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*Joshua Reynolds in the National Gallery and the Wallace Collection*



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#### FRONT COVER

Joshua Reynolds, *Lady Cockburn and her Three Eldest Sons* (NG 2077), 1773 (detail)

#### TITLE PAGE

TOP LEFT: Joshua Reynolds, *Mrs Mary Robinson ('Perdita')*, The Wallace Collection (P 45), 1783–4 (detail).  
TOP RIGHT: Joshua Reynolds, *Colonel Tarleton*, The National Gallery (NG 5985), 1782 (detail).  
BOTTOM LEFT: Joshua Reynolds, *Miss Jane Bowles*, The Wallace Collection (P 36), 1775–6 (detail).  
BOTTOM RIGHT: Joshua Reynolds, *Mrs Susanna Hoare and Child*, The Wallace Collection (P 32), 1763–4 (detail).

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# Joshua Reynolds at the National Gallery<sup>1</sup>

SUSAN FOISTER

Joshua Reynolds's work formed part of the founding collection of the National Gallery in 1824, and the collection now includes five of his works, all portraits. That small number does not reflect any adverse judgement on the significance of Reynolds's work by the guardians of the Gallery. Rather, it is explained by the fact that in 1897 the Tate Gallery was founded to house the national collection of British art, relieving the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square from the obligation to represent British painting in a comprehensive fashion and solving some pressing problems of space. Over time a number of the Gallery's paintings by Reynolds were transferred to the Tate, in particular those regarded as 'fancy pictures' or those that were particularly large, leaving those currently represented to be displayed today in Room 34, alongside great works by Gainsborough, Turner, Constable, Hogarth and Joseph Wright 'of Derby', among others.

In 1824 the British government decided to purchase the collection of John Julius Angerstein, the founder of Lloyd's, to initiate a National Gallery. Among prized masterpieces of European painting such as Sebastiano del Piombo's *Raising of Lazarus* (NG 1) were a small number of British paintings including Hogarth's *Marriage A-la-Mode* (NG 113–18) and Reynolds's portrait of Lord Heathfield (CAT. 15). The latter painting had been commissioned by Alderman John Boydell and presented by him to the Corporation of London at the Guildhall. Boydell's nephew removed it in 1809 and sold it to the painter Sir Thomas Lawrence. Lawrence's friend and patron Angerstein may subsequently have acquired it to help the painter out of his frequent financial difficulties. Angerstein also bought several works from Reynolds's sale in 1795 after his death, including Van Dyck's *Portrait of George Gage with Two Attendants* (NG 49). His purchases included a painting by Claude that Reynolds had partly painted over, which he did not keep. Reynolds's portrait of Heathfield depicts his subject as Governor of Gibraltar defending the rock from Spanish bombardment in 1782, holding the key of the fortress in his hand. A late work by Reynolds, first exhibited in 1788, and much admired, it was put on public display at the Guildhall from 1794 to 1809. In the same year it

was reported that it was in a poor state, 'utterly gone by cracking'.

In 1863 the Gallery's first director, Sir Charles Eastlake, made one of the Gallery's first purchases in the field of British painting (as distinct from gifts or bequests to the Gallery), acquiring the portrait of Captain Robert Orme (CAT. 1) at a Christie's sale. It was painted early in Reynolds's career, in 1755–6, and remained in his studio for over twenty years until bought by the 5th Earl of Inchiquin whose descendants sold it in 1863. Reynolds may have initiated the commission himself, as Orme seems never to have owned his portrait. It served as a showpiece in his studio, to encourage others to commission full-length portraits of themselves in this heroic mode. It was regarded as particularly notable for its 'boldness and singularity'. Reynolds may also have hoped that the painting would be engraved, a means of increasing his own reputation for such work, but no



FIG. 1 Joshua Reynolds, *Captain the Honourable Augustus Keppel*, 1752–3. Canvas, 239 × 147.5 cm. The National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, Caird Collection, Inv. BHC2823.

engraving was ever made. Captain Orme is shown in battle in North America in the year in which he sat for the portrait, at a notorious defeat by combined French and Native American forces, during which the officer of the Coldstream Guards was wounded but many of his fellow British troops were slaughtered. Reynolds took the poses of Orme and his horse from a fresco by the sixteenth-century Italian artist Jacopo Ligozzi, which he had sketched at first hand in Florence three years earlier during his Italian journey, but the troubled expression and urgency imparted to the painting is Reynolds's own.

Reynolds's portrait of Lady Albemarle (CAT. 3) was bought by the Gallery out of the Lewis fund<sup>2</sup> from the picture dealer Agnew's in 1888. It had been sold by the 7th Earl of Albemarle whose family had commissioned the portrait in about 1757. Although the portrait was paid for by the executor of the 3rd Earl of Albemarle, who died in 1772, and shows his mother, Anne, daughter of the 1st Duke of Richmond, the suggestion for the commission would appear to have come from the Earl's younger brother, Commodore Augustus Keppel. Keppel was one of Reynolds's most important patrons, being portrayed by him on seven or more occasions and also commissioning at least twelve portraits of other members of the family (FIG. 1). He played a key role in

Reynolds's artistic development by giving him a passage to Italy in 1749. Lady Albemarle sat for Reynolds on eleven occasions between 1757 and 1759 (although it is possible that more than one portrait was the result). She is shown in the activity of 'knotting', which produced decorative cords that could be sewn to clothing. The extreme whiteness of her complexion is not the result of age, ill health or the application of cosmetics but the result of the fading of Reynolds's red lake pigment.

In 1892 Reynolds's portrait of Lady Cockburn and her three eldest sons (CAT. 7) entered the National Gallery Collection as a bequest from Lady Hamilton, a descendant of the Cockburn family. Unusually, the bequest was challenged by six other family members, and in 1900 on the advice of the Treasury Solicitor, the painting was delivered to the heirs, who immediately sold the painting to Agnew's and Asher Wertheimer. The latter sold the painting to the collector Alfred Beit, who then left the painting to the Gallery in 1906. The portrait was commissioned by Lady Cockburn's husband, Sir James Cockburn, a Scottish baronet and MP, who later became bankrupt. Among other sources, Reynolds took much inspiration from Van Dyck's representation of Charity (FIGS 2, 3), now in the National



FIG. 2 Anthony van Dyck, *Charity*, about 1627–8. Oak panel, 148.2 × 107.5 cm. The National Gallery, London (NG 6494).

FIG. 3 Attributed to Joshua Reynolds, *Charity*, undated. Sketch on panel, 21 × 24 cm. Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Oxford. Chambers Hall, Inv. A174.

Gallery as well, then in another British collection, but also engraved. For the pose of the elder boy he adapted that of Cupid in Velázquez's *The Rokeby Venus* (NG 2057), also now in the National Gallery but then in Spain, knowledge of which he must have acquired from a drawing made by another artist. The parrot was evidently painted from life, as Reynolds himself owned such a bird, but its inclusion was perhaps also inspired by the work of Van Dyck.

Reynolds's full-length portrait of Colonel Banastre Tarleton (CAT. 13) was commissioned by one of the sitter's brothers on behalf of their mother; although it was exhibited in 1782 it was not paid for until 1791. The family sold the painting in around 1820 and by 1865 it was acquired by the collector Wynn Ellis. He then generously bequeathed the painting to the sitter's great-nephew Admiral Tarleton and the painting was

subsequently left to the Gallery by a Tarleton family descendant in 1951. Banastre Tarleton is shown in the green uniform of the British Legion cavalry in the American War of Independence in which he fought from 1776 to 1781, gaining a reputation for savage and merciless behaviour. In the latter year he was heavily defeated and shot in the right hand, leading to the amputation of part of his hand, a loss that Reynolds conceals by showing him wielding his sword with both hands. Reynolds shows Tarleton dismounted, with gunsmoke swirling and calling for a change of horse. The bent and twisted pose may have been inspired by a range of sources, from antique sculpture, Renaissance painting and a drawing by Reynolds in his own collection. Tarleton had nine sittings for Reynolds for the portrait and the work was praised on its exhibition at the Royal Academy.

## Joshua Reynolds at the Wallace Collection

LUCY DAVIS

In addition to its outstanding collections of eighteenth-century French fine and decorative arts and its Old Master paintings, the Wallace Collection owns a number of important paintings by Joshua Reynolds. According to Sir Henry Greville, writing in 1865, these were one of the highlights of a visit to Hertford House (now the home of the Wallace Collection): 'It is a collection of surprising beauty, particularly rich in Joshua Reynolds. They are well hung and cared for.'<sup>1</sup> The Wallace Collection today has twelve paintings by Reynolds, including portraits in each of the standard formats of the era – namely head, bust, kit-cat, half-length and whole-length – of both male and female sitters. The paintings date from 1759 until the end of his career, and are complemented by a 'fancy picture' and a rare history painting.

The Seymour-Conway family, Marquesses of Hertford, collected paintings by Reynolds over several generations.<sup>2</sup> The 1st Marquess of Hertford (1719–1794) was a contemporary of the artist, from whom he commissioned a series of portraits of his family.<sup>3</sup> His descendants, the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Marquesses, each subsequently acquired further works by Reynolds. When the collection was given to the nation in 1897, thirteen

Reynolds paintings remained in the possession of the Seymour-Conway family (seven were subsequently disposed of, with six today remaining at Ragley Hall in the ownership of the present Marquess). The focus of this essay is the works by Reynolds that can be seen in the Wallace Collection today.

Reynolds painted numerous portraits of the 1st Marquess's children, including three portraits of his sons in the 1760s.<sup>4</sup> Then the Marquess commissioned Reynolds to paint two small portraits of his daughters, Elizabeth Seymour-Conway and Frances Lincoln (CATS 12a, 12b), whose beauty was remarked upon by Horace Walpole.<sup>5</sup> Reynolds painted these between 1781 and 1784, and began his portrait of their father, the 1st Marquess, the following year. The portraits of the two sisters hang today in the Front State Room of the Wallace Collection (FIG. 4), together with portraits of George III, George IV, Queen Victoria and her eldest daughter Victoria, royal sitters with whom the family was linked at different times. Also hanging there is Reynolds's portrait of William Douglas (1725–1810), the 3rd Earl of March and, from 1778, the 4th Duke of Queensberry (CAT. 2).<sup>6</sup> Painted in 1759–60, this is the earliest portrait by Reynolds at the Wallace Collection and has been

FIG. 4 The Front State Room, the Wallace Collection.



cleaned as part of the Reynolds Research Project. The Duke was almost certainly the father of Maria Fagnani, the 3rd Marchioness of Hertford, to whom it is believed he gave the portrait, in addition to considerable money and property.

Later members of the family would acquire the perhaps more important paintings by Reynolds, however. The 2nd Marquess (1743–1822), who had sat for the artist as an adolescent, came to the title in 1794. Two years later, he acquired two paintings at Reynolds's estate inventory sale. One was a portrait of Miss Jacobs and the other a portrait (the first of several painted by the artist) of the actress and author Mrs Mary Robinson (see, for reference, CAT. 14) – of whom the 2nd Marquess and 2nd Marchioness were supporters – which had been exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1782.<sup>7</sup> Both were sold in the 1890s and the latter is now at Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire. Reynolds's portraits of Georgian society beauties appealed to Lord Hertford, who acquired George Romney's portrait of Mrs Robinson in 1810 and was also given Thomas Gainsborough's portrait of the same sitter by his patron (and intimate friend of his wife), the Prince of Wales, in 1818.<sup>8</sup> In 1810, at the Caleb Whitefoord sale, he acquired Reynolds's portrait of the courtesan Nelly O'Brien (CAT. 4), described in the catalogue of that sale as 'The celebrated portrait of Nelly O'Brien, a truly capital picture with the magic effect of Rembrandt.'<sup>9</sup> The work was greatly admired at the Manchester *Art Treasures of the United Kingdom* exhibition of 1857 and has remained a highlight of

the Collection.<sup>10</sup> It has recently undergone conservation treatment as part of the Reynolds Research Project.

The 3rd Marquess of Hertford (1777–1842) was the first member of the family to dedicate himself seriously to collecting works of art. He was an especially close friend of the Prince of Wales, with whom he shared a love of Old Masters and Dutch Golden Age painting in particular, and for whom as Lord Yarmouth he occasionally acted as a saleroom agent. In 1813 he acquired his first work by Reynolds, *Saint John the Baptist in the Wilderness* (CAT. 10).<sup>11</sup> History subjects of this sort were rare and, as deliberate references to the Old Masters, were intended to be displayed alongside them, even as pendants.<sup>12</sup> 1813 was by coincidence the year of the first exhibition of the British Institution. Dedicated to Reynolds, this was among the first retrospective exhibitions ever held.<sup>13</sup>

The 4th Marquess of Hertford (FIG. 5) began collecting in 1842, the year of his accession, and acquired the majority of the paintings and drawings in the Collection today. He purchased seven 'Sir Joshuas', as he called them. A resident of Paris, he purchased them at English sales through his London agent, Samuel Mawson.<sup>14</sup> During his lifetime, five of the works were kept in storage in London at Hertford House. Reynolds's fancy pictures and portraits of women and children were well suited to the 4th Marquess's taste for what he called 'pleasing pictures' – that is, those depicting beautiful subjects that were comforting and very seldom violent.<sup>15</sup> The first of the paintings by Reynolds acquired



FIG. 5 The 4th Marquess of Hertford (1800–1870), about 1860.

by the 4th Marquess, in 1850, was *Miss Jane Bowles* (CAT. 8), an attractive composition of the three-year-old cuddling a spaniel in a pastoral setting, which has recently been cleaned.<sup>16</sup> The work reflects an eighteenth-century sensibility shared by Reynolds's contemporary Jean-Baptiste Greuze, an artist avidly collected by the 4th Marquess.<sup>17</sup> The portrait of Miss Bowles is akin to the 'fancy pictures' of children painted by Reynolds in the mid-1770s, such as *The Strawberry Girl* (CAT. 6) which Lord Hertford bought in 1856.<sup>18</sup> A further pleasing image of childhood was the portrait *Mrs Susanna Hoare and Child* (1763–4, CAT. 5), which was acquired in 1859, a work with strong echoes of Old Master compositions of the Virgin and Child.<sup>19</sup>

The 4th Marquess, like his father, was generally cautious regarding the condition of the paintings that he acquired and he was warned at an early stage that Reynolds's paintings were liable to fade and deteriorate. Such was his initial enthusiasm to acquire, however, that in 1854 he ignored Mawson's warnings about the portrait of Mrs Jane Braddyll (CAT. 16) then for sale.<sup>20</sup> He advised his agent to buy it in spite of its condition and also to have it restored ('cooked up' in his words).<sup>21</sup> He would become increasingly cautious in

his later purchases. When considering the acquisition of the portrait of Mrs Elizabeth Carnac (CAT. 9), he wrote to Mawson 'only you do not tell me whether this picture is in good preservation & if it has not faded which is so often the case with Sir J[oshua]'s works. I should be very sorry to have one in a bad or even indifferent state.'<sup>22</sup> The 4th Marquess typically sought works of established provenance; the Reynolds portraits he acquired were all of identified sitters, with those of Miss Bowles, Mrs Hoare and Mrs Carnac being bought from the sales of the sitters' descendants.<sup>23</sup>

The 4th Marquess continued the family habit of favouring portraits of society beauties. At the Phipps sale of 1859 he acquired two portraits, those of Mrs Mary Nesbitt (CAT. 11) and Mrs Mary Robinson (CAT. 14).<sup>24</sup> Despite Mawson's reservations about the high price and relative quality of the former, on seeing photographs of them the 4th Marquess was determined to acquire them as a pair to adorn his Paris residence, 2 rue Laffitte, 'where I have no Sir Joshuas'.<sup>25</sup> Both collector and agent had in mind the collection, or 'family' as Lord Hertford called his paintings, as they considered what was offered by potential sales. Mawson recommended Reynolds's full-length portrait of Mrs Carnac, inspired by Gainsborough, as a pendant to Gainsborough's *Mrs Mary Robinson ('Perdita')* (P42). Compositional affinities between the two portraits make the pairing particularly appropriate, even though, as Lord Hertford pointed out, their dimensions are not identical. *Mrs Elizabeth Carnac*, bought in 1861 and referred to as 'our very expensive lady', was the last Reynolds purchased by Lord Hertford.<sup>26</sup>

The 4th Marquess lamented the prices that Reynolds fetched but was prepared to pay them, declaring that he did not regret paying an 'immense price' in order to have a fine Sir Joshua, 'as I am extremely fond of them & they cannot always be had when wanted'.<sup>27</sup> The two most expensive pictures he bought by Reynolds were *Mrs Susanna Hoare and Child*, at 2,550 guineas, and *The Strawberry Girl*, for which he paid £2,215. The former purchase was made by the agent Holmes, whose correspondence with Lord Hertford has not survived. The latter work, which was recommended by Mawson 'without reservation', was described laconically by his patron as 'dear'.<sup>28</sup> The full-length portrait of Mrs Carnac and the portrait of Miss Bowles were considerably more expensive than the bust-length or three-quarter-length portraits of Mrs Mary Robinson, Mrs Mary Nesbitt and Mrs Jane Braddyll.

*The Strawberry Girl*, *Miss Nelly O'Brien* and *Miss Jane Bowles* were among 44 paintings that Lord Hertford sent to the immense Manchester *Art Treasures* exhibition. When his son Sir Richard Wallace made Hertford House his home in the 1870s, he created a special Reynolds room (FIG. 6) to house the family's magnificent collection of the artist's work.<sup>29</sup>

In recent years there has been a growing awareness at the Wallace Collection that Reynolds's paintings had not been cleaned for generations and that some, particularly the portrait of the Duke of Queensberry, had yellowed and darkened. Part of the reluctance to treat the paintings in the past stemmed from alarming assumptions about Reynolds's technical experimentation, which had begun to circulate even in Reynolds's

own lifetime. As explained in the introduction to this *Technical Bulletin*, in 2010 the Reynolds Research Project was launched by the Wallace Collection, in collaboration with the National Gallery, to investigate Reynolds's working methods and use of materials and, in doing so, to decide which paintings could be cleaned both safely and with appropriate aesthetic gain. An external advisory committee was set up to guide that process. The findings of the project are described in detail in this volume, together with comparative accounts of five paintings by Reynolds in the National Gallery Collection. The results of the project will also be included in a major exhibition at the Wallace Collection at Manchester Square, London, in spring 2015.



FIG. 6 The Reynolds Room (now the Small Drawing Room) at the Wallace Collection, about 1898.