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A Monumental Mistake: Newly Discovered Letters to Handel Editor Samuel Arnold

Jeremy Barlow, *London*
Todd Gilman, *Yale University*

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Jeremy Barlow, London, and Todd Gilman, New Haven

**A monumental mistake.**

**Newly discovered letters to Handel editor Samuel Arnold**

A collection of thirteen letters, written to the Handel editor and composer Samuel Arnold (1740–1802), has come to light in a box of family papers belonging to a descendant of Arnold. The box also included, as well as unexamined material, a manuscript memoir of Samuel Arnold written by his widow, Mary Ann, née Napier,¹ and a draft autobiography by his son, the theatre manager, playwright and portraitist Samuel James Arnold (1774–1852).² The letters range in date from c.1780 to May 1802; all are from notable figures in London’s musical and theatrical scene. They comprise six from the musical historian Charles Burney, one each from the co-founder of Methodism, Charles Wesley, and his son, musician Charles Wesley junior – both ardent Handelians, as their letters demonstrate – and one each from Irish-born actor, critic and playwright Francis Gentleman, from theatre manager and playwright George Colman the Younger, from composer and violinist William Shield, from French-born composer and violinist François-Hippolyte Barthélemon and from soprano Elizabeth Billington.

Chronologically, the first six letters cover miscellaneous topics; the last seven, all from 1802, concern Arnold’s proposal for raising a monument in St Paul’s Cathedral to Thomas Augustine Arne, and for an associated fund-raising concert. Press announcements and a programme for the concert, together with letters from other sources, help to fill out the story of a disastrous venture. Letters from other sources include a group of seven found in the Library at St. Michael’s College, Tenbury Wells (catalogued collectively as Tenbury MS. 1509),³ and a further three written by Bur-

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¹ Born 1750 and still alive in 1810, according to a family descendant; date of death unknown.

² The envelope containing the letters also included one from Erasmus Darwin (1731–1802) (grandfather of Charles) to Thomas Beddoes, recommending Samuel James Arnold as a portrait painter.

³ The organist, composer and scholar Rev. Sir Frederick Ouseley (1825–1889) built and endowed St Michael’s College, and bequeathed it his music library. Honorary librarian Watkins Shaw oversaw the transfer of the library to the Bodleian Library, Oxford in 1978. The contents included Handel’s conducting score of Messiah from the Dublin premiere in 1742; Shaw is remembered today for his edition of Messiah, London 1959, still much in use, and for A Textual and Historical Companion to Handel’s Messiah, London 1965. Although Tenbury MS. 1509 has gone missing, Shaw had transcribed the letters in an article, A Projected Arne Commemoration in 1802 for The Monthly Musical Record (May–June 1960), pp. 90–94, and his transcriptions are reproduced here.
ney; our attention was drawn to these by Professor Philip Olleson. We are grateful to Professor Olleson for much additional information and advice. The Tenbury Wells letters, which include yet another from Burney, mostly postdate and complement the newly discovered material; it is as if the two collections once belonged together. Two of the extra Burney letters were not written to Arnold, but relate to the concert and to Arnold’s death not long after.

The chief interest to Handel scholars in the twenty-three letters transcribed here lies in two from Burney (nos. 3 and 5) concerning Arnold’s edition of Handel’s works. As has often been stated, Samuel Arnold was the first person to attempt a complete edition devoted to a single composer, even if he did not finish the project. The letters are numbered chronologically: nos. 1–4, 6–10, 12–14 and 16 make up the newly discovered material; nos. 11, 15 and 17–21 are from Tenbury MS. 1509, and nos. 5, 22 and 23 were notified by Philip Olleson; see below for sources.

Editorial conventions in transcriptions of the letters

The letters are to Samuel Arnold unless indicated (see nos. 21 and 23).

The newly discovered letters (nos. 1–4, 6–10, 12–14 and 16, indicated with an asterisk)

Dots under superscript abbreviations have been omitted; capitalisation has been normalised at the start of a new sentence after a full stop, but not after an exclamation mark, question mark or dash. Insertions by the author of the letter are indicated with carats ^-----^. Editorial interventions are in square brackets. A vertical slash indicates a line-break in addresses and other cover material.

Newly discovered letters to Handel editor Samuel Arnold

In his article on the letters, *A Projected Arne Commemoration*, Watkins Shaw did not describe his editorial method for the transcriptions. Since the originals are currently missing, the letters are printed here exactly as in the article, footnotes apart.

Letters notified by Philip Olleson (nos. 5, 22 and 23)

Nos. 5 and 22 have been transcribed from the original manuscripts by Todd Gilman; no. 23 has been reproduced from a typed transcription that Philip Olleson obtained some time ago. It is not known who transcribed the letter from the original. Indication of address conforms as far as possible with the procedure in the newly discovered letters; the original has not been seen. No. 5 and no. 22 are in the Burney Family Collection, The James Marshall and Marie-Louise Osborn Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, Call number OSB MSS 3; no. 23 is in Collected Correspondence of Elizabeth Montagu, Box 1, Folder 68; Manuscripts Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, Call number C0078.

First, the letters that predate the Arne Monument proposal. The earliest is from Francis Gentleman (1728–1784), written in Dublin and dated October 1st, but with no year. The letter has particular interest because Arnold drafted a reply on the envelope. Gentleman’s sycophantic tone and poor health corrobore accounts of his character and pathetic state of affairs during the last decade of his life. Style is long-winded and handwriting most unusual; almost printed. The letter could be earlier than the speculative date of c.1780, but probably no earlier than 1777, the year that Arnold was appointed musical director at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket and began to build his reputation as a composer for the stage; in his reply Arnold wrote that he had already gained “a little credit” as a composer. Gentleman mentions, among others, a Mr Ryder; undoubtedly that’s Thomas Ryder (1735–1791), manager of the Smock Alley Theatre in Dublin until 1782. The gist of the letter is that Ryder has authorised Gentleman to enquire if Arnold would be willing to compose settings for the playwright’s lyrics in


Newly discovered letters to Handel editor Samuel Arnold

1. *From Francis Gentleman* (the letter is enclosed in an envelope, on the reverse side of which Arnold drafted a reply)

Doctor Arnold | Musical Professor | London

[The envelope has two printed marks, circular and containing figures; one is illegible, the other reads "6 | OC". The figure "6" is also scrawled beside the address]

Dublin Octob' 1st [c.1780]

D^r Sir

Had not a most debilitating and tedious illness prevented all attention to literary matter – I should long ere this have furnished materials subjects for your excellent and Original Talents of Composition – if leisure suits, and inclination concurs; I am Authorised by Mr Ryder to let you know, that he would be very glad to give D^r Arnold's acknowledged Genius every advantage the Irish stage would afford; my confirmed attachment will always stimulate me to every exertion that may tend to serve and please the Manager, here – and to extend profitably your Musical Reputation; if you will favour me with your sentiments in this point with all convenient speed I will be more explicit, and possibly negotiate a Connection advantageously agreeable; in which transaction I shall feel singular satisfaction; knowing the liberality of sentiment, possess'd by each party – if my Pen can be serviceable pray Command it

Receipts here – shall trouble you with cordial respects to Messrs King & Hull, whom I hold in very particular Estimation; trust me to be D^r D^r [Dear Doctor] faithfully &c &c &c Francis Gentleman

[Down side of letter] P:S: A M^r Water^house^13 has wrote for an engagement in the Vocal way – he assimilates himself in Person and executive Pow'rs to M^r. Web- ster – he refers to your opinion, pray indulge us with ^it^ – the Manager has been miserably deceived by some London Bargains and horridly purloin'd by others; is therefore cautious [runs out of space]

Arnold's draft reply, though tactful, includes a struck-through phrase – "I am by no means a mercenary man" – that reveals underlying irritation at being asked to provide music for little remuneration.

1a.* Arnold's draft reply to Francis Gentleman (written on Gentleman's envelope)

D^r Sir

I have rec'd the favour of yours, & am truly sorry for the Account it contains of the bad state of yr Health, which I hope will soon be re-established, not only for yr own, but also that of yr Friends.

In Answer to that part of yr Letter respecting the offer from M^r Ryder, I beg you will present my Comp[l]s. to that Gentleman & inform him, I am always

9 Webster performed at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket and Covent Garden, and at the Smock Alley and Crow Street theatres in Dublin. See Philip H. Highfill et al., Webster, Anthony, in: A Biographical Dictionary of Actors (see note 6), vol. 15, pp. 326–9.

10 Jean-François Marmontel (1723–1799). His moral tales (Contes moraux) first appeared in Mercure de France; collected editions were published in 1761 and 1789–1792. In Dublin, a translation of the first collection, The moral tales of M. Marmontel. Translated from the French by C. Denis, and R. Lloyd, was published in 1764.

11 Thomas King (1730–1805) acted at Dublin's Smock Alley Theatre in the 1750s; Gentleman had praised him in his work of theatrical criticism, The Dramatic Censor (1770). King worked for David Garrick at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane for many years and, after the latter's death in 1779, succeeded him as Master of the Drury Lane Theatrical Fund until September 1782. See Philip H. Highfill et al., King, Thomas, in: A Biographical Dictionary of Actors (see note 6), vol. 9, pp. 26–43.

12 Thomas Hull (1728–1808) started his career at Dublin's Smock Alley Theatre in the early 1750s; he joined the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden in 1759 and acted there for 48 years. Hull succeeded George Colman the Elder as acting manager at Covent Garden from 1775 to 1782; Samuel Arnold worked with Colman and his son at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket (see note 7 and p. 364). See Philip H. Highfill et al., Hull, Thomas, in: A Biographical Dictionary of Actors (see note 6), vol. 8, pp. 32–40.

ready to exercise [sic] myself in my own profession. I am by no means a mercenary man. If therefore M’ Ryder will point out what he wishes me to do & say what he can afford to give & in what mode I am to be pay’d I will be explicit in my Answer – whatsoever Business I undertake I will endeavour to perform so as not to lose [sic] the little credit I have already gained, & I trust no Gentleman with wishes to take up an artist’s time without making him some recompence.

With respect to M’ Waterhouse, [illegible word s. t.] he has had a few lessons of me, he is young, his Voice not very strong, his figure much like Websters & would do in 2d parts, but I fear is not Competent to first Characters. I am – D’ Sir

Most truly yours. SA.

The next letter chronologically comes from Charles Wesley, co-founder with his brother John of the Methodist movement. It is addressed to Arnold, not at his usual Duke Street address in London, but at Gt Pultney Street in Bath. The letter includes a draft concert programme with the date Thursday April 22nd, but no year. It seems here that Arnold had turned down a request from Wesley for his services.

2.* From Charles Wesley senior

Dr. Arnold | Great Pultney street [Bath]

[The date “Thur April 22” is placed at the end of the letter and above the concert programme]

Dear Sir,

I perfectly well understand your situation. Added to all your other Engagements, you now have upon you the Care of the Chapel R[oyal] – and must provide for it. I am glad of your return to Church Music. (The best upon earth, said D’ Boyce) and to your old Father Handel. I remember a saying of yours concerning my sons “these boys will bring back Handel.” They might do something towards it – under your auspices. You know in your heart & conscience (if you durst confess it) that there is none like Handel: and there is none comes so near him in his Chorusses as – Therefore find, (or make) time for writing Chorusses & Oratorios.

On Thursday Evening you may (if you please) engage yourself to us for the next Sunday Evening, immediately after Chapel: and be so kind as bring your two Anthems with you, and what else you please – I am, dear S’
Most affectionately Yours

C. Wesley

Thur April 22
1. Sinfonia – C. W.
2. Song
3. Concerto Geminiani.
4. Organ Voluntary C. W.
5. Solo, Violin f S. W.
Part II
1. Overture and Chorus. Handel
2. Organ Voluntary S. W.
3. Solo Violoncello. Reinagle
4. Song
5. Organ Duet
6. Concertanti. S. W.

The letter must be from Charles Wesley senior (1707–1788), since he refers to his sons, Charles (1757–1834) and Samuel (1766–1837); Charles junior did not have children. Charles Wesley senior wrote the words of several thousand hymns; three were set by Handel, though it is unlikely that the two ever met. Arnold had been the last being The Prodigal Son (1773). Later he composed Elisha, or, The Woman of Shunem (1801) and The Hymn of Adam and Eve (1802).


16 The most likely link between Wesley and Handel was the manager of the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, John Rich and his third wife, Priscilla, née Wilford (c.1713–1783). Handel had known Rich for some years and his oratorios were performed in the theatre at the time he set the
appointed organist and composer to the Chapel Royal in 1783; 22 April was a Thursday in 1784, so that must be the year the letter was written. In 1778 the Wesleys had moved permanently from Bristol (near Bath) to 1 Chesterfield Street, Marylebone, London, yet the address for Arnold, just “Great Pulteney Street”, with no town or city, suggests that the letter was posted in or near Bath itself. The reason for Arnold’s visit to Bath remains unknown, but the concert programme resembles, in format and content, the well-documented family concerts that Samuel and Charles junior organised in the music room at their father’s London house from 1779 to 1787; data concerning the concerts has been collated and analysed in detail by Alyson McLamore.18 The concerts took place usually, but not invariably, on Thursdays at fortnightly intervals between January and April. In 1784 there were concerts on Thursday 15 and 29 April, but not on the 22nd. The draft programme, which includes “C. W.” [Charles Wesley junior] and “S. W.” [Samuel Wesley], either as performers or composers, and also an offering for solo cello from Reinagle, does not correspond exactly with any of those listed by McLamore, though it is nearly the same as that for 24 April 1783.19 The cellist Reinagle could in theory be either Joseph or his brother Hugh; however, Joseph Reinagle attended just one concert over the years20 and did not participate at all. Hugh Reinagle performed frequently up until 1783, but not in 1784 or thereafter.21

Next, we move forward eleven years to the first of the letters from Charles Burney (1726–1814); it seems that Burney was responding to a request from Arnold for information about Handel’s early instrumental publications. Burney had played under Handel,22 and written about him extensively in his account of the 1784 Handel commemorations23 – cited at the start of the letter – and in A General History of Music.24 Despite his eulogistic tone in the Commemoration of Handel, Burney did not admire the composer’s output uncritically; George III on the other hand, as dedicatee of the book, took a keen interest in its progress and would allow no criticism. Burney, in a long letter to confidant Thomas Twining, poured out his frustration at not being able to express his opinions truthfully.25 When Twining reviewed the book, he coined the expression “Handelomaniacs” for those “partisans of what is called the old Music” who rejected all post-Handelian musical trends.26

3.* From Charles Burney

Unpaid | To | Dr. Arnold | No. 22. Duke Street | Westminster
[The name “ANDERSON” is stamped beside the name and address, with a large “2” scrawled over it]
[Written beside the address, not in Burney’s hand]

| Overture | 1 |
| Leak    | 2 |
| Bland   | 1 |
| Banister| 1 |
| Fawcett | 1 |
| Duane   | 2 |
| March   | 1 |
| Feralia | 2 |

[Boxed] 12

[23 Charles Burney, An Account of the Musical Performances in Westminster-Abbey (see note 5).
26 Twining’s review appeared anonymously in: The Critical Review, or, Annals of Literature, vol. 59 (February 1785), pp. 130–38; he used the term “Handelomaniacs” in a footnote on p. 131. In a letter to Burney dated 15 February 1785, Twining acknowledged authorship of the review and used the term again (GB-Lbl Add. Ms 39929, ff. 350–51).]
Easter Tuesday Night | 1795

My dear friend.

In my account of the Commemoration of Handel, p. 13. I have said that Handel was in the Service of the Duke of Chandos at Cannons, from the year 1718 to 1720, “where he produced besides Anthems, the chief part of his Concertos, Sonatas, Lessons & Org. Fugues.” For this assertion I am sure I had good authority, at the time it was made; but which I am now unable to find. The 1st Instrumental Music of Handel that was printed in English was his 6 Org. fugues, with his name. I have the 1st Edition to be composed “by an eminent Italian Master.” His 1st Book of Lessons: “Pieces de Clavecin, was, I believe the 1st Instrumental work to which he set his name – these were advertised at a Guinée in 1720. His 2nd ouvrage, were his VI Sonates à deux Violons, deux Haubois [sic], deux Flutes traversieres & et Bass Continue – & the Hautbois Concertos are called in the title-page Op. 3.” Now from all this we may gather, that they were composed about 1719 & published about 1723. The late M’ Belcher, Handel’s intimate friend told me, that the 4th Hautbois Concerto was composed by Handel expressly during the opera regency of the Royal Academy for a benefit which was given to the band, & was called the Orchestra Overture.

Yrs ever most sincerely

Cha’ Burney.

Arnold started producing his Handel editions in 1787, and by 1795 had issued all the works that Burney mentions, except for the six concertos with oboes (better known as the concerti grossi, Op. 3, HWV 312–317). He brought out the concertos in 1796, a year after Burney’s letter, so it seems that Burney’s purpose was to date the concertos

27 Probably 7 April; Easter Sunday fell on 5 April in 1795. Easter Week follows Easter Sunday, but the term is sometimes used incorrectly for the preceding Holy Week.

28 The ‘8’ of ‘1718’ is written over a ‘5’. In the Commemoration of Handel (see note 5), immediately preceding the passage that he quotes, Burney writes: “From the year 1715 to 1720, I find, in the records of Musical Drama, no new opera that was set by Handel. The first three years of this period were chiefly spent at the Earl of Burlington’s, […] during the other two years, Handel seems to have been employed at Cannons, as maestro di capella to the Duke of Chandos”. Perhaps Burney, in hastily re-reading the passage for his letter, had initially misunderstood “1715 to 1720” to encompass entirely the period at Cannons. Kerry Downes (Cannons, in: The Cambridge Handel Encyclopedia, ed. Annette Landgraf and David Vickers, Cambridge 2009, p. 116) writes that “Cannons was Handel’s base in 1717–19”.

29 John Belcher or Belchier (1706–1785), an eminent surgeon, to whom Handel left £50 in his will.

30 Arnold published the Op. 3 concertos (HWV 312–317) in 1796 as issues 172–174; Six Fugues or Voluntaries for the Organ or Harpsichord (HWV 605–610) in 1798 as issue 131; Twelve Sonatas for the German Flute, Hautboy and Violin in 1794 as issues 139–140; Six Sonatas for Two Violins, Two Hautbois, or Two German Flutes (HWV 386–391) in 1798 as issues 47–48; the Suites de Pieces pour le Clavecin (HWV 426–433) in 1793 as issues 128–129 (information kindly supplied by Annette Landgraf).


33 See Anthony Hicks, Handel, George Frideric, in: New Grove, 2nd ed. (see note 32), vol. 8, p. 801.

34 “Compiled from existing material composed 1712–33” (ibid., p. 796).
Haymarket on 20 June, 1716, a benefit performance for the orchestra. Burney states wrongly that this was in the time of the Royal Academy of Music; the opera company did not start functioning until 1720.

The biggest puzzle concerns Burney’s reference to an anonymous edition of the six organ fugues, composed by “an eminent Italian Master”; no such edition is known.16 Walsh published *Six Fugues or Voluntaries for the Organ Compos’d by G. F. Handel* in 1735 (HWV 605–610); he confusingly labelled them “Troisieme ovarage” [sic], a year after he designated the concerti grossi “Opera Terza”. Since Handel had composed the fugues much earlier, in 1717,17 it may be that Burney was referring to an edition from that period which has not been found. He must have known an attributed source too, to establish that the “Italian master” was in fact Handel. In referring to Handel’s “first book of lessons” Burney meant the first set of harpsichord suites (HWV 426–433) and here his comments on the work are correct.38

At the start of the following year, Burney wrote to Arnold again, about a two-part biographical sketch on him that appeared in a short-lived newspaper, *The Tomahawk,* on Saturday January 2 and Monday January 4, 1796 (issues 58 and 59). They were written by Arnold under the pseudonym “Magnus Apollo”. Burney had evidently seen the first piece – his letter is dated Sunday 3 January – and he noted that it was based on an account Arnold had written ten years previously in the *European Magazine.* Burney wanted to ensure that, in the second piece, Arnold updated his sons’ careers with news of recent posts and promotion; an additional motive perhaps was to mask earlier setbacks and even scandal in their lives.40

**4. From Charles Burney**

To | D’Arnold | Duke Street | Westminster.

Sunday 3d [January; see end of letter] 1796.

My dear friend.

I thank you for the care wth you have kindly taken of me in the T. H. If the editor was determined to talk of so unimportant a personage as myself, wth I own I never wished, I cnot fall into better hands than yours. The praise and abuse of the living, the news–papers have long time rendered equally suspicious; & I am as glad to escape being bedaubed, as bespattered. And I fear that the coarse manner in wth C. F.41 was yesterday treated, will do more harm than good to our favourite cause. ^Though^ the facts alleged are all truisms, yet he is so idolized by the ^Sans Culottes^, Jacobins, and his duces of rank & fortune, that it is to be apprehended

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35 “In some MSS as ov. to Queen Anne Birthday Ode; movt 1 as ‘second overture in Amadis’, in 6 Overtures fitted to the Harpsichord, iii (London, 1728)” ([ibid.], p. 797). See also *The London Stage*, II.1., ed. Emmett Avery, Carbondale 1960, p. 407, where, quoting from newspaper advertisements, the entry for the King’s Theatre, Haymarket on 20 June 1716 reads: “AMADIS / MUSIC. Two New Symphonies / COMMENT. Benefit the Instrumental Musick. By Command. With all the Scenes and Cloaths belonging to this Opera, particularly the Fountain Scene”.

36 A search of bibliographic databases for a title similar to Burney’s has not yielded results, yet Burney gave the same information about this edition in *A General History of Music*, vol. 2 (see note 24): “the first productions of Handel, that were published in England, were said to be composed by an eminent Italian master” (Charles Burney, *A General History of Music*, ed. Frank Mercer, London 1935, reprinted New York 1957, vol. 1, p. 726, n(r)); he repeated the phrase in his entry on Italy for Rees’s *Cyclopedia* (*The Cyclopedia; or, Universal Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Literature*, ed. Abraham Rees, London 1802–1820, vol. 19, unpaginated).


38 An edition of the suites, authorised by Handel, was published in London by John Cluer as *Suites de Pieces pour le Clavecin Composées par G. F. Handel*. They were advertised at one guinea in *The Daily Courant*, 14 November 1720. [Ibid.], p. 41.

39 *The Tomahawk! or Censor General* (subtitle: *The King! and the Constitution*), published between 27 October 1795 and 7 March 1796. Although chiefly political in content, *The Tomahawk* often included brief commentaries on the musical scene in the form of letters, dialogues, verses and articles.

40 Burney’s eldest son, James Burney (1750–1821), had a naval career that took him twice to the south seas with Captain James Cook; he witnessed Cook’s death in Hawaii in 1779. While captain of the *Bristol* in 1782 James Burney had disobeyed orders; this led to his forced retirement, which may explain his father’s request to omit mention of his commanding the ship. The second surviving son, also Charles (1757–1817), disgraced himself at Cambridge University through stealing books from the University Library. He then took a classics degree at King’s College, Aberdeen and became a schoolmaster, and later a noted classical scholar. He was headmaster of a successful school in Chiswick, which he moved to Hammersmith, and in 1793 to Greenwich. The third son (by Charles’s second wife, Elisabeth Allen) was Richard Thomas Burney (1768–1808). According to Roger Lonsdale, “In about 1785 […] Richard committed some mysterious crime – or was involved in some kind of scandal – and, although there are dark references to his disappearance to India, his name is very largely dropped from family correspondence.” (Roger Lonsdale, *Dr. Charles Burney: A Literary Biography*, Oxford 1965, p. 333). However, he does seem to have achieved respectability in his post at the Orphan School.

41 Charles James Fox (1749–1806), the radical Whig politician. Fox had supported American independence and the French Revolution.
they will be provoked to avenge the honour of their Champion by some new outrage.

If anything should be said about my children in the sequel of your account, as it is near 11 years since the Europ. Mag. wch you have followed was published, it may be necessary to omit what is said of my eldest son's commanding the Bristol – and to add after “– Capt. Cook; he was made Post Captain in 1782.” And after the mention of – “His second Son, now at the head of a great academy at Greenwich, is an excellent &c” – “His 3d son, who has had a liberal education, & been some time in India, has lately been appointed Head – Master of the Orphan – School at Calcutta for the children of Officers who have died in the service of the East India Company.”

I beg my best Compts to Mrs. Arnold, & hope that the new year which we have just broached may run clear & pleasant to the last drop.

Believe me with sincere regard

Dear Sir, yours with fraternal affection,

Chas Burney.

The next letter from Burney relates once more to Arnold’s Handel editions. Arnold terminated the editions, uncompleted, in 1797, and the letter, written towards the end of that year, suggests that the project had not made money for Arnold.

5. From Charles Burney

To Dr Arnold

To Dr Arnold Duke Street Westminster.

Chelsea College, 7 October 1797

Chel. Coll. 7 Oct' 1797.

My dear brother Graduate.

On my return to Chelsea, after scampering about the kingdom like a vagabond, I called in Duke Street, for 3 specific reasons: impræmīs — to enquire after the health of yourself & family; 2nd to ask whether Weds' seven-night, 18 Inst. were suit you to meet our brother graduates; & 3rd to settle our handelian account according to my memorandum had not been liquidated since the 29th Augt 1793, up to No 135, so that since that period, having received 45 Nos, my debt amounts, if I mistake not, to £9.0.0. — Will you, my dear friend, have the goodness to let me know whether our account agree? If they do, I will send you a draught for the needful, immediately: as I perceive you have wound up your bottom. I fear this laudable enterprise has been more troublesome to you, than profitable. I had hopes that it would have been worth your while to have given Handel’s Ital. operas, before the Harvest-home was sung; but I know, by experience, that people, in general, behave very shabbily in subscription business; & I believe I ought to congratulate you, that you are come to the close, after the difficulties you had to encounter.

I should not have postponed my Graduate dinner so late as the 18th if Callcott had not written me word that he should be out of Town the beginning of the month; and the number of our brethren at present is so small, that losing one of them, is equal to an Inch in a man's Nose.

God bless you, my dear brother — believe me ever Yours Affectly

Chas Burney.

Burney’s figures tally with publication prices, issue numbers and dates. Arnold published each issue of his edition at two prices: 4 shillings on imperial paper, and 3 shillings on thin paper. Arnold published each issue of his edition at two prices: 4 shillings on imperial paper, and 3 shillings on thin paper. 46

42 Inserted over illegible deletion.

43 European Magazine, and London Review, published between 1782 and 1826. The issue of March 1785 led with an article, Some Account of the Life and Writings of Dr Charles Burney (pp. 163–4) and also included “an elegant engraved likeness of him.”

44 The East India Company.

45 Burney had been appointed organist at Chelsea College in 1783 and lived in the organist’s apartment there from 1787 until his death (Roger Lonsdale, Dr. Charles Burney [see note 40], p. 335).

46 In 1790 Arnold had founded a society of musicians called “The Graduates’ Meeting”; see also letters 4, 8, 22.


48 The successful glee composer John Wall Callcott (1766–1821). He met Arnold in 1782 and together with Arnold and others founded The Glee Club in 1787. In 1797 Callcott issued a prospectus to subscribers for a music dictionary; the project was not completed.

Burney could therefore obtain 5 issues on imperial paper for £1. 0s. 0d. (20 shillings = £1. 0s. 0d.) and 45 issues for £9. 0s. 0d. Arnold announced the conclusion of the edition on 22 September 1797, two and a half weeks before Burney’s letter; the final issue was no. 180. Burney had paid for issues up to no. 135, so he had 45 issues remaining to pay for.51

A few months later comes a short letter, dated 22nd March 1798, from George Colman the Younger (1762–1836), who had inherited the Theatre Royal in the Haymarket from his father, George Colman the Elder, after the latter’s death in 1794. Arnold continued to work at Colman’s theatre until he died.

50 For further details see J. M. Coopersmith, The First Gesamtausgabe (see note 5), p. 286.
51 These were:

135–139: Susanna (HWV 66) / Esther (HWV 50)
139–140: Twelve Sonatas or Solo’s for the German Flute, Hautboy and Violin (HWV 359a; 360; 361; 363a; 364; 365; 366; 367a; 368; 369; 372; 373)
140–146: Deborah (HWV 51)
146–149: Agrippina (HWV 6)
150–153: L’Allegro il Penseroso, ed il Moderato (HWV 55)
153–154: Anthem. For the Wedding of Frederick Prince of Wales […] (HWV 263)
155–156: Anthem. For the Funeral of Queen Caroline (HWV 264)
156–157: Anthem. For the Victory at Dettingen (HWV 265)
157: Anthem. For the Coronation of George II.⁵ (HWV 259)
158: Anthem. For the Coronation of George II.⁵ (HWV 258)
158–159: Anthem. For the Coronation of George II.⁵ (HWV 261)
159–160: Masque Consisting of a Prelude, Airs Duettes, a Chorus, and Dances [Il Pastor fido, Terpsichore] (HWV 8⁸–⁹)
160–164: Alexander Balus (HWV 65)
165–169: The Triumph of Time and Truth (HWV 71)
169–171: La Resurrezione (HWV 47)
171–172: Anthem. For the Coronation of George II.⁵ (HWV 260)
172–174: Concertos [6 Concerti grossi] (HWV 312–317)
174–176: Two Trios, and Four Cantatas (HWV 201¹–²; 200; 89, 87; 97; 170)
176–179: Thirteen Chamber Duetto’s and Twelve Cantatas (HWV 178; 180; 183; 184; 185; 188; 191; 193; 194; 196; 197; 198; 189; 88; 106; 111; 114; 115; 139a; 145; 153; 160a, 161b; 163; 167a)
179–180: Concertos &c. For the Organ (HWV 305, 305). We are grateful to Annette Landgraf for this information.

6.⁶ From George Colman the Younger

D’ Arnold | 22 Duke Street | Westminster
[stamped postmark in red, illegible]
22d March. 1798. | Piccadilly.

My dear Arnold,

As I have lent the words I see no objection to lending the Musick also – but care should be taken that both Musick & words are return’ d safe, & in proper time.

I take shame to myself in having suffer’d so much time to go by without giving you a call.

We must meet soon, upon business – & begin to look about us for the summer.

very truly your’s

G. Colman

Arnold had composed a number of operas with dialogue to libretti by Colman the Younger and the latter’s father too, especially during the 1780s. The last collaboration was The Surrender of Calais in 1791. But Arnold also composed a large number of shows for other librettists. The piece might have been no more than a single vocal number; at the time, Arnold was involved with the Glee Club, the Anacreontic Society and the Academy of Ancient Music, as well as being an active freemason.⁵²

The last letter before we arrive at proposals for the Arne Monument comes from Charles Burney again, dated 27 June 1801, and it could be the seed from which Arnold’s idea of the monument grew. The letter concerns a plea to the Royal Society of Musicians for money, made by the widow of Thomas Augustine’s son, Michael Arne (c.1740–1786); she was Michael Arne’s third wife, Ann, née Venables (fl. 1772–1820). Arnold and Burney both belonged to the Royal Society of Musicians; Arne senior and Handel, among many other notable figures, had been founder members of the institution when it was founded in 1738.⁵³ Handel bequeathed the Fund £1,000 in a codicil to his will, and took part in annual concerts that raised money for the organisation.

50 For further details see J. M. Coopersmith, The First Gesamtausgabe (see note 5), p. 286.
52 The institution, originally the Society of Musicians, administered a Fund for the Support of Decayed Musicians. On 26 August 1790 the Society received a charter from George III, making it the Royal Society of Musicians.
7. From Charles Burney

[No addressee]

Chelsea College, June 27th 1801

My dear friend.

The widow of the late Michael Arne intending to petition the R. S. of Musicians for some relief in her deplorable circumstances, has been soliciting me to back the application. All I know of the person is her name, and the melancholy narrative with which she has furnished me, of the extreme distress and indigence under which she has laboured since her husband's decease, which happened near 16 years ago.

I have long ceased to attend the meetings of the Society, and am going out of town till Monday or Tuesday; or, for the sake of the name she bears, certainly be inclined to give her my suffrage, when the business is brought before the Society; on which she has, indeed, no regular claim, her husband having never been a member. And it seems as if the rule for disqualifying from an annual allowance the families of all such professors as have never contributed to the support of the Fund, should never be violated; but if a few loose pounds be granted as a temporary relief to persons suffering under the pressure of extreme want, & who have been left destitute by the negligence or misconduct of professors of eminence (as was the case of Dr. Arne's widow) it seems as if a small deviation from rigid economical rules would do credit to the liberality and benevolence of the Society: an establishment which does honour to our profession and Country; and which has been adopted as a model by other professions at home, and on the continent.

If, my dear Sir, you see this poor woman's petition in the light which it has struck me, and she do not attend the general meeting, you, who as well as myself, have a due sense of the merit & memory of my old Master, Doctor Arne, [new page] will commiserate the case of an unfortunate remnant of his family.

I shall call in Duke Street this morning in my way to Black-Heath in order to talk this matter over, vivâ voce: but lest you shd not be at home, I shall leave this statement of the business for your consideration, hoping that you will excuse my troubling you with so long a letter, & believe me to be with sincere regard and friendship,

yours very affectionately.

Cha' Burney

Burney and Arnold succeeded in their petition; the minute books of the Society show that from 1801 to 1820, the year of her death, Michael Arne's widow received between five and ten guineas annually.

Eight months later, in February 1802, we come to Burney's lengthy, but initially negative, response to Arnold's idea for the Arne concert and monument.

8. From Charles Burney

[No addressee]


My dear friend & brother.

I rejoice much at the plan you mention, of a public performance for the purpose of erecting a monument to our ingenious countryman, my Master Dr Arne; it is what I have long wished, & was always ready & willing to contribute my mite, if, according to a plan which was formed many years ago for doing it among ourselves, we, his brother Graduates, had been able to bear the expense. I was so much in earnest at the time, that, at the instigation of my brethren then living, had proposed an Epitaph for the Tablet, or any form of Monument which our means could raise – but by degrees, our zeal cooled, & the idea faded away – & I know not what is become of my Epitaph, not having seen it these 7 years – However if a better cannot be procured, I shall look for it in my chaos of Papers, or feel for another in my present chaos of Ideas, if wanted. But, as for writing "an exordium, to be spoken by a Theatrical Person["], the very thought terrifies me, so occupied and perturbed as my mind is at present! The jobb which I have, too inconsiderately, undertaken, of furnishing musical articles on a large scale, including Biography, criticism, & histy for the new Encyclopædia, will, I

54 Another version of this letter exists, with minor differences, in the Burney Family Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, Call number OSB MSS 3.

55 A London suburb now – a village then – about a mile south-east of Greenwich. As mentioned above, Burney's son Richard was headmaster of a school in Greenwich.

56 See Philip H. Highfill et al., Arne, Mrs Michael the third, Ann, née Venables, in: A Biographical Dictionary of Actors (see note 6), vol. 1, p. 105.
perceive, occupy every moment of my leisure for the rest of my life – indeed I have no title to expect to live to see a work finished, wch. will occupy the press for at least ten years to come, & wth drives on at the rate of 3 sheets a week! of wth 12 were worked off before I became a coadjuter. So that having nothing before hand to feed the press, the compositor is always at [new page] crave, crave, crave – I have not been well for 4 or 5 weeks past – and moreover, I am not accustomed to write for the Stage – and know nothing of the humours of The Town, what key it is in, or the prominent feature of the performer who is likely declaim this exordium. You, my dear brother, are perfectly acquainted with all these things, and know the Theatrical writers that are most likely to draw up something interesting on the occasion. It grieves me not to comply with the wishes of my friends, but particularly the wish of yourself, & on such an Occasion; but I really do not feel up to the task; I am as relaxed as a dishclout, mind & body, at present; nor is there time sufficient screwing myself up. so do, my dear friend, for the reasons assigned above, wch are not frivolous excuses, but real truisms, take from me this Cup, and believe me wth sincere friendship & regard Yours affectionately Cha’. Burney

Burney’s anxiety at taking on a huge commission for Rees’s Cyclopædia at the age of seventy-five is corroborated in Roger Lonsdale’s biography. Lonsdale points out that one attraction was the fee: £1,000, to be paid at £50 every six months over ten years, as installments were published (in fact, it took eighteen years for publication to be completed). Despite his worries however, Burney sent Arnold another letter the next day and plunged in without salutation:

9.* From Charles Burney

To | Dr. Arnold | Duke Street – | Westminster.

Chel. Coll. 23d. Feby. 1802.

Though it seemed impossible ^for me^ to bestow a thought on anything but what I was ab^i^ when I rec^d^ your letter, I cannot get the subject of it out of my head; it haunts me. And though I shall only suggest what, no doubt, has occurred to yourself in forming a plan wth does you so much honour; lest I shb^n^t find you at home when I call, I will just make a few memoranda of what strikes me as most likely to honour our countryman and our country, in the execution of your plan.

Imprimi – as it will be a kind of Commemoration of our magnus Apollo, it seems desirable that his own productions sh^d^ furnish food for the Feast; wth (if they c^b^ were well performed) his Comus – Alfred, Mask & Oratorio – Cantatas – Overtures – Quartets – and even some of his Vaux-Hall Songs, in Lyric Harmony, wth in natural and pleasing melody will never be exceeded, w^a^ amply supply. His Rule Britannia, w^b^ is deservedly at the head of our national Songs, will doubtless be called for – Rise, Glory, rise! in Rosamond – sweet Echo, in Comus – “Nature framed thee sure for loving”, in the Judgment of Paris, & a 100 &ceteras might be selected from his works, w^th^ would^d^ please an English audience, and do honour to his memory. Artaxerxes, now revived, in [?]run, & in greater favour than ever, is, in my opinion, less original than the above, in w^b^ he was no imitator of Purcell, Handel, or any foreign composer. I have lately sent a Biographical Article for him, to Dr. Rees – and in that, chiefly taken from my Hist. of Music, retouched; and in my Epitaph (If I c^d^ find it) will be seen my true feelings of his merit, and the obligations w^th^ the nation has to his talents. God bless you, my

60 Arne's masque Comus was first performed 4 March 1738 at Drury Lane. His masque Alfred was first performed 1 August 1740 at Cliveden House in Buckinghamshire; it was later revived as an oratorio. Arne wrote numerous cantatas between 1736 and 1774, many of them published. He wrote two collections of overtures, the first published in 1751; the second, in 1767. On the “quartets” see note 65 below: His two volumes of Vauxhall songs titled Lyric Harmony appeared in 1745 and 1746. See Peter Holman and Todd Gilman, Arne, Thomas Augustine, in: New Grove, 2nd ed. (see note 32), London 2001, vol. 2, pp. 41–46.

61 Arne's famous patriotic song “Rule, Britannia” was first performed as part of the masque Alfred (see previous note). “Rise, Glory, rise” is a trumpet aria from Arne’s earliest stage work, the English opera Rosamond, first performed on 7 March 1733 at the Little or New Theatre, Haymarket. “Sweet echo” is the first of three main masque airs from Comus and features an echoing flute accompaniment. “Nature fram’d thee sure for loving”, an air from Arne’s masque The Judgment of Paris (first performed 12 March 1742 at Drury Lane), a simple English minuet, elegantly recalls Purcell’s “Fairest Isle.”

62 First performed 2 February 1762 at Covent Garden. This work became the first successful all-sung English opera and held that distinction until late Victorian times.

63 See comments on Elizabeth Billington below (p. 371).
dear Arnold – I shall [new page] be anxious for the prosperity of this plan, for the honour of Arne, our profession, & the national gratitude.
Believe me ever Yours
most truly
Cha’ Burney

Three weeks later, Burney regretted that illness would probably prevent his attending a meeting the next day about the concert.

10.* From Charles Burney

To | D’ Arnold | Duke Street | Westminster
[Stamped: “Two Penny | POST | Chelsea CO”; also in red, illegible, apart from “1802 N.T”]

Monday mont⁴ 15th Mar. 1802.

My dear friend.

“My mind to me a kingdom is” – and you will have that kingdom entire, [?]
w⁴ on Tuesday; but as to corporeal service, I cannot promise it. I have been an invalid ever since Thursday night, when I was seized with a shivering fit at the Wesley’s Concert⁶⁴ – and I am now confined to my fire-side by its consequences.

Having been too much indisposed to call on Capt. Wilson ab’ Arne’s Quartets,⁶⁵ I wrote a note to him this morning to request the loan of them, & inclose you his answer. But the Naval Ode,⁶⁶ he mentions, seems very much to our Purpose, if it can be procured & performed. I am delighted that the sweet chantress M’a Billington, is with us, & ^that^ all seems going on so prosperously.

Eve'r affectionately
on this and all Occasions
Cha’ Burney.

The previous year Elizabeth Billington (1765–1818) had returned from eight years in Italy, where she had achieved an immense reputation. Stories of her fame reached England, and her appearance on return as Mandane in Arne’s Artaxerxes at Covent Garden drew much attention; this is the production that Burney mentioned in his previous letter.⁶⁷ Her presence in the concert plans demonstrates that Arnold and his committee aimed to obtain the finest performers.

The next letter, dated a day later, is to Arnold from the bass James Bartleman (1769–1821), another singer of high reputation.⁶⁸ It concerns the same meeting; Bartleman too was unable to attend and indeed cannot make the date of the concert; he did not take part.

11. From James Bartleman

Dr. Arnold

March 16th 1802

My dear Sir

I should be very ready to lend my assistance at Arnes Commemoration, but on that day the Harmonic Club⁶⁹ meet, but I shall endeavour to see you in a few days & talk the matter over with you—I would have met the Committee to day but am prevented by business.

Yours Truly

J : BARTLEMAN.

28 Bury St:

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65 Wilson unidentified; “Arne’s Quartets” presumably refers to Arne’s sole essay in chamber music, the trio sonatas titled VII Sonatas for Two Violins with a Thorough Bass for the Harpsichord or Violoncello […] “Opera Terza”, which Walsh published on 6 April 1757. See Todd Gilman, The Theatre Career of Thomas Arne, Newark, Delaware 2013, p. 301.


67 See Philip H. Highfill et al., Billington, Mrs James, Elizabeth, née Weichsel, in: A Biographical Dictionary of Actors (see note 6), vol. 2, pp. 122–9.

68 Bartleman sang at the Theatre Royals in Covent Garden and the Haymarket during the 1790s as the leading interpreter of the bass-baritone parts in Handel’s oratorios. See Philip H. Highfill et al., Bartleman, James, in: A Biographical Dictionary of Actors (see note 6), vol. 1, pp. 367–9.

69 A singing club founded by Charles Knivett, who was also its secretary; meeting places included the Thatched-House tavern and the Star & Garter tavern (see letter no. 19, p. 378). According to an advertisement in True Briton, Tuesday 5 November 1799 (among other sources), the prince of Wales was a member, and through his generosity the club awarded silver cups as prizes for the best catch, glee and song lyric.
Four days after Bartleman, the composer, violinist and viola player William Shield (1748–1829) wrote to Arnold; he too could not attend a meeting about the concert, although he is advertised as principal second violin in the eventual performance on 10 June (see below).

12.\* From William Shield

Doctor Arnold | Duke Street | Westminster
Saturday Evening | March 20 [1802]\)

My dear Dr Arnold

[flourish]

Your Letter (altho dated the 19th) was not delivered to me till this moment

In answer to which, I beg leave to state my opinion “that it would be more prudent to consult with Mrs Billington after Banti's Benefit than before it.”

I am truly sorry to add that it is totally out of my power to meet the Committee to morrow, but believe me that I am as zealous in the cause as any gentleman that may have the happiness of being present

I am my Dear Doctor

Yrs ever Wm Shield

The benefit to which Shield refers, given on 25 March, included Billington as well as Brigida Banti (1757–1806)\) as performers. Banti’s health had begun to decline; she decided to return to her native Italy and in a surprising gesture before leaving, asked Billington to perform with her in the benefit, and in doing so to take the leading role in Nasolini's Merope e Polifonte.\)

13.\* From François-Hippolyte Barthélemon

Dr. Arnold | Duke Street | Westminster.

April 4th 1802.

Dear Arnold

I receiv' d Your note this Morning from the Post-man near the Asylum\), as I was going to several scholars into Town. I call' d at Clementi's in Cheapside to make choice of three airs of Dr: Arne's to form a Solo, which I shall be happy to play Saturday to put my mite in the Treasury for the purpose of seeing a Monument erected for my Dear Departed Great Uncle and most affectionate Friend. wishing all success to the cause I have at heart,

I am, Dr Arnold, sincerely

Yours. F. H. Barthelemon

So far, plenty of goodwill existed towards the idea of an Arne monument and associated concert, even if Burney, Bartleman and Shield had been unable to attend meetings relating to the plan. On 22 April, an advertisement, under Barthélemon’s name, appeared in The Times:

DR. ARNE:—Mr. BARTHELEMON, Nephew to the late Dr. ARNE, takes the liberty of renewing the application he made four months ago, to the Nobility, Gentry, and the Musical Professors of this United Kingdom, for a SUBSCRIPTION towards the erection of a MONUMENT in St. Paul’s Cathedral,\)

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70 20 March fell on a Saturday in 1802.

71 Banti had come to London first in 1779, and again in 1794 following a highly successful four year European tour. She then took leading roles in opera at the King’s Theatre, Haymarket until her departure in 1802. See Bruce Carr, Banti, Brigida Giorgi, in: Grove Music Online (see note 21, website last accessed 21 January 2014).

72 Sebastiano Nasolini (?1768–?1798 or 1799) composed the opera in 1796 for Billington, who sang the title role in Venice and then in several other Italian cities.

73 Regarded as a fine player by Burney and many others; he led several London theatre and pleasure gardens orchestras, as well as the Academy of Ancient Music.

74 Possibly Bethlem Hospital (Bedlam), situated on the north side of London Wall, about a ¼ mile from Cheapside.

75 The musical instrument makers, music sellers and publishers Clementi, Banger, Hyde, Collard & Davis (also known as Clementi & Co.) had premises at 26, Cheapside from 1800 to 1810.

76 It will be recalled that Arne was a Roman Catholic. Despite relief legislation to mitigate, and eventually abolish, most of the penal enactments in the last decades of the preceding century,
memoration of that great Musical Genius Dr. ARNE, who has not at this time a stone to point out his ashes, to whom the Public are indebted for the celebrated Composition of ‘Rule Britannia,’ for the Operas of Artaxerxes, Comus, and many other Compositions equally meritorious. To accomplish this object, Mr. Barthle-

memon proposes having a GRAND CONCERT in the ensuing month of May, at one of the most fashionable Concert Rooms, where he hopes to be honoured with the attendance and patronage of the Lovers of Harmony, by whom the memory of that great National Composer must ever be respected.

Two days later, on April 24th, another advertisement appeared in The Times, which credits Arnold with the organisation:

COMMEMORATION of the late Dr. ARNE.
(By permission of the LORD CHAMBERLAIN.)
At the THEATRE ROYAL, HAYMARKET, on Saturday, May 8, 1802, will be per-
formed a SELECTION OF MUSIC, compiled entirely from the Works of Dr. ARNE, by SAMUEL ARNOLD, Mus. Doc. The Profits arising from the Performance will be applied towards raising a Monument to the memory of the late Dr. Arne. Under the direction of Dr. ARNOLD, and a Committee appointed for that purpose.

A qualified endorsement for the proposal from Charles Wesley junior, on 27 April, suggests that plans were still in place for 8 May.

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anti-Catholic sentiment persisted in the early nineteenth century. It might be thought, therefore, that Protestants would object to a monument at St. Paul’s dedicated even to a prominent Catholic such as Arne. However, there is no evidence to support this notion. Indeed, a comparable example is James Barry, the painter, who died a Catholic in 1806. Barry was buried, after an elaborate and presumably Anglican service, in the south-east corner of the crypt of St. Paul’s Cathedral, between the remains of Sir Christopher Wren and Sir Joshua Reynolds. While only a plain stone memorial marks the spot, in 1819 his bust was modelled and moulded in Coade stone and placed in the crypt. Barry’s bust constituted the first sculptural memorial to be placed in the crypt in more than a century. See William L. Pressly, Barry, James (1741–1806), in: Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (see note 6, website last accessed 31 January 2014); George Lewis Smyth, Biographical Illustrations of St. Paul’s Cathedral, London 1843, pp. 60–61; Roger Bowdler and Ann Saunders, The Post-Reformation Monuments, in: St. Paul’s: The Cathedral Church of London, 604–2004, ed. Derek Keene et al., New Haven 2004, p. 282; and Alison Kelly, Mrs. Coade’s Stone, Upton-upon-Severn 1990, pp. 138–9. (Clare Haynes kindly supplied the suggestion of Barry as a Catholic comparable to Arne.)

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From Charles Wesley junior

D’ Arnold, | Duke Street, | Westminster.
[Stamped “Two-Penny | POST | [illegible]” and overprinted with large figure “2”; also stamped in red “1 o’CLOCK [27.AP | 1802 N.T”]

Chesterfield Street April 27th [sic].

My Dear Sir,

I know you will excuse the liberty I am taking, by enclosing my young Friend Mr. John Bacon’s77 Letter wch I have lately received. – You appear to have remembrd[sic] an ingenious English Composer, tho’ none can ever equal the great Handel. It is very proper to revive Dr. Arne’s best musick, and if you can speak to your Committee on the subject of M’ Bacon, I shall be particularly thankful to you. – We all unite in kind Respects and regard to our worthy Friend M’ Arnold, not leaving out the young Folk. I am my good Sir,
your long oblig’d Friend [squiggle]
C.Wesley.

You will be kind enough to Direct your answer to J. Bacon Esq. Newman Street. –

However, shortly after that letter, plans started to go awry. For some unknown reason the concert on 8 May did not take place, and was rescheduled for midday on Wednesday, 19 May, at the Opera Concert Room in the Theatre Royal, Haymarket.78 A letter from William Jewell, treasurer then at both the Theatre Royal and King’s Theatre in the Haymarket,79 suggests problems in finding a rehearsal or performance space on 17 May.

From William Jewell

My Dear Doctor

Your letter is forwarded to Mr Coleman relative to the 17 instant which I

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77 The sculptor John Bacon (1777–1859) was born in Newman Street, London (see end of letter); his father, John Bacon senior (1740–1799), was also a sculptor (Jason Edwards, Bacon, John, in: Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, see note 6, website last accessed 5 February 2014).

78 Advertisement in The Times, 19 May 1802.

79 William Jewell (c.1729–1828) was treasurer at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket from c.1765 to 1805, and the King’s Theatre, Haymarket from 1781 to c.1813. See Philip H. Hightiff et al., Jewell, William, in: A Biographical Dictionary of Actors (see note 6), vol. 8, pp. 159–61.
am fearful cannot be complied with—(if so the [?—] House may be had) if the expenses are not thought too high the moment I hear from Mr Coleman you shall be acquainted with his determination.

I am Dear Doctor

Yours truly

W. JEWELL

Friday 7th May 1802  

Next, the concert on 19 May also had to be postponed; the reason may be found in a brief note from Elizabeth Billington to Arnold, written the day before at 6 o’clock.

16. From Elizabeth Billington

Doctor Arnold | Duke Street | Wes.t’

[At end of letter] 27 Manchester Street | ?Manchester Sq | Tuesday 6 o clock.
[18 May 1802]

Dear Sir

I am much concerned, my cold continuing so very bad prevents me the pleasure of serving at the Concert tomorrow Morning – I am dear Sir

Yours very obliged

Billington

On 19 May The Times published news of Billington’s indisposition.

Further letters relating to the concert come from the Tenbury Wells collection; problems with venues and performers continued. The location switched to Ranelagh Gardens, once the most exclusive of London’s pleasure gardens. Now, in its penultimate season, the Rotunda, where concerts were held, was no longer “one of the most fashionable Concert Rooms”, as The Times advertisement had promised (see above).  

In a letter to Arnold postmarked May, the celebrated tenor John Braham objected to the venue.  

17. From John Braham

[Postmark: May 1802]

Dr. Arnold

Duke Street,

Westminster

Dear Sir

I should have been happy to have sung at the Commemoration of Dr Arne—

But for many reasons cannot think of singing at Ranelagh.

Yours sincerely

J. BRAHAM

I hope soon to have the pleasure of seeing you perfectly re-established.

Braham’s final remark, as Watkins Shaw points out, contains the only reference to Arnold’s ill health, which had persisted since a fall from his library steps four years earlier.

At least the mezzosoprano Maria Theresa Bland demonstrated flexibility and professionalism.

80 Watkins Shaw, Projected Arne Commemoration (see note 3), p. 92, adds here, “The foregoing letter is endorsed with a memorandum in another hand, no doubt that of Arnold: Monday 13 [?–] Concert and [?–?] Fr: 14 Vocal Conc.”

81 For much of Ranelagh’s existence, admission cost 2s. 6d., compared with 1s. 6d. at rival Vauxhall Gardens. The Rotunda closed on 8 July 1803; see Mollie Sands, Invitation to Ranelagh, London 1946, p. 38 and p. 232.

82 John Braham (1774–1856), the most eminent English tenor of the early 19th century, had performed at Ranelagh as a teenager, shortly after his voice broke, probably under a feigned name. He made his reputation in Paris and Italy (1797–1801), where he travelled with Nancy Storace, and was much in demand after his return. He was the brother of Arne’s pupil Harriet Abrams (1760–1825), who was featured in the miniature comic opera May-Day, or The Little Gipsy, a collaboration between Arne and David Garrick that was first performed at Drury Lane on 28 October 1775. See Philip H. Highfill et al., Braham, John, in: A Biographical Dictionary of Actors (see note 6), vol. 2, pp. 291–303; Garrick, David, in: ibid., vol. 6, p. 58; and Todd Gilman, Theatre Career of Thomas Arne (see note 65), pp. 542–3.

83 See Watkins Shaw, Projected Arne Commemoration (see note 3), p. 91.

84 Maria Theresa Bland (1768/9–1838); said to have been of Italian origin. She had deputised for Brigida Banti in Italian opera in 1798–1799, but suffered a breakdown for several months in 1800 after the death of a child. See Olive Baldwin, Thelma Wilson, Bland: (1) Maria Theresa Bland, in: Grove Music Online (see note 21, website last accessed 21 January 2014).
18. From Maria Theresa Bland

Dr. Dr.

I shall certainly make a point of being punctual on Tuesday at 12 o clock, and it gives me great pleasure in offering my assistance to your generous endeavour in so liberal an undertaking.

If it is possible I will esteem it a particular favor for Master Price to sing the upper part of the Duett, as it chiefly lies on F, G and A which I think will probably suit his voice better than mine. I will however sing the upper part with pleasure if inconvenient in the young gentleman.

I am Dr.

Your obt.

M: BLAND

A note on a scrap of paper from Charles Knyvett, although undated, must relate to the concert and implies that plans were not going smoothly. Knyvett had succeeded Arnold as organist to the Chapel Royal in 1796.

19. From Charles Knyvett

Dr Arnold

Dear Arnold,

I fully Intended Comming to you this morning but am Summon’d to Con-

cannons (?) to give an acct. of the Harmonic Club.

Whatever you do will be for the best, & I shall fully Agree, come this Eveg. to the Thatchd House if Possible.

Yrs.

C. KNYVETT

A further letter from William Shield, undated but probably written after 4 June (see note 87), shows him unable to take part in the performance itself, which was held at Ranelagh on 10 June, despite Braham's objections.

20. From William Shield

My dear Dr. Arnold

It gave me much concern when you told me (on the Birth Day) that the performance for Arnes Commemoration would be on Thursday next at Ranelagh, because I cannot be a performer there without disappointing Mr Codrington whose annual concert I have attended for many years.

When I assure you, & the rest of the Committee, that I sustained a loss of 3 Guineas in order to enable me to be at the rehearsal & performance, when the latter was expected to take place at noon in the Antient Concert Room, you will not conclude that Mr. Codrington’s 2 Guineas is the magnet that draws me from you but a desire of justifying my conduct to a gentleman who had a right to de-

My Dear Doctor Arnold

Yrs truly

WM SHIELD

An advertisement for the concert, printed in The Morning Chronicle on 10 June, lists the performers, including William Shield as Principal Second Violin. Presumably copy had been given to the printers before Shield's withdrawal.

RANELAGH.

COMMEMORATION of the LATE DR. ARNE.

THIS EVENING will be performed a Selection of MUSIC, compiled entirely from the Works of Dr. ARNE, by SAMUEL ARNOLD, Mus. Doc.


86 Probably the Thatched-House tavern, St James's Street, a venue much used for club meetings.

87 Watkins Shaw, Projected Arne Commemoration (see note 3), 92n, suggests that “This probably refers to the birthday of George III, June 4, when an Ode would be performed.” The birthday was widely celebrated, and unofficially marked the end of the London season.

88 In the King's Theatre, Haymarket.
Principal Vocal Performers—Mrs. Second, Miss Martyr, Miss Stevens, Miss Tennant, Mrs. Bland, Mr. Incledon, Mr. Dignum, Mr. Sale, Mr. Gore, Mr. Leete, Mr. Page, Mr. J. Sale, Master Price, Mr. Vaughan.

Leader of the Band, Mr. G. Ashley; Principal Second Violin, Mr. Shield; Hautboy, Mr. W. Parke; Violoncello, Mr. C. Ashley; Trumpet, Mr. Woodham, jun. Double Drums, Mr. R. Ashley; Organ, Mr. J. Ashley. In the course of the performance Mr. Barthélemon will perform a Solo on the Violin, the subject from Dr. Arne’s Works. The Band will be numerous and complete, and the Chorusses will be assisted by the Young Gentlemen of his Majesty’s Chapel, the Choir of St. Paul’s and Westminster Abbey.

The profits arising from the Performance will be vested in the hand of Messrs. Drummond, and will be applied towards raising a Monument to the memory of the late Dr. Arne, under the direction of Dr. Arnold, and a Committee appointed for that purpose.—Admittance 6s. each. Coffee and Tea included. The doors to open at eight, and begin at nine.

N. B. Tickets purchased of Mr. Rice, for the Boxes at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, will be admitted; and a Single Ticket purchased for the Opera Concert Room, will admit two persons by paying 1s 6d. at the door of Ranelagh.

◊Books of the Words to be had at the place of Performance, 1s. each.

A programme for the concert also survives, with several performers’ names deleted in ink and other names, handwritten, replacing them. All the replacement names appear in the Morning Chronicle advertisement, whereas the deleted names (identified with a light-enhancing magnifier) do not, with the exception of tenor Charles Incledon. This suggests that the programme, apart from the cover announcing the concert, had been printed for one of the earlier cancelled performances, on 8 or 19 May. In the following list, the first name is that printed in the programme, but deleted; the name in brackets after is the handwritten replacement: Mr T. Welsh (Mr Leete), Mrs Atkins (Miss Stevens), Mr Incledon (Miss Martyr), Signora Storace (Mrs Bland), Mr Braham (Mr Vaughan), Mrs Billington (Mrs Second), Mr Kelly (Mr Vaughan), Mrs Mountain (Miss Tennant). Most of the deleted names had much greater reputations than their replacements; Incledon, Storace, Braham, Billington and Kelly were major stars at the time. Withdrawals continued after the Morning Chronicle advertisement had been placed; two performers named in it did not take part: Charles Incledon, mentioned above, and the virtuoso oboist William Parke, who would have accompanied Elizabeth Billington (or her replacement Mrs Second) in “Sweet Echo” from Comus; he was replaced by an unknown Mr ?Mayhous. Parke, incidentally, had a high opinion of Mrs Second, ranking her “inferior only to Mrs Billington”.

90 J. Doane, A Musical Directory for the Year 1794. To be Continued Annually., London [1794] lists a Welch as organist, singer, and two Leetes, one a tenor with the Cecilian Society and the other a principal bass in the Academy of Ancient Music, the Concert of Ancient Music, grand performances in Westminster Abbey and Oratorios at Colman’s theatre. Eliza Atkins (Mrs William, née Warrell, later Mrs Hill) (fl. 1787–1808), sang at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket from 1797 and at Covent Garden from 1798; see Philip H. Highfill et al., A Biographical Dictionary of Actors (see note 6), vol. 1, pp. 168–9. Miss Stevens is not listed in the Musical Directory or the Biographical Dictionary (see note 6). Charles Incledon (1763–1826), an immensely popular singer from childhood, was at Covent Garden in 1802 on a high salary; see ibid., vol. 8, pp. 86–99. Margaret Martyr, née Thornton (?–1807), had great success in soubrettes and breeches roles at Covent Garden from 1779 to 1804. She had lived with William Parke (see below) since 1784; see ibid., vol. 10, pp. 118–123. Signora (Nancy) Storace (1765–1817), though pre-eminent in lighter and comic roles, had also sung in the 1784 Westminster Abbey Handel commemorations and in Handel performances elsewhere in London. She formed a relationship with John Braham. Storace is remembered today as the creator of the role of Susanna in Mozart’s Le nozze di Figaro. For Bland see note 84; for Braham see note 82. Thomas Vaughan (?–1843), tenor, was a lay-clerk at St George’s Chapel, Windsor from 1799; He married Miss Tennant (see below) in 1806. For Mrs Billington see p. 371. Sarah Second (Mrs John, née Mahon) (?–1805) was a soloist in the London premiere of Haydn’s Creation at Covent Garden (1800); she also took part in evenings of “Handelian Selections” there; see Philip H. Highfill et al., A Biographical Dictionary of Actors (see note 6), vol. 13, pp. 244–5. Dublin-born Michael Kelly (1762–1826), a tenor of high reputation in English musical theatre, is remembered also for his friendship with Mozart and the Storaces, as described in his Reminiscences (1826). Mozart wrote the roles of Don Curzio and Don Basilio for Kelly in Figaro. Kelly sang often in Arne’s Artaxerxes and praised the work highly. In 1801 he had been granted a licence to perform serious opera at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket; see ibid., vol. 8, pp. 291–300. Rosamund Mountain (Mrs John, née Wilkinson) (c.1768–1841) had, from her teenage years, a successful career as a stage and concert soprano. In 1800 she had become principal singing actress at Drury Lane; see ibid., vol. 10, pp. 346–52. Miss Tennant, later Mrs Thomas Vaughan (?–1822), was named as a singer in Handel oratorios from 1800; see ibid., vol. 14, pp. 398–9.

91 William Parke (1761–1847) had been principal oboe at Covent Garden since 1783. His playing, much admired, led Shield to compose a number of arias with obbligatos for him.

92 See note 90.
Confirmation that the concert was a disaster, financially and artistically, comes from Charles Burney in a letter dated 7 July and written, not to Arnold, but to I. Doane (Joseph Doane, who compiled and published a musical directory for 1794, and dedicated it to Arnold). One wonders how this letter came to be with the remainder of the Tenbury Wells collection, since it was not written to Arnold. Perhaps Doane gave it to Arnold for his records.

21. From Charles Burney to I. [Joseph] Doane

Chelsea College, July 7th, 18[02]

Sir

I inclose a draught on Messrs. Fuller & Co. for £4. 10. 4. which you inform me has been settled as my quota of the deficiencies in the receipts at the Concert for that most unfortunate and mortifying business, which after so much trouble and expence leaves our meritorious countryman still without a memorial of his existence & talents. £63 wd. indeed have gone but a little way towards erecting a splendid monument; but if we had subscribed that sum individually we might at least have elevated an humble Tablet to his memory. But many years ago the Musical graduates of the two universities entered unanimously into an agreement to have a monument erected to the Memory of Dr Thos. Augustine Arne at our own expense—every one subscribed a specific sum, I forget now to what amount—and every one undertook some particular department for forwarding this pious & patriotic design. To me was assigned, by my brethren, the task of furnishing an Epitaph. To this hour, I have never known why this plan was not pursued, & why another [was proposed] from which I never had great expectations, particularly after Mrs. Bilington and other eminent performers withdrew their promise of assistance. Then was the time, perhaps, to have made an honble. retreat, after manifesting our zeal & wishes on the occasion. I beg my best Compliments to Messrs. Shield & Parke, and am sorry that I cd. not have the pleasure of meeting them, & partaking the trouble they must have had in terminating this melancholy business. But I had attended so many meetings to so little purpose in making the final arrangements, that I cd. not afford to sacrifice more time in discussions and calculations for wch. I am very ill qualified; and without the least chance of doing myself or any one else any good by it. I knew it was in very safe and honble. hands—in those of men whom I was sure wd. obey the great moral & social law of 'doing by me, what, in a similar situation, they wd. have wished I shd. have done for them.'

I am, Sir,

Your Obedt. and humble Servant

CHAS. BURNEY.

Letters concerning the monument and concert show that, while a number of prominent musicians professed respect and love for Arne's music 24 years after his death, those feelings were not enough, or genuine enough, to ensure that they remained committed to the project through the exigencies of meetings, rehearsals, other professional obligations and the event itself. Burney's evident warmth of feeling for Samuel Arnold, revealed in his letters' salutations and endings, may have played a part in his support for the project; always "My dear friend" or "My dear friend brother" and at the end "Ever yours affectionately," "Yours very affectionately,"...
“yours with fraternal affection”, “believe me with sincere friendship and regard yours affectionately” and so on.

It is in accordance with Burney’s style that he praises Arne lavishly to Arnold despite a personal animosity which he had long harboured toward his former master. As with the Commemoration of Handel, Burney’s desire to be liked meant that he kept any misgivings from those involved. Hence his change of mind to Arnold only a day after complaining that the Rees Cyclopedia contributions prevented him from writing an “exordium” to support the endeavour. One can detect his reluctance to disappoint even in the letter of complaint: “It grieves me not to comply with the wishes of my friends, but particularly the wish of yourself, & on such an occasion.” Burney was more honest with Doane than with Arnold about his initial doubts (“never had great expectations […] then was the time to have made an honorable retreat”).

A month later, Burney wrote again to Arnold and for the first time expressed concern about the latter’s health.

22. From Charles Burney


Burney to Dr. Arnold

4 Aug. 1802

Wed’ Morn$.

4th Aug$ 1802 – –

My dear Friend.

I am very sorry that you have been left in doubt concerning the next Graduate dinner. But Calcott wrote me word that S’ W. Parsons$ & Smith$ were out of Town, & that he himself was engaged on the 4th of Aug$ – – and seemed to wish the next meeting postponed till the wanderers were returned – – I therefore told him that I had no other wish for the 4th Inst. than that the meetings sh’d not be out of their usual course, if my turn was next – – & therefore begged him particularly to acquaint you wth the procrastination, with whom I had alone conversed on the subject.

I am truly concerned at the State of your health, & saw with sorrow when you called, that you had been an invalide. I am much obliged to Mrs Arnold for kindly letting me know that you had had a good Night. May your entire recovery be very speedy! is the sincere wish of Your affectionate friend

Cha’ Burney

Upon my enquiring of Broadwood, what frd I had at Gla[s]gow, he put me in mind of [new page] M’ Professor Young, a very worthy new friend of mine, but a very old one of My Son at Greenwich – – they are both at this very time at Harrowgate – – but on the point of looking homewards, & I shall write to Glasgow in hope of his return thither, before your ingenious Son’s departure.[]$9

Arnold died on 22 October and three days later Burney responded to a request or invitation from William Ayrton, presumably to attend the funeral (Ayrton married Arnold’s daughter Marianne the following year). The letter provides further proof of Burney’s affection for Arnold.

23. From Charles Burney to William Ayrton

Chelsea College – – Tuesday night

Oct 25th 1802.

John Stafford, in: Grove Music Online (see note 21, website last accessed 21 January 2014).

95 Sir William Parsons (1746–1817), Master of the King’s Music from 1786 until his death; an assistant director for the Handel commemorations at Westminster Abbey and the Pantheon in 1784.

96 Probably John Stafford Smith (1750–1836). He sang under Arnold in the Chapel Royal from 1784 and became an organist there after Arnold’s death in 1802; see Nicholas Temperley, Smith,
Dear Sir

The performance of the very melancholy duty wch you inform me it is the wish of the worthy respectable, afflicted family of our much lamented friend, Dr Arnold, I shd undertake, wd have afforded great satisfaction to my mind had I not been rendered incapable by the present State of my own health. But having some weeks been nursing, to little purpose, a violent cough, wch has been fastened upon me, I fear for the winter; & having had some days an alarming bilious attack, wch has left me extremely weak, with my legs so swelled as to oblige me to lie in bed or on a Sopha the whole day, I am constrained to deny myself the gratification of my heart.

Dr Arnold’s personal & professional merit, as well as rank in his profession, were such as intitled him to every testimony of respect and regard in the power of all who had the happiness of knowing him. And, individually, for my own part, these considerations joined to our long acquaintance & friendship, I shd have thought myself honoured by being numbered “with those he most loved & esteemed,” had I been able to attend the awful ceremony to be performed on Friday.

I am therefore constrained earnestly to entreat you to assign to the afflicted family the real reasons of my absence, assuring them of my sincere regard and unfeigned sorrow for their irreparable loss.

I shall with pleasure order my carriage and servants to attend, and be ready to obey your commands at whatever time they can be of the most use, if you will have the goodness to inform the bearer of your wishes on the subject. But if you shd be happen to [be] from home when this arrives, he shall wait on you again for orders.

I beg you to believe me to be, with regard,

Dear Sir, Your obedient
and faithful Servant

Cha’ Burney.

Arnold was buried in Westminster Abbey. He had been appointed organist there in 1793, and his grave lies in the north choir aisle (the “musicians’ aisle”), adjacent to that of Henry Purcell, a predecessor in the post. A notice in the Morning Chronicle of Saturday, 30 October, 1802, describes the funeral:

Yesterday was interred in the North aisle of Westminster-abbey, between the Monuments of Croft and Purcell, the remains of the late Dr. Arnold, Organist and Composer to his Majesty, and Organist of Westminster Cathedral; a gentleman whose worth as a man endeared him to all who had the pleasure of his acquaintance, and whose genius and science have been long and universally acknowledged. The Pall was supported by his old and esteemed friends, Sir Wm. Parsons, Dr. Busby, Dr. Ayerton, Dr. Calcott, Dr. Smith, and Richard Guise, M. B.; amongst the other mourners were, J. Rose, Esq. the Rev. Dr. Pearce, Sub-dean of the Chapels Royal, Henry James Pye, Esq. Poet Laureat, &c. &c. and the ceremony was performed by the Precentor of the Cathedral.

The body, after entering the West door, was preceded by the members of the church, and sung into the choir, where it was placed, and the morning prayers being concluded, it was then conveyed in procession round the church to the grave, where the funeral service was performed. The choir and aisles of the church were so thronged by distinguished personages, respectable professors, and others, that it was with difficulty the ceremony proceeded.

Affixed to the south wall of the aisle, near Arnold’s grave, stands an inscribed tablet of the kind that he and Burney had in mind for Arne at St Paul’s Cathedral. Opposite is a similar memorial to Burney, erected in 1817. The inscription to Arnold reads:

101 Names identified and not mentioned previously: Thomas Busby (1755–1838) co-edited The New Musical Magazine with Arnold (c.1783–1786); Richard Guise (dates unknown) was Master of the Choristers at Westminster Abbey; Henry James Pye (1745–1813) became father-in-law of Samuel James Arnold in 1803.

102 In 1793 a proposal had been introduced at a meeting of the Glee Club that members should join in a subscription to erect a marble bust of Arne in Westminster Abbey. Despite much enthusiasm from Arnold and others, and a concert of Arne’s music planned to be performed at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, the project failed when Thomas Harris, the proprietor of Covent Garden, refused to allow his singers to participate. (See William Thomas Parke, Musical Memoirs, 2 vols., London 1830, vol. 1, pp. 177–8.) Presumably it was the memory of this failure that led Arne’s proponents to set their sights on St. Paul’s Cathedral in 1802 instead of Westminster Abbey. Another motivation might have been that St. Paul’s, having lacked monuments, had been in the process since 1791 of having four large statues commissioned and erected, to commemorate notable public benefactors: John Howard, Samuel Johnson, Sir William Jones, and Sir Joshua Reynolds. Many other monuments followed soon after, and Arne’s contemporary William Boyce had been buried there in 1779. See Roger Bowdler and Ann Saunders, The Post-Reformation Monuments (see note 76), pp. 272–92.
To the beloved and respected memory of Samuel Arnold, Doctor of Music: Born July 30th O. S. 1740: Died Oct. 22nd 1802 aged 62 years and two months; and is interred near this spot. This tablet is erected by his afflicted widow.

Here rests of genius, probity, and worth,
All that belongs to nature, and to earth:
The heart that warmly felt, and freely gave;
The hand that pity stretch'td to help and save;
The form that late a glowing spirit warm'd,
Whose science tutor'd, and whose talents charm'd;
That spirit, fled to Him who spirit gave,
Now smiles triumphant o'er the feeble grave,
That could not chain it here; andjoins to raise
With Heav'n's own choir, the song of pray'r and praise.
Oh shade rever'd! – our nation's loss and pride!
(For mute was harmony when Arnold died!)
Oh let “Thy still-lov'd son” inscribe thy stone,
“And with a ‘mother's sorrows' mix his own.”

The last two lines imply that Samuel James Arnold wrote the verse. Below the inscription there is a bas relief sculpture by Joseph Nollekens of a lyre and sickle.

The statue of Handel by Louis François Roubiliac (1762) stands apart from his fellow musicians, at Poet's Corner in the south transept. The Handel monument recalls its predecessor, the Roubiliac statue that had adorned Vauxhall Gardens since 1738; an example of what Suzanne Aspden has noted as “a growing range of public structures designed to create an ordered, integrated British society through appeal to, among other things, national pride.”103 Aspden elaborates:

A nation, if it is truly to be such, has to have some sense of identity, a rallying ideal represented in the figures and actions of past heroes. […] Patriotism and nationalism were developed—in part in response to eighteenth-century Britain's many wars—as a means of providing an impetus to coalescence for a naturally divergent populace. (pp. 41–2)
