney and the classical scholar Dr Charles Burney. Captain Burney was therefore one member of an extraordinarily distinguished

[1] E.V. Lucas, *The Life of Charles Lamb* (London: Methuen, 1914), p.485. Hereafter *Life*.

eighteenth century family. For this reason, the imposing figure of Dr Samuel Johnson cherished the Burneys. Such was his approval of their talents that he once enveloped them all in a bear hug.

Having entered the Royal Navy as a 'Captain's servant' at the tender age of ten, Burney served his apprenticeship on the coasts of North America and the Mediterranean. He rose to prominence in the 1770s when he sailed with Captain Cook in his second and third voyages. In due course he was promoted to lieutenant, and, consequent to the death of Captain Charles Clerke, heroically returned to England in command of the *Discovery* in 1780. (Burney was confirmed as commander on 2 October 1780). When Burney departed on the frigate *Latona* for a voyage to Norway in 1781, Johnson questioned whether 'any ship upon the ocean goes out attended with more good wishes than that which carries the fate of Burney.'[2]

Burney's last active deployment for the Royal Navy was serving as captain on H.M.S. *Bristol* in the East Indies between 1782-85. It was surprising that he failed to receive another command (especially during the revolutionary wars with France), although his health had admittedly been poor in India.[3] During the impasse of his life in the late 1780s, Burney moved with his new wife to the village of Mickleham in the tranquil surrounds of Box Hill, Surrey, to be near his sister, Susanna, and her Irish husband, Colonel Molesworth Phillips.[4] Mickleham coincidentally became an important literary centre in the years following Burney's arrival. After 1793 it provided sanctuary for an eminent group of French *émigrés* who rented Juniper Hall. Their number included Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand, Madame de Staël, and Fanny Burney's future husband, General d'Arblay. Between 1797 and 1835, it was also home for the wealthy hatter and critic Richard 'Conversation' Sharp MP. At his 'cottage house' in the grounds of Fredley Farm, Sharp entertained many of the leading writers of the day, notably William Hazlitt and Henry Crabb Robinson.

Captain Burney hitherto distanced himself from London, other than to attend the trial of Warren Hastings. Nonetheless, his fate changed at the start of the new decade. In 1790 William Bligh returned from the southern hemisphere and created a great furore in naval circles. Burney knew Bligh from Cook's last voyage on the *Resolution*, and in 1787 Bligh was sent to Tahiti to transplant the breadfruit tree for the benefit of slaves in the West Indies. It was during this voyage that the famous mutiny of the *Bounty* occurred, when Bligh and a few other sailors were turned adrift in an open boat until they reached Timor. In England there was a public clamour to read Bligh's account of his survival, but unfortunately Bligh's prose was too rugged to be accepted for publication. Bligh thereby approached Burney to refine his manuscript, which he did for both the June 1791 edition of *Narrative of the Mutiny on board H.M.S. Bounty*, and probably also the fuller edition published in 1792.

[2] *The Letters of Samuel Johnson*, edited by Bruce Redford, 5 volumes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), III, p.373.

[3] In April 1804 Burney was passed over as one of the Senior Captains for promotion to the Flag Officers, and placed on the Retired list. It was not until five months before his death that he was honoured as an Admiral in his Majesty's fleet on the Retired list. However, Winifred F. Courtney has revealed that the real reason for Burney's curtailed career was insubordination in 1782. See 'New Light on the Lambs and the Burneys' in *Charles Lamb Society Bulletin* (January 1987), p.21. Hereafter *Courtney*.

[4] Burney married Sarah Payne in 1785. They had three children, of whom Martin (1788) and Sally (1796) survived. Colonel Phillips (1756-1832) served aboard the *Discovery* with Burney, survived Cook's last voyage, and married Susanna Elizabeth Burney (1755-1800) in 1782. In 1802 he was seized by Napoleon's forces and detained in France until 1814.

A second change in Burney's life occurred in November 1792 when his father's Norfolk friend, John Hayes (a son of Robert Walpole), left Burney his house in James Street, Buckingham Gate. This was a welcome bequest as it alleviated Burney's financial concerns, and provided him with a commodious home in a street with literary and political connections. Now living in London, Burney increasingly devoted his leisure to the study of literature. In 1795 he promoted Fanny Burney's novel *Camilla*, and two years later he published a pamphlet offering a plan of defence against the threatened French invasion of Ireland, as well as one on the topical issue of public credit. With the modest success of these publications behind him, Burney conceived the idea to write a study of maritime discovery in the South Sea. The plan gained approval from Sir Joseph Banks, the President of the Royal Society, and in 1800 Burney set about collating the history of every voyage appropriate to his work.[5] At this time Burney was also the reviewer for all geographical articles in the *Monthly Review*.

The progress of Burney's historical research was, however, diverted by the attractions of the London *literati*, as well as his untiring enthusiasm for the game of whist. It was indeed the combination of these two pursuits that led Burney to befriend John Rickman, then secretary to the Speaker of the House of Commons. Burney was introduced to Rickman in July 1802, and it was at a gathering at Rickman's house in New Palace Yard, Westminster, in the following winter, that Burney first met Charles Lamb. Meeting Lamb was one part of a wonderful year for Burney: in 1803 he also published the first volume of his definitive *Chronological History of the Discoveries in the South Sea or Pacific Ocean*. The work was warmly received by Robert Southey in the *Annual Review*, and as a result Burney was invited by Southey to contribute his knowledge of 'navigation and the connected sciences'[6] to a 'Bibliotheca Britannica', proposed by the publishers Longman and Rees.[7]

III

In a letter to Thomas Manning on 19 February 1803, Charles Lamb expressed his delight that 'a merry *natural* captain' he met the night before had made the first ever 'Pun at Otaheite in the O. language'. This tale was typical of Burney, who retained a fund of comic stories from his travels; according to Southey, Burney blew puffs of pipe smoke from one corner of his mouth, and puns out of the other.[8] During the same evening at Rickman's, Burney announced to the

[5] In 1803 he began the publication of 'A Chronological History of the Discoveries in the South Sea or Pacific Ocean', 5 volumes, 1817. In 1819 he published in 8 volumes 'A Chronological History of North-eastern Voyages of Discovery and of the Early Eastern Navigations of the Russians'. He also published several shorter works, including 'An Essay on the Game of Whist', 1821.

[6] *New Letters of Robert Southey*, edited by Kenneth Curry, 2 volumes (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1965), I, p.319. Hereafter *Southey.*

[7] See *Annual Review*, II (1803), pp.3-12. It was also reviewed by John Rickman in the *Monthly Review*, XLII (1803), pp.414-423. In this connection, on 8 February 1804, Southey wrote to Rickman to say: 'Our friend the Captain is in high luck. If we could but make Wm Taylor pilot him thro the *Critical* [*Review*], he will have cleared all the bars most happily.' *Southey*, I, p.350. The 'Bibliotheca Britannica' was, however, abandoned in August 1803.

[8] G.E. Manwaring, *My Friend the Admiral* (London: Routledge, 1931), p.223. Hereafter *The Admiral.* (My information on Burney is largely taken from this biography; the brief entry in the old *DNB* is less reliable.)

assembled guests that he admired Shakespeare because he was '*so much of the Gentleman*.'[9] Lamb found this flash of wit irresistible, and became very eager to gain Burney's friendship.[10]

Through Rickman's introduction, Burney joined Charles Lamb's circle of acquaintances in early 1803. At this time the Lambs expanded their circle to include the tutor and miscellaneous writer George Burnett; the philanthropist and abolutionist Thomas Clarkson, and his wife, Catherine; the dramatist Thomas Holcroft; and the journalist and judge John Stoddart, and his sister, Sarah. However, as a survivor from the era of The Club, Burney held a central position in this new group. Sir Thomas Noon Talford opined that Burney 'seemed to unite our society with the circle over which Dr. Johnson reigned.'[11]

In the summer of 1803 Charles and Mary Lamb accompanied the Burney family on holiday.[12] In July they travelled to the Isle of Wight, and later Portsmouth, where they met John Fenwick before he turned himself over to the authorities in London for bankruptcy. Whilst staying at Cowes, Burney and Lamb sent John Rickman a joint letter on 27 July. Burney's entry gives an account of their pursuits, such as 'reading books from a circulating library, sauntering, hunting little crabs among the rocks', and reading churchyard poetry. He also narrates a sea voyage on the Solent to visit Carisbrooke Castle in Newport, where they 'saw a deep well and a cross old woman'. On board the deck, 'Lamb (to give a specimen of his Seamanship) very ingeniously and unconsciously cast loose the fastenings of the Mast, so that mast, sprit, sails, and all the rest tumbled overboard with a crash, and not less to his surprise than to the surprise of every other person in the boat.'[13]

Lamb conceded that Burney had given a 'pretty good outline' of their doings, but 'that filling it up requires the hand of a master.' The mast ending upside down was not entirely his fault - it was 'never properly nailed down.' In return, Lamb wished to redress the balance by bringing to Rickman's attention the buffoonery of Burney's son, Martin (1788-1852). Thus:

> A volume might be made of Martins Blunders which paternal tenderness omits. Such as his letting the packet boat's boat go without him from the quay at Southampton, while he stood hiatusing, smit with the love of a Naiad; his tumbling back over a stone twice the height of himself, and daubing himself; his getting up to bathe at six o Clock, and forgetting it, and in consequence staying in his room in a process of annihilation &c. &c.

'In short', laughed Lamb, 'nothing in this house goes right till after supper'.[14]

Afflicted with a partially paralysed face, Martin Burney was a kind-hearted person with a voracious appetite, ranging from veal pie to epistolary novels. Yet during this holiday Lamb

[9] *The Letters of Charles and Mary Anne Lamb*, edited by Edwin W. Marrs, 3 volumes (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1976), II, p.96. Hereafter *LCL*.

[10] A common ground for Burney and Lamb was Burney's elder cousin, Charles Rousseau Burney. Phyllis G. Mann has made the point that when Lamb first visited Drury Lane as a six-year-old, Charles Rousseau Burney was the chief harpsichord player in the orchestra and was assisted in his teaching by his cousin-wife Esther, who is mentioned in *Elia*. See 'Lamb, Elia, and the Burneys', *Charles Lamb Society Bulletin* (July 1952).

[11] *The Admiral*, p.288.

[12] This was a particularly significant holiday for the Burneys as in May 1803 James and Sarah Burney were reunited after a long separation. See *Courtney*, p.21.

[13] *LCL*, II, p.121.

[14] Ibid., II, p.122.

blamed Captain Burney for teaching his children 'bad habits': 'He surfeits them with cherries and black currents till they can eat no supper & then claps down the fruit expended to the common stock, and deducts what the surfeit saves from his part.' Worse still, 'Martin has brought down a Terence, which he renders out loud into canine Latin at Breakfast & other meals, till the eyes of the infatuated Parent let slip water for joy, and the ears of every body beside shed their wax for being tired.'[15] Lamb nevertheless grew fond of Martin's foibles, such as his obstreperousness, and even his reluctance to clean his hands. Martin is known to have been Lamb's most regular guest, whilst in 1818 Lamb dedicated the second volume of his *Works* to him in a sonnet.[16]

IV

After sailing with Charles Lamb in July 1803, a new ambition for Captain Burney was to meet Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Coleridge spent the autumn of 1803 in the Lake District with the Wordsworths, but moved southwards in the New Year with a view to settling in the healthier climes of the Mediterranean. On Wednesday 23 January 1804 Coleridge arrived in London, and promptly joined Thomas Poole. Poole was already there to work with John Rickman on the Census, which aimed to provide information on the conditions of the London poor in each separate parish.[17] Coleridge initially operated in Poole's lodgings at 16 Abingdon Street, Westminster, although he slept at Waghorn's Coffeehouse nearby. This base was useful to Coleridge as he had been given employment by Daniel Stuart to write for his new paper, the *Courier*. He was also warmly welcomed by William Godwin and Richard Sharp, and was eagerly courted by recent acquaintances, such as the Scottish poet Thomas Campbell.[18]

In the period surrounding Coleridge's arrival in London, Captain Burney was evidently introduced to Poole, possibly at Rickman's or at Lamb's. Burney was keen to meet Coleridge too, and therefore wrote to Poole on 25 January 1804 to express his desire to entertain them both:

> My dear Sir
>
> I have not the pleasure of being acquainted with M$^{r}$ Coleridge, but it would give me much pleasure if you were to prevail on him to accompany you hither.
>
> Yours very sincerely
> J. Burney[19]

[15] *LCL*, II, p.122.
[16] '[…] In all my threadings of this worldly maze,
(And I have watched thee almost from a child),
Free from self-seeking, envy, low design,
I have not found a whiter soul than thine.'
On this subject see Winfred Woodham, 'Martin Charles Burney', *Charles Lamb Society Bulletin* (May 1951).
[17] A Poor Laws act of 1803, passed by George Rose MP, provided that all parish overseers should make returns as to the condition of the poor in their parishes.
[18] See Sharp's MS letter to Poole, 23 January 1804, British Library, *Add MSS 35344, f.231*; Campbell's to Poole, 26 January 1804, *Add MSS 35344, f.233;* Godwin's to Poole, 28 January 1804, *Add MSS 35344, f.182*.
[19] British Library: *Add MSS 35344, f.245*.

Their meeting is not recorded in Coleridge's published letters, but there is ample evidence that they met later in life.[20] Coleridge may well have been intrigued by Burney's naval career, especially as Captain Cook's astronomer on the *Resolution*, William Wales, taught him at Christ's Hospital School.[21] It has also been suggested that an inspiration for *The Ancient Mariner* was Cook's published journals, as well as Bligh's voyage on the *Bounty*.[22]

The most persuasive evidence of Coleridge's interest in Burney is from an entry made in his first new pocketbook after his return from Malta in autumn 1806. In the note Coleridge makes reference to a Burney anecdote about Omai, a legendary figure from Coleridge's childhood. Omai, of course, was a native of the Society Islands, lionised in London after 1774. He had been brought to England in the *Adventure* by Captain Tobias Furneaux, taken to see George III, and was painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds.[23] As an authority in Tahitian, Burney was Omai's interpreter, and was therefore able to gain Omai's impressions of England, as well as valuable insights into his native culture. Omai sailed back to the southern hemisphere in 1777, and it was Burney who accompanied him on his home journey in the *Discovery*.

V

In later life Burney appears to have wearied of regaling acquaintances with sea songs, or wild tales from his nautical past. Leigh Hunt once sighed in the *Examiner* that though he met Burney 'fifty times', he did not have 'the courage to address him', as 'he appeared to be so wrapped up in his tranquillity and his whist.'[24] Burney was not alone in this respect. For instance, after 1806 we learn of Burney and Rickman earnestly playing the opening hands of whist, before the 'new institution' of Wednesday evenings spilled into Thursday mornings.[25] During these gatherings tongues were loosened by the consumption of Mary Lamb's hot punch, glasses of brandy and tobacco smoking. Nonetheless, the card tables were no place for 'lukewarm gamesters'. 'Cards were cards', observed *Mrs. Battle* in her *Opinions on Whist*.

Sir Thomas Noon Talford once recorded his wonder at the sight of an evening of whist held at Lamb's abode in Inner Temple Lane. The scene he depicts is a clean swept hearth and a blazing fire; a low ceiling, worn furniture, and walls adorned with framed Hogarths. At the centre of the room is a whist-table surrounded by Charles Lamb, smiling intently, William Godwin, regarding his hand with a 'philosophic eye', and in between them Captain Burney,

[20] See *The Admiral*, p.202.

[21] See Sarah Moss, ''The Bounds of His Great Empire': *The Ancient Mariner* and Coleridge at Christ's Hospital' in *Romanticism*, 8.1 (2002), pp.49-61: 'Christ's Hospital was founded and run with the explicit aim of providing well trained apprentice officers for the Navy and the great trading companies, and Coleridge's ten years at the school form an important but hitherto unexplored background to and significant influence on the *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*' (p.49).

[22] Richard Holmes, in *Coleridge – Early Visions* (London: Harper Collins, 1998) p.173n, underlines that modern research has suggested the influence of these voyages (as well as John Davies of the *Desire*, 1593) on *The Ancient Mariner*.

[23] 'Capt$^{n}$ Burney's Story told him by Omai – of the 2 Stars near the Scorpion's *Head* – {by Antares} / or *Tail*, famine in Otaheite / fish gained by man & his wife / Man would not suffer the children to be awaked, tho' the Mother wished it / 2 were awake, but feared to speake & pined & die / & were put up into Heaven & then by their entreaty the Mother /.' *Collected Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, edited by Kathleen Coburn, 5 volumes (Princeton and London: Princeton University Press, 1957-2002), II, 2874.

[24] *Life*, p.515.

[25] *LCL*, II, p.247.

'venerable because so young in spirit', and his partner Crabb Robinson, breaking the silence to welcome a guest. Adjacent on another table sit Martin Burney and his uncle Colonel Phillips, playing against the 'broad, burly, jovial bulk' of John Lamb, and the journalist Thomas Alsager. Around the edges of the room are small groups talking quietly; in one corner, Charles Lloyd and Leigh Hunt discussing free-will, in another, Basil Montagu pouring words into the 'outstretched ear' of George Dyer. The thickening conversation is punctuated only by the arrival of Hazlitt, slouching in from the theatre, early enough to savour the 'cold roast lamb or boiled beef, the heaps of smoking roasted potatoes, and the vast jug of porter'.[26] Returning to the centre of the room, one imagines Burney orchestrating another rubber of cards, content that in Lamb's friendship he had found both a fresh sense of adventure, and 'a long repose from his storms.'[27]

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[26] See *Life*, pp.373-375.
[27] Ibid., p.515.

# Reviews

DUNCAN WU. *Wordsworth: An Inner Life*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2002. Pp. xviii + 378. ISBN 0-631-20638-8. £50 / $75 cloth.

This is a very valuable and a very interesting book. Duncan Wu's goal is "to trace the connection between Wordsworth's inner life and his poetry" (p. viii). Wu is also concerned with how Wordsworth saw himself, evaluated his talents, how and by whom he was influenced. The text is especially the story of the Wordsworth-Coleridge relationship, the long and, at times, testy struggle to do "The Recluse," and especially the history of the writing of *The Prelude* with special emphasis on its intimate relationship to the "Recluse" enterprise.

Wu focuses on the juvenilia and a rich store of unpublished manuscripts in order to cover Wordsworth's career to 1813 as fully as possible. His reliance on such material is not to argue the value of various versions of Wordsworth's poetry but to document Wordsworth's development.

Wu proceeds by noting three major periods in Wordsworth's life, the first, July 1787, when Wordsworth, Christopher, and John joined Dorothy at Penrith and shared a painful "period of delayed mourning for their parents" (ix). This experience is reflected in a moving passage in "The Vale of Esthwaite," written in 1787. The account in the text is simply that of Wordsworth's waiting for horses in 1783. But he conflates both the anxiety of that wait with the statement that he returned home only to follow his father's bier to the grave. The text then self-reflexively brings the experience of 1783 immediately up to 1787 by the plaintive refrain "'I mourn because I mourn'd no more'" (l. 289, Wu p. 6). Wordsworth's elision foregrounds what will become key themes in his poetry. "The Vale of Esthwaite" starts with Gothic material, but "the delayed mourning of July 1787 turned it into a deeply personal investigation of grief, guilt, and restitution." Here begins "an emotional course that would compel [Wordsworth] for the rest of his poetic career" (p. 13).

The second major phase in Wordsworth's life starts in 1797 with his association with Coleridge and his acceptance of the role as the poet-prophet of "The Recluse." A strain of millenarian optimism rises in Wordsworth, especially as he begins to do *The Prelude*. Here grief and its cohorts slip into the background. The struggle to do "The Recluse" beings, and *The Prelude* starts its long, complex history, especially once it is dedicated to Coleridge and is tethered to "The Recluse." This account is one of the most riveting sections of Wu's text. "'The Recluse' would always remain [Coleridge's] brainchild rather than Wordsworth's" (p. 109). The poem's proposed philosophical burden was beyond Wordsworth's range of interest. The redemptive optimism of "The Recluse," "'a redemptive process in operation'" (p. 110), especially eluded Wordsworth's sensibility which was so heavily seasoned in grief and suffering.

However, Wordsworth was committed to "The Recluse," and thus begged Coleridge for his notes so that the work could be done properly. In his struggle Wordsworth's confidence began to fade. In Goslar he began *The Two-Part Prelude*, and here Wordsworth finds himself returning to the tragic vision he had from childhood. Wordsworth returned to England and by the fall of 1799, he "came closer than ever again to abandoning 'The Recluse'" (p. 162). Coleridge came north and reignited Wordsworth's dedication to the poem. Wu recounts how Wordsworth completed the second part of *The Two-Part Prelude*, and dedicated the work to Coleridge, a

remarkable feat since "most of it had been written in defiance of [Coleridge] and without his knowledge" (p. 164).

The death of John Wordsworth in 1805 marks the final stage in Wu's account of Wordsworth's development. Here especially Wu writes with great sensitivity. Wordsworth found that he could barely finish *The Prelude* because he found himself "out of sympathy with the self that had written it" (p. 241). Wordsworth confided to Beaumont that it "'seemed to have a dead weight about it'" (qtd. in Wu p. 241). Wu illustrates Wordsworth's terrible grief by offering a detailed explication of "Elegiac Stanzas, Suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle, in a Storm." Here Wordsworth speaks of having lost "a power" which Wu identifies as "a certain kind of imaginative vision" (p. 249). Wordsworth's task now is to accept suffering, and realize that "bereavement [is] permanent . . ." (p. 249). Also, even though in this context doing "The Recluse" seemed all the more "impossible," Wordsworth could not abandon the project because he saw it as a commitment to John (p. 250).

Wordsworth soldiers on with "The Recluse" always in the back of his mind, but now he endeavors to accommodate himself to suffering. "The White Doe of Rylston" is a key text in his struggle. (The 1808 version of the poem, as best as can be gotten from fragments, is in the Appendix in Wu's text.) The importance of the poem is that it shows that for Wordsworth "a new aesthetic developed out of the renewed experience of grief" (p. 273).

In the Epilogue, Wu admits that "grief" could be regarded "as a disabling force in Wordsworth's life but that is not the argument of this book" (p. 314). It became a strong inspirational force in his poetry. "The Recluse," despite its being "an idea in Coleridge's mind" proved "an organizing principle . . . at times inspirational . . . in Wordsworth's" (p. 314).

Wu's account takes us to 1813. He argues convincingly because of the ready store of textual detail he offers. He is one of the great masters of Wordsworth's texts and manuscripts. So immediate is Wu's account of Wordsworth's creative endeavors that one almost feels at hand as Wordsworth composes. One might quibble with an interpretation here and there, but one is always fully informed and impressed with Wu's careful reasoning. *Wordsworth: An Inner Life* fulfills the promise of its title. It is one more fine text in a long list of fine works by an eminent scholar.

Richard W. Clancey

# Society Notes and News from Members

## NOTES AND NEWS FROM MEMBERS

### CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

*The President*

Apologies to those UK members whose copies of Bulletin No. 121 reached them with slightly too little postage paid, occasioning some inconvenience.

*Announcement regarding the Friends of Coleridge*

The Friends of Coleridge Website http://friendsofcoleridge.com is now officially open and actively soliciting hits and links.

This site includes a Home Page for that society's publication, the *Coleridge Bulletin*, a virtual tour of Coleridge Cottage, and up to date information and programmes will be provided on all forthcoming events:

- Nether Stowey Literary Evenings
- Kilve Study Weekend, 5-7 September 2003
- Coleridge International Conference, 22-28 July 2004

There are plans for significant expansion of the site in the course of the next few months:

- to increase the number of *Coleridge Bulletin* articles online
- to build up the links page
- to provide a gateway to any enquirer, at whatever level, who is interested in Coleridge

### FROM D.E. WICKHAM

*Leigh Hunt and Queen Victoria*

The saddest words ever spoken to a celebrity, I understand, include 'Didn't you use to be ……?' In an earlier century it seems to have happened to Walter Savage Landor (1775-1864) and to Samuel Rogers (1763-1855), when extreme old age, for that period, took them well past their years of fame.

'Inscribed by Leigh Hunt to Queen Victoria' stopped me short in James Burmester's antiquarian book catalogue of November 1999. Now, hang on. Leigh Hunt. Born 1784. Christ's Hospital. Published his first book (*Juvenilia*) in 1801, and that was in Burmester's catalogue of January 2000. Libelled the Prince Regent in 1812. Story of the specially decorated cell in Horsemonger Lane Gaol. Visited there by the Lambs in 1815. Introduced Shelley to Keats and brought both of them before the public in 1816. Nursed Keats in 1820. Moved to Italy in 1822 at the invitation of Shelley. Partly dependent on Byron. But Queen Victoria?

It was perfectly possible, of course – and was so. The volume in question was *The foster-brother: a tale of the war of Chiozza*, a novel written by Thornton Leigh Hunt, our man's eldest son, edited by the father, published in three volumes, 12mo, 1845, and inscribed 'To the Queen's Most Gracious Majesty With Humblest Duty of the Editor'. Leigh Hunt died in 1859. But I expect you already knew that.

*Inkle and Yarico* (Revised version)
*Incle and Yarico* may not be at the tongue's end of even the most dedicated Elian but judicious use of Lucas, Prance and Marrs identifies it as a romantic comedy written by George Colman the younger (1762-1836) and published in 1787. One of the epigraphs to the Elian essay *The Superannuated Man* is the line *A Clerk I was in London gay*, which is there given to O'Keefe, John O'Keefe (1747-1843), 'the author of countless farces and comic operas'. The line is repeated at the end of Charles Lamb's letter of 9 August 1815 to William Wordsworth. Lucas identifies it as by Colman, describing it as sung by Drudge (Trudge actually) and mentioning that the work was 'a farce in which Lamb greatly admired Fanny Kelly'.

Like most collectors, I am now caught between showing two treasures. Here is my original playbill for a single performance of what is described as a comic opera 'not acted these five years'. It was put on at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, on Monday, 13 April 1817, *Signora STORACE's Night*, with a cast including Elliston as Inkle ('Being his First Appearance in that Character'), Braham as Campley, and many of the customary thesps, Dowton, Wewitzer, Banister as Trudge, Storace herself as Wowski, and Miss Kelly as the Governor's daughter, described as 'the tight little frigate Miss Narcissa' (I.ii). Yarico was played by Mrs Dickons, who is untraced.

Between the main event and the equivalent of the B-picture, *The Prize*, 'Master Pio CIANCHETTINI 7 years old (surnamed *Mozart Britannicus* [sic!]) will Play on the Piano Forte a DUETT with his Mother and Instructress, a new SONATO, composed by his Uncle, I. S. DUSSEK', probably without a dry eye in the house.

On the other hand, here is my copy of a collection of plays printed about 1810, bought because it contains *Lovers' Vows* (Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park*, etc.) but now doubly precious because it includes *Inkle and Yarico*.

Why I actually began this note was to record the following item from *The Daily Telegraph* of Saturday, 21 August 1999:

> On Monday, in honour of Unesco's International Day of Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition, George Colman's opera *Inkle and Yarico* will be performed at the Edinburgh Festival. The eighteenth century musical follows a merchant, Thomas Inkle, who travels from Bristol docks to Barbados. He falls in love with Yarico, a black girl, and, on arrival in Barbados, is forced to sell her.

> As a sort of forerunner to *Comic Relief* and *Live Aid*, the musical became a torch for William Wilberforce's efforts to abolish slavery. Michael McCarthy, who played Javert in *Les Miserables*, stars as Inkle.

I have now read the play and can say that the first half at least does not go at all badly. There is constant, descriptive scene-setting, which creaks a little, and the action keeps on stopping for a song, but it could be 'dressed up' very musically. Indeed, it is referred to as an opera on the title-page of my version, though as a drama in Mrs Inchbald's remarks. You can almost hear the applause as Inkle makes his first entrance.

The oddest line is probably 'We shall stand here, stuffed, for a couple of white wonders' (I.iii).

Colman seems unable to distinguish between what we must now call the Native American nobility of the conveniently English-speaking Yarico (I seem to remember such words as 'copper', 'feathers', and 'scalping': 'Think Pocahontas, luvvie', cries the director) and the comic relief of the Negroid Wowski. Campley is the true hero, Narcissa (Fanny Kelly) is his beloved, and Trudge is Inkle's comic servant. Trudge sings <u>that</u> song in Act III, scene ii.

## FROM JOHN I. ADES

*A Wordsworthian Hoot*

By a circuitous route, I was led, after reading Mary Wedd's genial reflections on "The Lake District on *The Prelude* Book IV" in the January 2003 issue of the *Bulletin*, to the recollection of a charming incident some years ago in a Wordsworth seminar on *The Prelude*, which I gave annually for many years at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, Illinois, USA.

As usual in such seminars, students were assigned scholarly literature for reports to be presented and discussed by members of the class. You know: they read and reported on, among others, Hartmann, Havens, Bloom, Coleridge (who?), Bostetter, Lindenberger, Moorman, Trilling, Raysor, Ferry, Abrams, Northrup Frye—do I betray my age!? The students were also assigned reports on specific passages in *The Prelude* from a list I had selected.

In the incident I am recalling, one of the best students in the seminar, a young man named Brad with an irrepressible sense of humor, chose for his explication the Boy of Winander episode in *Prelude* V. 364-88. In signing him up for this text, I had remarked that is was a matter of some personal regret that neither as boy nor man could I ever blow the Winander "mimic hootings to the silent owls," with fingers intertwixed and thumbs pressed together at the mouth. "No," he said (wheels turning), "neither could I"; then, with a twinkle in his eyes that I must have missed, he forecast a special adjunct to the usual run of scholarship in his upcoming report.

A week passed and I pretty much forgot our exchange, for when Brad showed up for the next class meeting, he had in tow a guest named Henry, a stranger both to the seminar and to Wordsworth.

Brad began his report—as was our custom in this seminar—by reading aloud the passage, coming in due course to the famous lines:

> And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands
> Pressed closely palm to palm, and to his mouth
> Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
> Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls,
> That they might answer him…. (V. 370-74)

There Brad stopped and signaled Henry, who stood and, with great virtuosity, folded up his fingers and thumbs and blew such "mimic hootings" as to give the class of young Wordsworthians gooseflesh. No resident owls (if any) in the campus trees dared answer Henry's hootings, so we pretended that a "lengthened pause / Of silence came and baffled his best skill." We listened to that silence a few seconds and then broke into applause.

Neither Brad (so far as I know) nor I ever learned to "hoot." But Henry? I hope he has settled within "mimic hootings" distance of some seminar approaching *Prelude* V. 364-88 and lacking a resident manual "hooter."