

Nonconformist Women Writers, 1720–1840

Editors: **Timothy Whelan** and **Julia B Griffin**

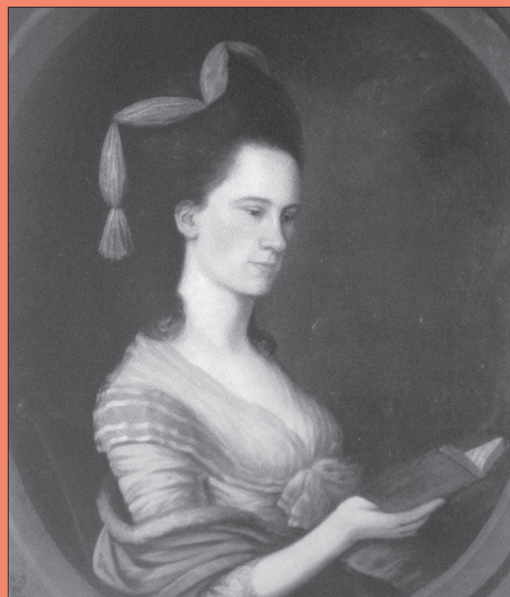
Part I: Volumes 1–4: c.1600pp: June 2010
978 1 85196 144 3: 234x156mm: £350/\$625

Part II: Volumes 5–8: c.1600pp: May 2011
978 1 85196 154 2: 234x156mm: £350/\$625

This is a scholarly edition of the public and private works of a remarkable circle of women writers. The collection features ten nonconformist women including Anne Steele, Mary Steele, Mary Scott and Maria Grace Saffery combining new editions of their previously published works with unpublished hymns, poems and letters newly transcribed from manuscripts held at the Angus Library, Oxford.

Though isolated both geographically and culturally their writings reveal a group of women who were keenly aware of current events, widely read, assertive in their opinions, highly imaginative, inspired at times by romantic sensibilities far ahead of the Romantic movement, at times all too aware of the limitations placed upon them by the circumstances of their place and time, and yet they still managed to document their lives and times and to pass that legacy on from generation to generation.

The edition will be of interest to those studying eighteenth century studies, women's writing and history and religious history.



Mary Steele (1753–1813),
by kind permission of John Broome

- Many hymns, poems and letters are published here for the first time
- Full editorial apparatus includes a substantial general introduction, bibliographies, chronologies, headnotes and endnotes
- Consolidated index

Timothy Whelan and **Julia B Griffin** are both
at Georgia Southern University

**RESET
EDITION**

Contents*:

Part I

Volumes 1 and 2: Anne Steele (1717–78)

The first volume consists of the republished authoritative edition of Anne Steele's *Poems on Subjects Chiefly Devotional*, and her *Verses for Children*, published under the pseudonym "Theodosia". The volume begins with a biographical summary and critical discussion of her poetry, both devotional and secular, published and unpublished, as well as her correspondence, placing her within the context of eighteenth-century women's poetry, and more particularly, nonconformist women's poetry.

The second volume presents the unpublished poetry, prose and correspondence from the collections of the Angus Library, fully annotated with endnotes and identifications of individuals as well as explanations of any literary, political, or religious allusions.

Volume 1: Anne Steele, *Poems on Subjects Chiefly Devotional* (1780); Anne Steele, *Verses for Children* (1788).

Volume 2: Unpublished poetry (approx. 190), prose (10) and correspondence (approx. 60) from the Angus Library.

Volume 3: Mary Steele (1753–1813)

This volume republishes the four printed works by Mary Steele: "Ode to Spring", "Ode to Liberty", *Danebury Hill, or the Power of Friendship*, which appeared in the 1779 edition of *Danebury*, and "To Miss Scott on Reading 'The Female Advocate,'" which was published in *The Lady's Magazine* 5 (1774) and hitherto unattributed. Also presented is the complete unpublished poetry of Steele, comprising some 145 poems dating from 1766 to 1810, as well as a sizeable selection of her correspondence. The volume contains a critical biographical and literary introduction to Mary Steele, placing her, like her aunt, Anne Steele, within both the larger culture of eighteenth-century Baptists as well as the local culture of nonconformity in Wiltshire and the West Country.

Volume 3: Mary Steele, "Ode to Spring", "Ode to Liberty," and *Danebury Hill, or the Power of Friendship* in *Danebury* (1779); "To Miss Scott on Reading 'The Female Advocate'", in *The Lady's Magazine* 5 (1774); the complete unpublished poetry of Mary Steele (approx. 145); the correspondence of Mary Steele (approx 110).

Volume 4: Mary Scott (c.1752–1793)

Volume 4 is made up of the published and unpublished poetry of Mary Scott, including twenty-seven unpublished hymns from the *Steele Collection*, and two "friendship poems" to Mary Steele from 1770. It also presents a diverse collection of poetry and correspondence addressed or related to Mary Scott, including poetry and letters from the Steele family and portions of letters to her brother and husband. The critical biographical and literary introduction alligns her not only with the Steele coterie of West Country nonconformist (Calvinist) women poets, but also the larger poetic and religious contexts that created the impetus behind her two published poems, *The Female Advocate* and *The Messiah*, especially her connection with the literary culture of the Bluestockings and her later adherence to the theological heterodoxy of the Unitarians.

Volume 4: "To Miss Aikin, on Reading her Poems", in *Gentleman's Magazine* 44 (1774); *The Female Advocate, A Poem Occasioned by the Reading of Mr Duncombe's Femeinead* (1774); "Verses Addressed to Miss Seward, on the publication of her Monody on Major Andre," *Gentleman's Magazine* 53 (June 1783); *Messiah: A Poem in Two Parts, Published for the Benefit of the General Hospital at Bath* (1788); the unpublished poetry of Mary Scott (approx. 30); poetry and correspondence addressed to Mary Scott (approx. 30).

Part II

Volumes 5, 6 and 7: Maria Grace Saffery (c. 1772–1858)

Volume 5 begins with a critical biography of Maria Saffery, incorporating much material from the extensive correspondence within this collection, and including the parallel history of her sister, Anne. It will include Maria's courtship with John Saffery following the death of his wife in 1798, the history of her boarding school (including the letters in this collection between Maria and the Rylands, a notable Dissenting family, whose daughter, Mary, began attending Maria Saffery's boarding school in Salisbury), and her poetic career, beginning in 1790 and ending in the 1840s. Volume 5 also republishes all of Saffery's published poetry from 1801–40, as well as presenting her 117 unpublished poems, which include twenty-five sonnets. Volume 6 comprises a broad range of Saffery's correspondence, to both family members and colleagues. The seventh volume includes a new edition of the rare novel *The Noble Enthusiast: A Modern Romance* (1792). With Saffery's authorship of the text only recently established, *The Noble Enthusiast* represents a vital addition to studies of the eighteenth-century novel, being the first known work published by a Particular Baptist.

Volume 5: The republished poetry of Maria Grace Saffery (approx. 100); the unpublished MS poems of Maria Saffery (approx. 117).

Volume 6: The correspondence of Maria Grace Saffery (approx. 400)

Volume 7: Maria Grace Saffery, *The Noble Enthusiast: A Modern Romance* (1792)

Volume 8: The Poetry and Prose of Six West Country Nonconformist Women Writers, 1720–1810

This volume, made up of the unpublished work of a selection of West Country nonconformist women writers, begins with selections from the writings of the two matriarchs in this collection: the diary of Anne Cator Steele (1730–60) and the meditations of Mrs Wakeford of Andover (1712–39). It continues with the remarkable poetry (22 poems) of Mary Steele Wakeford ("Amira"), Anne Steele's half-sister, including her "Poems on Devotional Subjects" (1748–69). The volume then moves to the next generation and commences with the twenty remarkable poems of Marianna Attwater [Head] ("Maria"), elder sister of Jane Attwater, including her political poem, "Ode to Peace," her feminist poem, "On Reading Fordyce's Sermons to Young Women," and her long religious poem, "Serious Reflections." This section is followed by selections from the diary, letters, and poetry of Jane Attwater ("Myrtilla"), the close friend of Mary Steele and Mary Scott and the primary link between the Steele coterie and the last generation of this remarkable group of Baptist women writers, the Andrews sisters (Anne Whitaker and Maria Grace Saffery). The volume closes with selections from the diary of Frances Barrett Ryland of Bristol, another Baptist woman diarist and someone who would have known of and, in some cases, known personally, all the women writers included in the volumes of this series.

Volume 8: A selection of unpublished writings by Anne Cator Steele, Mrs Wakeford of Andover, Marianna Attwater, Mary Steele Wakeford, Jane Attwater and Frances Barrett Ryland.

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