

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastelists before 1800*

Online edition

KNAPTON, George

Lymington, Hampshire bpt 21.IX.1697 – London
brd 28.XII.1778

Contrary to all sources Knapton was not born in London, but in Lymington (as published here in 2014): he was baptised at Christchurch on 21.IX.1697 to William Knapton of Brockenhurst Manor and Elizabeth, née Odber. His elder brother Odber Knapton (1696–1746), an attorney and town clerk in Lymington, married a Mary Chadwick; two younger brothers, Charles (who also became a painter) and James, were both baptised at Christchurch, in 1699 and 1701. The connection with the Lymington family emerged in the 1776 will (proved 1784) of Francis Cotes's widow, who left Cotes's portrait of George Knapton to his niece Maria Beata Knapton, Mrs James Samber, of Lymington. (A group of pastels of members of the Knapton and related Dansey families confirms the connection.) George Knapton was the nephew, not the son, of the prosperous London bookseller James Knapton (1667–1736).

George Knapton was apprenticed to the painter Jonathan Richardson, Sr for five years from 3.XI.1715 for a premium of £107 10s. by his mother Elizabeth (by then a widow). Knapton travelled in Italy from 1725 to 1732, returning to England to work as a portraitist, primarily in pastel but also in oil. In 1737 the Earl of Bristol commissioned him to make a copy of Fayram's 1728 portrait of his heir, John, Lord Hervey; he was paid 8 guineas, while the original had cost £7 in 1728. In 1749 he was recorded in Gerrard Street in the poll of the electors for the Westminster seat. Curiously George Knapton voted for the successful Lord Trentham (later Earl Gower), even though his portrait of the other candidate, Sir George Vandeput, was engraved by Houston and published a few weeks after the election "at ye request of the Worthy Electors of Westminster" with a caption implying the he had lost through bribery.

Between 1741 and 1749 he made a series of 23 portraits (in oil) of the members of the Society of Dilettanti, of which he himself was a member. Many of the Dilettanti were portrayed in pastel – by artists from Carriera to Liotard – but while the Society passed a resolution on 4.I.1741 that "every member ...do make a present of his Picture done by Mr Geo. Knapton a Member to be hung up in the Room where the said Society meets", the entry was altered to read "Picture in Oil Colours". One wonders whether Knapton suggested the medium which seems ideally suited to the intimate and spontaneous concept of these unusual images; if so the response indicates that members shared George Vertue's suspicion that pastel was too slick – "the depravity of skill, and lowness of Art". (At the same time, Pond, *q.v.*, also turned from crayons to oil, in response, it has been suggested, to the wave of anti-French feeling stirred up by military hostilities.) Developing the tradition of Kneller's Kit-Kat club portraits, Knapton shows the members in fancy dress, ranging from the antique to the Venetian and levantine; there is also a marked chronological progression in quality.

In 1750 Vertue asked Knapton to prepare a catalogue of the royal collection, and in 1765 he was appointed Surveyor and Keeper of the King's Pictures; he collaborated with Arthur Pond in a series of engravings of the most celebrated pictures in the royal collection. He taught Francis Cotes as well as amateurs such as Viscount Nuneham, the future Earl Harcourt and his sister (*qq.v.*). Nuneham mentions in a letter of 14.IX.1755, that Knapton was one of the few artists he knew that produced landscapes in pastel; no example is known. Despite Vertue's statement that Knapton "painted chiefly in crayons", almost all the known examples in pastel date from before 1750; his abandonment of the medium in favour of oil may have as much to do with the success of Cotes as with the attitude of the Society of Dilettanti.

Knapton was living in Kensington Square when he died in 1778. He left £120 to his niece Elizabeth who lived with him, while the rest of his estate went to Major-General George Morrison of Bolton Street (their relationship is unexplained, but in 1774 Morrison was made a free burgess of Lymington).

Widespread confusion persists in the attributions of pastels between Knapton, Hoare and Cotes, while the styles of Knapton and Pond may be even closer: both artists occasionally used almost vertical lighting, although Knapton showed sharper reflections in his sitters' eyeballs, and his tonality is distinctively subdued, in browns and greys. Both showed a French level of refinement, Knapton more consistently, and with a deeper sense of volume, than Pond.

Bibliography

Bénézit; C. H. Collins Baker, *British painting*, London, 1933, p. 89; Lionel Cust, *History of the Society of Dilettanti*, London, 1898; Grove 1996; Sir Cecil Harcourt-Smith, *The Society of Dilettanti: its regalia and pictures*, London, 1932; Ingamells 1997; Jeffares 2016f; Mariette 1851–60; Nagler 1835–52; Oxford DNB; Redford 2008; R&L pp. 706f; Sloan 2000, p. 230f; Walpole 1828, p. 110f; Waterhouse 1981; Shearer West, "Libertinism and the ideology of male friendship in the portraits of the Society of Dilettanti", *Eighteenth-century life*, XVI, n.s., 2, .v.1992, pp. 76–104; Whistler 2009, pp. 197f; Wright 2006; PRO, register of apprentices' indentures

GENEALOGIES Knapton

Pastels

- J.432.101 Mrs Wellbore Ellis AGAR (∞ 1762), née Gertrude Hotham (1731–), pstl, ov. (PC). *Olim* attr. Cotes, Hoare φ
- J.432.102 Master ARNOLD, m/u (Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum). Lit. Catalogue 1902, p. 108, iii.22, cited Harcourt-Smith 1932
- J.432.103 Madame [?Anne] AURETTI [fl. 1742–54], the celebrated dancer, crayons (London, Greenwood, 28.v.1789, Lot 19) [cf. Pond]
- J.432.1035 [olim J.21.0262] Arthur BARNARDISTON (1737–1743), with a spaniel, pstl, 44.5x34.5, [c.1738] (Weston Hall, Northamptonshire; a UK heritage asset, as by Carriera; Newbury, Dreweatts, 16–17.XI.2021, Lot 421 repr., est. £6–8000). Lit.: Sir George Sitwell, *A brief history of Weston Hall*, 1927, p. 54; Francis Bamford,

Dear Miss Heber: an eighteenth century correspondence, London, 1936, p. xxiv, anon. [new attr., ?; cf. Pond] φav



Colonel BENSON (London, Christie's, 12.IV.1994, Lot 20 repr., attr. Knapton), v. Pond

J.432.104 Mrs BROCAS, pstl, 60x44.5 (T. Humphry Ward 1889). Exh.: London 1889b, no. 221 n.r. Carteret, v. Granville

J.432.105 Duchess of CHANDOS [∞ 1767], née Elizabeth Major (1731–1813)], pstl (PC) φ



Lord CHESTERFIELD [?Philip Dormer Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield (1694–1773)], 60x45 (desc. Lord Weardale 1911). Exh.: Paris 1911, no. 73 [v. Hoare]

J.432.108 Lady Louisa CONOLLY, née Lennox (1743–1821), aged 4, holding fruit, pstl, 58.5x44.5 (Castletown House, cat. 0056, as circle of Knapton) [?; cf. Pond] Φα



Photo © The Castletown Foundation, courtesy of The Office of Public Works

J.432.111 Prince Henry Frederick, Duke of CUMBERLAND (1745–1790), pstl/ppr, 32.5x27, c.1748 (Royal Collection RCIN 452553). Lit.:

Cust 1909, p. 219 n.r., as of Louisa Anna; Millar 1963, no. 575 n.r., as of Cumberland; Rorschach 1989, no. 163 φ

J.432.113 Maria Martha DANSEY (1771–1831), later (∞ 1803) Mrs Augustus Brine, the artist's great-niece, pstl [c.1775]) φ



J.432.115 William DANSEY (1727–1800), surgeon, of Blandford Forum; & pendant: J.432.116 spouse (∞ 1770), née Anne Knapton (1743–1831), pstl, [c.1775] (PC 1990) φ



J.432.119 Anne-Marie-Élisabeth Rossa DU PARC, dite La Francesina (–1778), singer, holding a music book, m/u

~grav. John Faber 1737

J.432.121 ?Lionel Tollemache, 5th Earl of DYSART (1734–1799), pstl, [c.1740] (Lord Tollemache, Helmingham Hall, 2005, as of 4th Earl). Attr. [Attr.; cf. Pond] Φav



Photo courtesy owner

J.432.124 ~cop., v. Grace, Countess of Dysart Lady Eliot, v. Hoare

J.432.126 Princess ELIZABETH Caroline (1741–1759) with Prince William Henry, Duke of Gloucester (1743–1805) and Prince Henry Frederick, Duke of Cumberland (1745–1790), children of Frederick, Prince of Wales, pstl/ppr, 87.6x80, sd ↓ “GKnapton/fecit 1748” [GK monogrammed] (Royal Collection RCIN 400903. Comm. 50 gns). Lit.: Millar 1963, no. 574, pl. 214; Rorschach 1989, no. 162 φ



J.432.127 Countess of ESSEX, née Frances Hanbury Williams (1735–1759), pstl (H. J. Fielding 1903). Exh.: London 1903, no. 246 n.r.

J.432.128 Countess of EUSTON, née Lady Dorothy Boyle (1724–1742), with feather in hair, pstl, 60x44.5 (Lady Burlington; desc.: Duke of Devonshire, ?Chiswick House, 1760; desc., Chatsworth). Lit.: Walpole 1928, p. 16 n.r.; R&L pp. 431, 455f, fig. 365; Burns & Saunier 2014, p. 123 repr.; Kenny 2013, fig. 30 φ



J.432.13 Countess of EUSTON, née Lady Dorothy Boyle, with pearls on dress, pstl, 60x44.5 (Lady Burlington; desc.: Duke of Devonshire, ?Chiswick House, 1760; desc., Chatsworth). Lit.: R&L pp. 431, 455f, fig. 364 φ



Folkes, v. Rishton

J.432.133 ?FREDERICK Lewis, Prince of Wales (1707–1751), 56x42 (Lord Wallscourt 1911). Exh.: Paris 1911, no. 74

J.432.134 =? (location unspecified). Lit.: *Connoisseur*, XIII, 1905, p. 152 repr.: as by Largillierre; Kerslake 1977, p. 83 no. 26 n.r., ??attr., ?Knapton; Rorschach 1989, p. 53, no. 27 n.r.

J.432.135 Mrs David GARRICK, née Eva-Maria Veigel (1724–1822), pstl, a.1749 (Lady Burlington; desc.: Duke of Devonshire, Chiswick House, 1760; desc., Chatsworth, as Knapton). Lit.: Walpole 1928, p. 23, as “La Violette, a Dancer, afterwards married to Mr Garrick, by Knapton, crayons”; Ingamells 2004, p. 190 n.r.; R&L p. 442, fig. 430, as Knapton; Webster 2011, fig. 87 [cf. Cotes; Hoare; traditional attr. retained, as cited by Walpole] φ



J.432.137 ~version, pstl, 59.5x44.5, a.1749 (Arabella Garrick, Mrs Schaw, Garrick's niece; desc. John Schaw-Protheroe-Beynon, Hurst House, Laugharne, Carmarthenshire. London, Sotheby's, 14.VII.1994, Lot 75 repr., as Hoare, est. £5–7000). Lit.: Ingamells 2004, p. 190 n.r.; Jeffares 2006, p. 241aiv, attr. Hoare Φβv



Photo courtesy Sotheby's

J.432.14 William Henry, Duke of GLOUCESTER (1743–1805), to left, in blue coat and vest lined with gold, powdered and curled tie-wig,

pstl/ppr, 58.5x46 (Buckingham Palace 1909. Royal Collection, not listed 2005). Lit.: Cust 1909, p. 219 n.r.

J.432.141 Countess GRANVILLE, while Lady Carteret, née Lady Sophia Fermor (1721–1745), “Lady Carteret, drawn crowned with corn, like the Goddess of Plenty, and a mild dove in her arms, like Mrs Venus”, m/u, 1744. Lit.: Walpole, letter to Sir Horace Mann, 29.VI.1744, describing sitting

Handel, v. Hoare

J.432.143 Edwin Lascelles, 1st Baron HAREWOOD (1713–1795), half-length, to left, in brown coat over gold brocade waistcoat, blue background; & pendant: J.432.144 1st wife, née Elizabeth Dawes (–1764), half-length, in white dress with light pink cloak, blue background, pstl, 59x44 (Harewood House). Lit.: Borenius 1936, no. 355/356 n.r./repr. -/Φα



J.432.146 Marchioness of HARTINGTON, née Lady Charlotte Elizabeth Boyle (1731–1754), with dog or ferret, pstl, 59.5x44.5 (Lady Burlington; desc.: Duke of Devonshire, ?Chiswick House, 1760; desc., Chatsworth). Lit.: Walpole 1928, p. 23; R&L pp. 455f n.r.; Kenny 2013, fig. 31 φ



J.432.148 Marchioness of HARTINGTON, née Lady Charlotte Elizabeth Boyle, with fan, pstl, 59.5x44.5 (Lady Burlington; desc.: Duke of Devonshire, ?Chiswick House, 1760; desc., Chatsworth). Lit.: Walpole 1928, p. 23; R&L pp. 455f n.r.; φ



J.432.15 John, Lord HERVEY (1696–1743), pstl, 1737 (comm. Earl of Bristol, his journal, 8.I.1737, “Paid Knapton for the copy which he drew in crayon of Lord Hervey’s picture by Fayram which I made a present of to Lady Hervey, 8 guineas”). Lit.: *The diary of John Hervey, first Earl of Bristol: With extracts from his book of expenses, 1688 to 1742*, 1894, pp. 163, 250; Dorothy Margaret Stuart, *Molly Lepell, Lady Hervey*, 1936, p. 106. A/r Fayram pnt., half length, 1728

J.432.151 Lady HERVEY, née Mary “Molly” Lepell (1700–1768), pstl/ppr, 58.5x44.5, 1756, a/r Kneller (Ickworth, National Trust, inv. 851741). Lit.: Farrer 1908, p. 218, no. 98 n.r.; Gore 1969, p. 245 n.r.; Ormond & Rogers 1979 n.r., anon.; Moore 2000, fig. 4; Whistler 2009, pp. 197f, fig. 15 Φ



Photo courtesy National Trust

J.432.154 [?]Prince JOHN ADOLPH FREDERICK of Hesse (1715–) [?Friedrich II. Landgraf von Hessen-Kassel (1720–1785)], in grey coat, red waistcoat, a tricorn under his arm, pstl, 57x44.5, inscr. verso “Jno Ad. Fried. Hesse, Xmas 1746. Aetatis 31”; & pendant: J.432.155 spouse [?Mary of Hanover (1723–1772)], in black dress, a red rose in her corsage, half-length, turned to right, pstl, 57x44.5 (Anthony Bacon Drury Butts; London, Sotheby’s, 7.XII.1932, £20; Hepburn) [individual not identified]

J.432.155 Member of the JOHNES family, pstl (H. J. Fielding 1903). Exh.: London 1903, no. 245 n.r.

J.432.1551 Member of the JOHNES family, pstl (H. J. Fielding 1903). Exh.: London 1903, no. 247 n.r.

J.432.156 Eliza KNAPTON [? (1734–p.1778), the artist’s niece and heir], pstl (φ



J.432.158 Odber KNAPTON (1696–1746), attorney, the artist’s brother; & pendant: J.432.159 spouse (∞ 1736), née Mary Chadwick (–1751), sister of Richard Chadwick, pstl (φ



J.432.162 Princess LOUISA Ann (1748–1768), as a child, in white dress and close-frilled lace cap, pstl/ppr, 33.5x28.2, c.1748 (Royal Collection RCIN 452551). Lit.: Cust 1909, p. 219 n.r., as Knapton or Liotard; Millar 1963, no. 576 n.r., *olim* as of Caroline Matilda; Rorschach 1989, no. 164 φ

J.432.164 ??Mrs John MARKHAM, née Maria Rice (1773–1810), daughter of George Rice [?one of Rice’s sisters, ?Mrs Magens Dorrien Magens, née Henrietta Rice (1758–1849)] pstl/ppr, 45x34.5 ov., c.1750 (Dinefwr, Newton House, National Trust. Desc. Lord Dynevor, Dynevor Castle, Llandilo, 1957; Newton House, Dinefwr; London, Sotheby’s, 18.XI.1976, Lot 148, as Russell, £450; Colin Hunter; London, Sotheby’s, 11.VII.1991, Lot 55 repr., as by Russell, est. £6–8000, £11,000; London, Sotheby’s, 29.XI.2001, Lot 212 repr., est. £5–7000, £6500 [=£7800]). Exh.: London 1988a, no. 95. Lit.: Steegman 1962, p. 61 n.r., anon. Attr. Φα?δν



Photo courtesy Sotheby's
Lady MILTON, née Lady Caroline Sackville (Knole), v. Cotes]

J.432.168 A boy of the MOUNT CASHEL family, in a blue coat, with white embroidered waistcoat; & pendant: J.432.17 A girl of the MOUNT CASHEL family, in a yellow dress, pstl, 57x43 (White-Thomson; London, Christie's, 1.II.1924, Lot 66 repr., as by Rosalba Carriera, 27 gns; Glass; London, Christie's, 3.III.1924, Lot 17 n.r., 20 gns; Smith) [new attr., ?; cf. Hoare] Φαδν



J.432.172 The Hon. William NAPIER (1727–) in a blue green silk jacket and pink waistcoat, pstl/ppr, 55.8x40.7, olim sd 1735 (D. P. Robert Hemphill; London, Christie's, 12.XI.1991, Lot 18 repr., est. £1000–1500, £1500. The Nonesuch Gallery 2023) Φ



Photo courtesy Christie's

J.432.175 Horace Walpole, 4th Earl of ORFORD (1717–1797), pstl, 55.9x43.2, a.1736 (Sir Robert Walpole, 10 Downing Street, London, 1736). Lit.: Adams & Lewis 1970, A.5 n.r.; Ingamells 2004, p. 371 n.r.

J.432.176 Alexander POPE (1688–1744), poet, pstl/ppr, 59x44.5 (W. Lumley Arnold, Ashby Lodge, Northamptonshire; sale, Ashby Lodge, Phillips, 20.IV.1854, Lot 13, as Knapton; Thomas Christy (–1877), of Broadlands, Essex; [?desc.: Sydney Richardson Christie-Miller (1874–1931)]. C. B. J. Gledhill; London, Christie's, 14.XI.1972, Lot 65; Thomas Agnew & Sons; Theodore Besterman (–1976), Banbury; Miss C. A. Moore; London, Christie's, 17.XI.1981, Lot 40 repr., £500). Lit.: G. Baker, *The history and antiquities of the county of Northampton*, 1822–41, I, p. 248; Riely & Wimsatt 1979, no. 7.6b repr., Hoare or Knapton. A/r Kneller pnt. (Stanton Harcourt) Φα

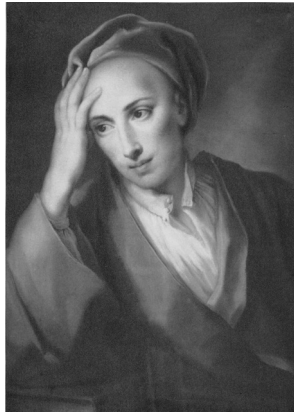


Photo courtesy Christie's

George RICE (1726–1779), MP (*Dinefwr*, National Trust). Lit.: Steegman 1962, p. 60 n.r., attr. Knapton [v. Hoare]

Duchess of RICHMOND (Castletown House, cat. 0054). Circle [v. Pond]

J.432.181 Mrs William RISHTON, née Dorothy Folkes (1718–), daughter of Martin Folkes, crayons (Martin Folkes (1690–1754), antiquary; legs: sitter). Lit.: John Nichols, *Biographical and literary anecdotes of William Bonnyer...*, 1782, p. 178 n.r.; *Literary anecdotes of the eighteenth century*, 1812, II, p. 589 n.r.

A lady of the ?SHELLEY family (Clandon Park, National Trust), v. Cotes, Lady Onslow

J.432.185 John, 1st Earl SPENCER (1734–1783), as Bacchus, and his sister Diana Spencer (1736–1743), as Ceres, pstl, 75.5x60, c.1742 (Althorp. Georgina, Lady Carteret; legs: Earl Spencer). Lit.: Johnson 1976, fig. 1; Garlick 1976, no. 333 n.r. Φ

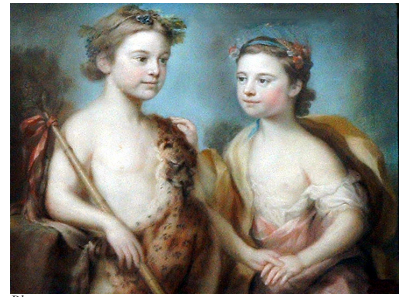


Photo courtesy owner

J.432.188 Countess SPENCER, née Margaret Georgiana Poyntz (1737–1814), and her daughter Georgiana, later Duchess of Devonshire (1757–1806), pstl, 82x71, 1758 (Althorp). Attr. Φαv

J.432.19 Lady SUNDON, née Charlotte Dyve (c.1679–1742), (∞ William Clayton, Baron Sundon), lady of the bedchamber to Queen Caroline, head and shoulders, nearly full face, blue ribbon in hair, white dress, corset laced with blue ribbon, blue knot fastened to her left side, shoulders covered by a lace kerchief, pstl/ppr, 61x47 (Welbeck, Portland collection, G.0352). Exh.: Manchester 1857, no. 275, repr. Sir George Scharf sketchbook 49, p. 20. Lit.: Portland & Fairfax Murray 1894, p. 100, no. 352; Goulding 1936, no. 352 n.r. Φ



Gentleman (Fitzhenry 1911). Exh.: Paris 1911, no. 72 [v. Cotes, man, sd 1747]

J.432.194 Gentleman wearing the order of the Bath, bust, pstl, 58.5x43 (London, Sotheby's, 28.VII.1943, £22; Colnaghi)

J.432.195 Gentleman, pstl, 56x43 (London, Sotheby's, 25.IX.1980, Lot 109, £240)

J.432.1956 A lady's head, ¾, crayons (Martin Folkes; London, Langford, 7–8.V.1755, Lot 92, £2/1/-)

J.432.196 Jeune femme, manteau lié d'un collier de perles, aigrette de plumes noires aux cheveux, m/u, 56x43 (Knoedler c.1910, as Carriera) [new attr., ?] Φαv



J.432.198 Lady, 61x44.5 (London, Christie's, 27.IX.1946, Lot 69, as Carriera; Mrs Maxwell Scott). Attr. [cf. Hoare] Φαv



Photo courtesy Christie's

J.432.199 Lady with a ruff, m/u (details n/k). *Olim* attr. Perronneau [new attr.; ?; cf. Hoare] φαυ



J.432.201 Lady in a white dress with blue silk shawl and hair band, pstl, 58.5x44 (London, Christie's, 10.VII.1990, Lot 114 repr., circle of Knapton, est. £800–1000) Φαυ



J.432.203 Lady in a white dress with blue silk shawl, pearls in hair band, pstl/ppr, 58x48.5 (Gaston Palewski. PC 2022; Paris, château du Marais, Artcurial, 21.IX.2022, Lot 252 repr., attr., est. €1500–2000) [new attr.; ?; cf. Pond]φαυ



J.432.204 Lady in a straw hat, pstl, 65x49 (Mme Édouard Cochet; vente p.m., Paris, Drouot,

Fraysse, 16.XI.2023, Lot 338 repr., est. €2–4000, €800) [new attr.] φν



J.432.203 The infant Bacchus, pstl, 60x44; & pendant: J.432.204 the infant Psyche with a garland of flowers, pstl, 60x44 (London, Christie's, 6.VII.1982, Lot 74 repr./n.r., circle of Carriera) [new attr.] Φ

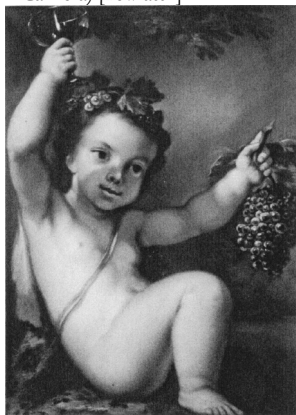
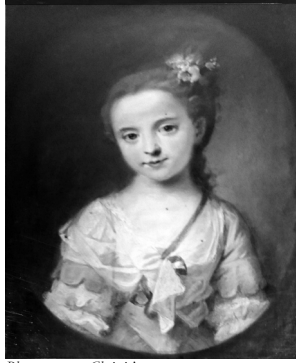


Photo courtesy Christie's

J.432.207 Boy in blue coat and lilac waistcoat; & pendant: J.432.208 Girl in white dress, pstl, 59x44 (London, Christie's, 8.VII.1986, Lot 89 repr., attr., est. £1–2000, £4600 [=£4960]) [?attr.] Φα



Photos courtesy Christie's

J.432.212 Unspecified item (Esher, 1769, Musgrave's lists)

J.432.213 Group of pstls (Coughton Court). Lit.: R&L p. 7070 n.r. [?confusion with Hoare]