While preparing a recent article, on Handel and music for the Earl of Carnarvon, I was unable to examine one source which turns out to contain interesting information on that subject. This is the diary of the Reverend Dr Henry Brydges (1675–1728), younger brother of James Brydges (1674–1744), from October 1714 Earl of Carnarvon and from April 1719 first Duke of Chandos.

Henry Brydges, like his brother, attended Westminster School and then proceeded to Christ Church, Oxford, where he took the BA in 1695, the MA in 1698 and the BD and DD in 1711. He served as rector of Broadwell, Adlestrop, Gloucestershire, from 1699 to 1717, a living granted him by his cousin Theophilus Leigh of Adlestrop, and as a chaplain to Queen Anne. His brother attempted to obtain a prebendary at Windsor for him in 1714, which he felt had been promised him by Queen Anne, but George I had promised it to another candidate. His brother suggested that the other candidate, Dr Pelling, would be more suited to the vacant position of canon of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, since he had the command of Hebrew necessary for the teaching connected with that post which Dr Brydges lacked; apparently nothing came of that suggestion. Finally, in May 1720 Dr Brydges was installed as archdeacon and prebend of Rochester Cathedral, where he worked closely with Francis Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester, who was exiled in June 1723 on charges of plotting with the Jacobites. From November 1721 he was also rector of Amersham, Buckinghamshire, and from 1722 a prebend of St Paul’s Cathedral. He died at Bath on 9 May 1728, after suffering ill health for several years, and is buried in the family vault of St Lawrence, Little Stanmore.

Dr Brydges began his diary on Sunday, 20 January 1717, and made daily entries until 11 February 1728. It was subsequently acquired by a Mr Heber, from whom it was purchased on 10 February 1836 by Chandos Leigh of 209

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Stoneleigh Abbey, Warwickshire, a direct descendant of James and Henry Brydges. The diary remained at Stoneleigh until 1981 when it was acquired by the British Library. Any hopes that Dr Brydges would provide dates for the first performances of *Acis and Galatea* or *The Oratorium* (later *Esther*) are disappointed. He seems not to have attended concerts, the opera or the theatre, although while at Bath in September and October 1724 he went to ‘musick meetings’ by Messrs Powell, Waring and Grano. His children were taught dancing, but there is no mention of music in the diary despite his friendship with Sir John Dolben, sometime sub-dean of the Chapel Royal and patron of the composers William Croft and James Kent. It may, however, be that Dr Brydges chose not to mention such activities in his diary, just as he omitted to note the bursting of the South Sea Bubble in which he was financially involved. In any event, he took a house at Greenwich for the summer of 1718, the likeliest time of the première of *Acis and Galatea*, and made no visits to Cannons, his brother’s palatial home at Edgware, during that period.

Dr Brydges did, however, keep a detailed record of the persons he encountered in his own home and on his visits around London and its environs, and with whom he dined or supped. This information provides us with some new details concerning the lives of two musicians at various times in the service of his elder brother: George Frideric Handel and Johann Christoph Pepusch.

On Sunday, 4 August 1717, Dr Brydges wrote:

> At 8 this morning I went to Canons where I din’d. I met there Lady Child of Soho, Sr R. Child and his Lady & Cosen L. Cornwallis, Mr Handle, Dr Arbuthnot, Mr Shorthose & Mr Lowthorp. I was home by 8.

This entry provides the earliest reference known for Handel’s connection with James Brydges, and is the first to establish his physical presence at Cannons. Before this, the earliest reference had been a postscript to James Brydges’s letter of 25 September 1717 to Dr John Arbuthnot at Bath:

> Mr Hendle has made me two new Anthems very noble ones & Most think they far exceed the two first. He is at work for 2 more & some Overtures to be plaied before the first lesson. You had as good take Cannons in on your way to London.

It has been suggested that this letter might not actually indicate Handel’s presence at Cannons. It is now clear, however, that both Handel and Arbuthnot were at Cannons at the beginning of August 1717. Arbuthnot subsequently travelled to Bath and the Brydges’s letter was an invitation to pay a return visit. The two references also seem to imply that Arbuthnot had heard the first two Chandos anthems performed, which would place them near the beginning of August 1717, something previously suspected.