



The Welsh writer Hester Thrale, later Piozzi (1741- 1821) and Shakespearean critic Elizabeth Montagu (1718-1800) were friends and fellow intellectuals interested in theatre, the arts and architecture, travelling and literature. They were indefatigable letter-writers and held rival London salons where witty conversationalists gathered. In 2011 we had two HA lectures on Bluestockings by Les Turnbull and Mike Franklin when we heard how both were also pioneer businesswomen, Hester running Thrale's brewery after his death, with the help of Dr Johnson, and Elizabeth managing an important Newcastle colliery.

A team led by Caroline Franklin at Swansea University is editing the correspondence of Elizabeth Montagu and we need help in transcribing some of these fascinating letters which are fairly short – about 3-4 pages. And Elizabeth generally has excellent handwriting as you can see from the sample below! No previous experience is necessary and you don't need a computer. Get in touch and we will send you a copy of a letter and full instructions on how to do the transcription. You can give Caroline your transcription at an HA meeting, or send it to her by email attachment or letter, and she will check it. When the edition of Montagu's correspondence is published, the transcriber's initials will be given. It would be wonderful if the Swansea branch could transcribe all 35 of the letters from Elizabeth to Hester so that we could acknowledge the branch in our introduction. This is a pilot project for 'crowdsourcing' our transcriptions and if it is successful we will ask other HA branches to help.

If you would like to transcribe a letter, please email c.franklin@swansea.ac.uk or telephone her at university on 01792 604304, or write to her c/o Department of English Language and Literature, College of Arts and Humanities, Swansea University, Singleton Park, Swansea, SA 2 8PP.

To find out about the project, click on http://elizabethmontaguletters.co.uk/home

Eighteenth-century letter-writers

Bydd ein prosiect ymchwil yn drawsgrifio y llythyrau o Elizabeth Montagu. Caiff ei arwain gan Caroline Franklin ym Mhrifysgol Abertawe. Mae 35 o lythyrau gan Elizabeth i'r awdur Cymreig Hester Thrale (neé Salusbury). Rydym yn gobeithio y bydd y Gymdeithas Hanesyddol Abertawe helpu. Os hoffech chi i drawsgrifio llythyr i ni ysgrifennwch at c.franklin@swansea.ac.uk

To Find out more about Hester Thrale read Michael Franklin's account on Oxford Dictionary of National Biography http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22309?docPos=2

To find out more about Elizabeth Montagu read Barbara Schnorrenberg's ODNB article

http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19014?docPos=1

Sample of a letter from Elizabeth to Hester, thanking her for a poem and sending her best wishes to Dr Johnson

Sampl o lythyr oddi wrth Elizabeth i Hester, yn diolch iddi am gerdd a anfon ei ddymuniadau gorau at Dr Johnson

to juga to mought cloc but my day a my sheet I find by w letter yesterday, If you have an opportunity to leave with me Pipy. I will in this sweet postoral veene as our present enjoyments depend much on our future get mo Oddie to send for it when he return expectations mine are greatly heighland to dondon I ever wrote a bad hand but now ye diserder in my shomach fisheds my By 12 B: Jebb, removing from my min the fear of suntidge bisions of the Partile writing any way but by holding ye Walk would have defermed every prospect paper in my hand I am become illegible Publish places are good for sich or evening Thanks for ye Poin I like it much & minds, my mind is never such a savely also ye didicution It will be ye same thing surry I am huppy in tranquill mode of life & ye much ado about nothing of to me if you leave ye puched in any sufe hand we publish place is to me an unpleasant & favour me with a direction where to Fram I will most Thank fully & religioush sond for it. my love to go truly lovely miss obey 1 h. Jebb's where as to regiment se Burner & give a bribate from all my hast I find bad serand dad yen into un affection, to De Johnson To 1 th. Jebb of you emor about ye Person to whom ye puchet See him my trust respects a most gratifull I mude a letter like on UP whereas I ought achnowlegment I always thought hem most Excellent a I fand hum. most hand to have made a round O the Persons mop g: here is her best respects. name is Oddie Honever he is not in Town I um. Dr maden ever y so de de de