

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

COLLINS, Mrs John, née Ann Shillard

Bath bpt 5.1.1744 – ?p.1784

Assistant to Mrs Harrington (*q.v.*), Mrs Collins, equally obscure, advertised in various local newspapers from 1777–

By HM Letters patent. Late pupil and assistant to Mrs Harrington who has the honour of taking profiles of the Royal Family &c and is now making a tour of the whole Kingdom, having purchased a moiety of that Lady's patent. Price 2s 6d. Time of sitting three minutes. Coventry, Warwick, Wolverhampton, Litchfield & Derby will be visited.

She was in Bath in 1778, at 6 Bond Street, where the *Bath chronicle* for 10.XII.1778 disclosed that her “miniature likenesses” were “in Crayons, highly finished at only Half-a-Guinea, frame and glass included...But one sitting required and *that* a very short one.” A similar advertisement in the *Norfolk chronicle* on 30.X.1784 announced that she had paid Mrs Harrington 60 guineas for a half share of the patent, which still had four years to run. Evidently itinerant, she advertised in the *Dublin evening post*, 25.1.1781, “for a very short time, Royal Patent Likenesses, in diminished profile...from life, in Crayons, etc.”

Research by Brian Wellings (2021) has uncovered her biography. She married, in Bath Abbey on 24.1.1768, John Collins (1742–1808), an actor, poet, lecturer and auctioneer from Bath who settled in Birmingham in 1793; he was involved with the *Birmingham chronicle*, and established the *Evening brush*, containing theatrical stories etc., leading to his being nicknamed “Brush Collins”. Mrs Collins is supposed to have died after an operation for breast cancer at an unknown date.

Bibliography

Foskett 1987; McKechnie 1978; Index of Bath artists; Nevill Jackson 1938; Oxford DNB, *s.v.* “Brush Collins”; Brian Wellings, pr. comm., 5.XI.2021