

# Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

## **CAY, Mrs Robert Hodshon, née Elizabeth Liddell**

North Charlton 1770–1831

The daughter of John Liddell of Dockwray Square, North Shields and his wife, née Jane Hubback, in 1789 she married an Edinburgh judge, Robert Hodshon Cay, from a family based in North Charlton, Northumberland. Cay evidently had interests beyond the law; he was president of the Speculative Society in 1781, and in 1796 he was engaged with Sir Walter Scott to organise the medals collection of the Advocates' Library. They had nine children, one being the mother of the physicist James Clerk Maxwell. Elizabeth Cay was an amateur pastellist and pupil of Skirving (*q.v.*), who portrayed her in pastel. There are Raeburn portraits of Robert Cay and of his mother-in-law, Mrs John Liddell (Fogg and Hunterian museums); Bewick made a bookplate for Barbara Liddell, one of Elizabeth's numerous siblings.

Elizabeth's surviving works, kept at the Maxwell family house, 14 India Street, Edinburgh, depict herself and four of her own children. Her workbox, at the V&A (inv. P.42-1922), contains bottles of dry powder and a set of leather stumps indicating that she worked in this manner rather than with fabricated sticks. It is thought to date from the end of the eighteenth century or possibly slightly later, although the known examples are all from well into the nineteenth century.

### **Bibliography**

Rutherford J. Gettens & George L. Stout, *Painting materials: a short encyclopedia*, 1966, p. 315; Jo Kirby & David Saunders, "Fading and colour change of Prussian blue", *National Gallery technical bulletin*, xxv, 2004, pp. 73ff, as "Elizabeth Carey"; *A history of Northumberland*, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1907, VIII, p. 130; [clerkmaxwellfoundation.org](http://clerkmaxwellfoundation.org)

### **Pastels**

SELF-PORTRAIT, in blue striped dress with black lace shawl, pstl (James Clerk Maxwell Foundation. Don Barbara Wallis)  $\varphi$

=?pstl, 70x57 (London, Christie's, 11.II.1911, Lot 53, anon., 300 gns; Doig, Wilson & Co)

Jane CAY (1797–1876), aunt of James Clerk Maxwell, pstl (James Clerk Maxwell Foundation. Don Barbara Wallis)

Robert Dundas CAY (1807–1888), uncle and lawyer of James Clerk Maxwell, registrar of the Supreme Court, Hong Kong, pstl (James Clerk Maxwell Foundation. Don Barbara Wallis)  $\varphi$

John CAY (1790–1865), FRSE, uncle of James Clerk Maxwell, sheriff of Linlithgow, pstl (James Clerk Maxwell Foundation. Don Barbara Wallis)  $\varphi$

Mrs John CLERK MAXWELL, née Frances Cay (1792–1839), mother of James Clerk Maxwell, her sister Jane Cay (1797–1876), pstl (James Clerk Maxwell Foundation. Don Barbara Wallis)  $\varphi$