

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

GIBBONS, Mrs Charles, née Elizabeth Spell

London c.1610–1679

“Mrs Gibbons of Lincoln’s Inn Fields” was an unrecorded pastellist responsible for a pastel of a rather youthful Duke of Somerset. In her will of 26.VI.1640, a Margaret Goodwyn left 20s. to “friend Mrs Gibbons at the Tennis Court near Lincoln’s Inn Fields”, and it appears likely that she is the pastellist. The tennis court in Vere Street was founded in 1633 by Charles Gibbon or Gibbons (–1664), initially on a lease of 31 years, and was to prove very successful. In the early stages he borrowed £800 from his wife’s step-father, John Poole. In addition to tennis and bowls, Gibbon employed a French cook, with the result that “many noblemen resort [to his house], and there eat”. Theatrical performances were held there, even during the Civil War, and in 1660 Tom Killigrew chose Gibbon’s Tennis Court as the first Theatre Royal to house his newly created King’s company. In 1675 the parish rates were paid by the widow Gibbons, the property including the Bull’s Head and Bear Yard.



Elizabeth Spell married Charles Gibbins on 1.I.1627 at St Mary-at-Hill. Their daughter Mary (1632–1712) married John Cooke (1614–1691) in 1654; from 1681 he was Latin secretary to Charles II, and is later described as secretary of state and Rt Hon. Cooke was a close friend of Mary and Charles Beale (*qq.v.*), Thomas Flatman and Samuel Woodforde, all connected with the art world at that time. One of his eleven children (Mrs Gibbons’s granddaughter), Venetia Philippa Cooke (1658–1732), is mentioned in Mrs Gibbons’s will of 11.V.1679 (proved 6.VII.1679 after her burial at St Clement Danes on 19.V.1679). Another relative mentioned in Elizabeth’s will was Jane Broadnax (1628–1693) who married Thomas Papillon (1623–1702), MP for Dover and a deacon of the French church.

Bibliography

Beale 1999; David Best, *Disturb’d with Chaces*, London, 2009, Helen Draper, “Mary Beale...”, in R. F. W. Smith & G. L. Watson, eds., *Writing the lives of people and things...*, Abingdon, 2016, pp. 115ff, pp. 126, 131; Leslie Hotson, *The Commonwealth and Restoration stage*, 1928, pp. 115ff; Aleya Lyell Reade, *Johnsonian gleanings: the doctor’s life, 1728–1735*, London, 1928, p. 140; *Gentleman’s magazine*, LXXXIII, .X.1813, p. 334; *English Goodwin family papers*, 1921, I, p. 213; Prerogative Court of Canterbury, wills proved 21.III.1664, 16.VII.1679

Pastels

J3468.101 Charles Seymour, 6th Duke of SOMERSET (1662–1748), pstl, 26x21, sd verso “Mrs Gibbons of Lincoln’s Inn Fields”, 1679 (desc.: PC 2017) φ