

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

LONGASTRE, L. de

c.1747–p.1806

Portraitist in pastel; a French émigré and former colonel in the gendarmerie according to Farington (*Diary*, 10.v.1797). However his origins remain obscure. Some sources suggest that he was a member of the Houchain family to whom the Longastre fief belonged, but the last legitimate member of this line died in 1783. He is first reported in Zürich in the company of Lavater when Leopold III. von Anhalt-Dessau is on a trip to Switzerland with his wife. One morning they went “de tres bonne heures en ville chez Lavater, la Princesse voulant se faire peindre en pastel d’un peintre nommé Lancaster se disant flamand mais qui à tout l’air d’être un aventurier, ayant mangé comme on le sai 800000 Livres en peu de tems”. This probably resulted in the portrait recorded in Schloß Dessau in 1894. Lavater mentions the artist again in a letter to Goethe from Zurich dated 17.I.1784 (*Briefe an Goethe*, Goethe- und Schiller-Archiv, Weimar): “Als Porträt Mahler hab ich Longastre merkwürdig gefunden – Sonst keine Seele, die du nicht kennst.”

Longastre next appeared in London, where he exhibited numerous portraits at the Royal Academy in 1790 from 14 Tavistock Row, Covent Garden, followed by other London addresses (91 Newman Street, 1795; Grove House, Knightsbridge, 1796; 5 Leicester Square, 1797; 62 Queen Anne Street East, 1798; and, as W. de Longastre, 30 Piccadilly, 1799). The medium is generally unspecified and most of his subjects are unidentified, although Graves (1905) deciphers a number from contemporary documents. According to Pasquin, reviewing the 1796 Academy, “This artist has improved much since the last Exhibition. The portrait under consideration is in crayons, and managed with more force and fire than any similar production this year, excepting No. 490” [Humphry’s Mrs Sheridan, giving both preference over eight Russells]. The following year the critic noted that “De Longastre has some crayon portraits, but inferior in brilliancy of colour to those of Russell and Humphreys.” We can see from surviving examples (such as the commanding portrait of Matthew Boulton published here for the first time), just how far the artist had adapted from any Continental training he may have had to embrace the studied vigour of both of these English pastellists, even if his palette remains more subdued than Russell’s “gaudy exuberance”.

Further evidence of Longastre’s influence is in Constant de Massoul’s *Treatise*, in which the information on crayon painting and techniques for fixing was provided by “Mr Longastre, who is well versed in this manner of Painting.” It is possible that they had previously met in the Royalist counter-Revolutionary service.

An unexplained notice was printed at the end of the issue no. 69 of the *Journal de Francfort* for 10.III.1799:

On désireroit savoir la demeure de M. de Longastre peintre en pastel; on a des choses importantes à lui communiquer. S’adresser au Bureau de ce Journal.

An advertisement appeared in the *Manchester Mercury* on 10.XII.1799, in which—

Mr DE LONGASTRE Begs leave to inform his Friends, that he is RETURNED to Manchester. His Apartments are at No. 21, Piccadilly; right hand side going up.

Possibly through John Russell, Longastre appears to have been close to the Lunar Society, of four of whose members he left portraits. Although reference books have hitherto given Longastre’s date of death as 1799, he is evidently the artist introduced to James Watt in .i.1805 by the abbé de Calonne, brother of the contrôleur général (one or other of whom was the subject of a portrait exhibited in 1797), in a letter recommending the bearer, a portrait painter in pastels (Watt family papers, Birmingham Archives and Heritage, MS 3219/4/47/7) and in a letter from Longastre to Matthew Boulton, also from .i.1805 (Boulton family papers, Birmingham Archives and Heritage, MS 3782/12/50/38). A few months later, he was in turn introduced in a letter from Boulton to John Wedgwood, Josiah’s son, dated 23.V.1806 (*loc. cit.*, MS 3782/12/51/94):

Permit me to introduce you to the Bearer, Mons^r De Longastre, a French Emigrant Gentleman who has been many Years in this Country, & for 18 Months past a resident at Birmingham, occupying himself in the profession of a Portrait Painter in Crayons.

With the same view he now purposes to pay a visit to the Potteries; & if you, or any of your Friends, feel an inclination to have your Likeness transmitted to posterity let me recommend the Crayon of Mr Longastre as I am induced to think it will do justice to your wishes, judging from some successful specimens which he has exhibited of his talents in the Portraits of your friends at Heathfield & here.

I venture to hope that you will find this Gentleman, independent of his professional merits, in other respects deserving of any attentions or civilities with which you may please to honor him during his stay in your neighbourhood.

Consistent with Boulton’s letter we have portraits of Boulton, Watt and their families from this period, and even a record that, on 29.X.1805, Boulton gave the artist a copy of William Sharp’s 1801 print after Beechey’s portrait (although Longastre’s pastel is not copied from it). Boulton was very familiar with the medium: as early as 1771, he was engaged by Erasmus Darwin (*q.n.*) to provide him with crayons; several years later he commissioned a portrait of his son (*q.n.*) from Liotard, and the boy’s education in France included drawing lessons with “large heads in Crayons”.

In the *Monthly magazine or British register*, .VIII.1805, p. 52 was announced “a series of heads engraved in chalks, by T[homas] Nugent, for the improvement of those who are learning drawing, published by Ackerman. No doubt the originals were chalk drawings rather than pastels. The first number included—

Ariadne and Diana, drawn by L. de Longastre; Minerva, by J. Agar; and Sapina, by Maria Cosway.

These heads are as large as life, and admirable calculated for the improvement of young practitioners in the art, being in a free and easy style, and the air of the head, especially the Ariadne, is unaffected and pleasing...the two first are en profile...

Tradition has it that Longastre was a Bonapartist spy, seeking to obtain technical secrets by conversing with his subjects. He was

an active member of the émigré community, and is listed as a subscriber to a novel (*Zilka*) by the comtesse Beaufort d’Hautpoul published in London in 1797. He was last recorded (as “Mr Langastre, crayon painter”) among the subscribers to William Blake’s 1808 edition of *The Grave: a poem*.

Bibliography

Bénézit; Henry Winram Dickinson & al., *James Watt and the steam engine: the memorial volume prepared for the committee of the Watt centenary commemoration at Birmingham 1919*, Oxford, 1927, p. 83; Graves 1905, II, p. 299; Leopold III, *Fürst und Förderlist: Tagebücher einer Reise von Dessau in die Schweiz 1783...*, 2004, p. 259; Valerie Anne Loggie, “Soho depicted: prints, drawings and watercolours of Matthew Boulton...”, Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham, 2011, p. 237; Massoul 1797, pp. 115ff; Smith & Moilliet 1967; Waterhouse 1981

Salon critiques

Anthony PASQUIN [John Williams], *A critical guide to the Royal Academy, for 1796*, London, 1796: 505 – *Portrait*. DELONGASTRE. This artist has improved much since the last Exhibition. The portrait under consideration is in crayons, and managed with more force and fire than any similar production this year, excepting No. 490.

Anthony PASQUIN [John Williams], *A critical guide to the Royal Academy, for 1797*, London, 1797: 459 – *Portrait of a Lady*. DE LONGASTRE. Since the demise of *Coates*, the art of crayon painting has been on the decline, until Mr *Humphreys* assumed that character, [...]. Mr Longastre has a boldness in his handling which may lead rapidly to greater excellence: we believe that this gentleman was expatriated for his attachment to the late unfortunate French Monarch, and as a Professor by necessity, he is entitled to our liberality.

Anon., “The exhibition of the Royal Academy”, *Monthly mirror*, VI.1797, p. 347:

De LONGASTRE has some crayon portraits, but inferior in brilliancy of colour to those of Russell and Humphreys.

Pastels

J.496.101 SELF-PORTRAIT, m/u, Royal Academy 1790, no. 78, as an artist. Lit.: Graves 1905, identified

J.496.102 Matthew BOULTON (1728–1809), FRS, engineer, pstl/ppr, 65x54, sd → “L. de Longastre 1805” (Desc.: PC 2013) φσ



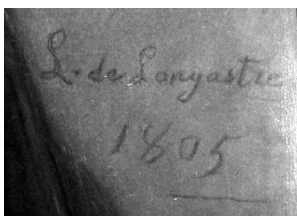


Photo courtesy owner

J.496.106 Charles William Henry Montagu Scott, 4th Duke of BUCCLEUCH (1772–1819), in blue coat, pstl, 66x56 ov., sd “De Longastre Pinxit 1795” (PC 1953). Lit.: Waterhouse 1981, n.r. φ



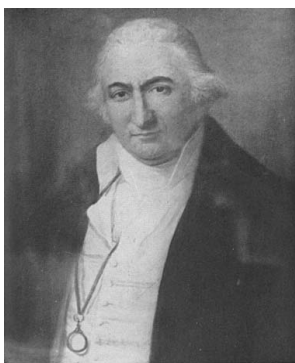
J.496.108 [?Charles-Alexandre] de CALONNE [(1734–1802), contrôleur général des finances/?abbé Jacques-Ladislas-Joseph de Calonne (1742–1822), m/u, Royal Academy 1797, no. 497. Lit.: Graves 1905, identified as Calonne

J.496.109 Mrs FRY, née Anne Feilding, ?granddaughter of Earl of Denbigh, pstl, 53x44.5, sd “De.Longs...1798”, inscr. verso “Mrs Fry, née Anne Fielding” (Robert Wyndham Jermy Rushbrooke, Rushbrooke Park, 1906. London, Christie’s, 2.VII.1948, Lot 123, as Mrs Fyer). Lit.: Farrer 1908, p. 294, no. 18 n.r.; Waterhouse 1981, repr. φ



Photo courtesy Christie’s

J.496.112 Samuel GALTON (1753–1832), FRS, member of the Lunar Society, in a brown coat, pstl/ppr, 66x56 (Warwick, St John’s House Museum, inv. H12370. Darwin Galton 1868; Wheeler Galton, Claverdon, 1914; Claverdon sale 1954; PC; acqu.). Exh.: London 1868, no. 907 repr. Lit.: Pearson 1914; Uglow 2002 φ

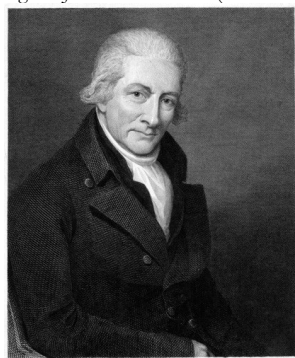


J.496.114 ~pendant: J.496.115 spouse, Mrs Samuel GALTON, née Lucy Barclay (1757–1817), pstl (Warwick, St John’s House Museum, inv. H12373. Wheeler Galton, Claverdon, 1914; Claverdon sale 1954; PC; acqu.). Lit.: Pearson 1914, repr. opp. p. 46 φ



J.496.117 Mr HORNSIDE, m/u, Royal Academy 1790, no. 143. Lit.: Graves 1905, identified

J.496.118 William JESSE (1737–1814), evangelical cleric, curate of West Bromwich, m/u ~grav. Johann Carl Bock (1757–1843)



J.496.121 James KEIR (1753–1832), FRS, member of the Lunar Society, with his granddaughter Amelia Moillet, pstl/ppr, 68.5x56 (James Moilliet 1868). Exh.: London 1868, no. 903 repr.; Smith & Moilliet 1967, repr. φ



~grav. William Henry Worthington. Lit.: Schofield, *Notes and records of the Royal Society of London*, XXI, 1966, p. 149 repr.; Uglow 2002 repr., detail

J.496.124 LUISE Wilhelmine Henriette Fürstin von Anhalt-Dessau, née zu Brandenburg-Schwedt (1750–1811), m/u, c.1783 (Schloß Dessau, Herzoglichen Gallerie, inv. no. 526, a.1896; not located 2004). Lit.: von Frankenberg 1896, II, s.r. Luise, n.r.; Froesch 2004, p. 195 n.r., as c.1775

J.496.1245 H. NICHOLSON, Esq., traveller and explorer, friend of Lord Nelson, in black coat, white stock, pstl, 61x53 ov., sd 1788 (London, Christie’s, 20.XI.1933, Lot 16 n.r.)

J.496.126 Samuel PARR (1747–1825), schoolteacher, m/u, 1805. Lit.: Warren Derry, *Dr. Parr: a portrait of the Whig Dr Johnson*, Oxford, 1966, p. 360

~grav. W. Skelton. Lit.: *Bibliotheca parriana*, London, 1827, frontispiece

J.496.128 =?portrait repr. *Memoirs of the life, writings, and opinions of the Rev. Samuel Parr*, LL.D φ



J.496.13 Mr PHIPPS, m/u, Royal Academy 1798, no. 338

J.496.131 Mr PLATT, m/u, Royal Academy 1798, no. 330

J.496.132 Mrs Henry Anthony PYE (∞ 1794 Rev. H. A. Pye, fellow of Merton College, Oxford), née Frances Ursula Wilkinson (1767–1850), dau. of Thomas Wilkinson, merchant, of Amsterdam, pstl, 66x56 ov., sd √ 1789 [?date] (English PC) φ



J.496.134 [Joseph Boulogne], chevalier de SAINT-GEORGES [(1745–1799), musician, swordsman and soldier], m/u, Royal Academy 1790, no. 282, unidentified. Lit.: Graves 1905, identified as chevalier St George

J.496.135 Mr TAYLOR, m/u, Royal Academy 1790, no. 211. Lit.: Graves 1905, identified

J.496.136 James WAIT (1736–1819), FRS, LLD, engineer, pstl, 68.5x56, c.1805 (sitter; don: his cousin Robert Muirhead). Lit.: James Muirhead, *List of the principal portraits, statues and busts*, 1854, no. 3a “A three quarter, or head size in crayons or pastel, by Longcastre [sic] an emigrant officer of the Guards of Louis XVI ... Of this, which is a striking portrait and

exact likeness, there is a duplicate by the same artist. One of the pair was presented by Mr Watt to his cousin Mr Robert Muirhead ... ; the other was executed for Mr Boulton, and after being at his house in Soho was moved to Haseley Court, Oxon”

J.496.137 ~repl., pstl/ppr, 62x51, n.s. (comm. Matthew Boulton; desc.: Lionel B. C. L. Muirhead, Haseley Court, 1904; desc.: PC 2013). Lit.: Caw 1903, II, pl. xc; Dickinson & al. 1927, pl. III; Ingamells 2004, p. 477 n.r.; Jane Insley, “Picturing James Watt”, *British art journal*, XI/3, 2011 Φσ

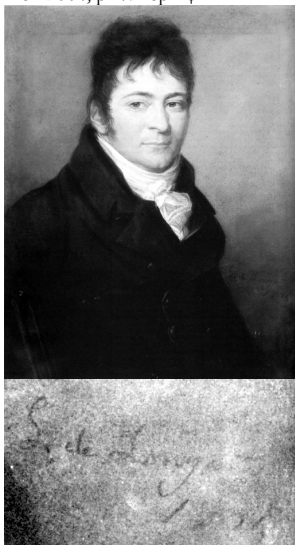


Photo courtesy owner

~grav. Lit.: Uglow 2002 repr., detail

J.496.141 James WATT, pstl, s “L. de Large”; & pendant spouse, née Ann McGrigor (-1832), pstl, s “L. de Large” (London, Bonhams, 16.II.1977, Lot 206). Lit.: Ingamells 2004, p. 477 n.r.

J.496.142 James WATT, Jr (1769–1848), son of James Watt, Sr by his first wife, engineer, pstl, sd sd v “L. de Longastre/[?]1795” [illegible; ?1805] (PC). Lit.: Oliver Fairclough, *The grand old mansion: the Holtes and their successors at Aston Hall 1618–1864*, 1984, fig. 83; Richard Haslam, “Doldowlod, Powys. The home of Mr and Mrs Julian Gibson-Watt”, *Country life*, 8.I.2004, p. 47 repr. φ



J.496.145 =?James WATT, Jr, pstl, 61x51, sd 1805 (Major J. D. Gibson-Watt, Doldowlod, Llandrindod Wells, Radnorshire, 1957). Lit.: Steegman 1962, II, p. 210, no. 17 n.r.; Ingamells 2004, p. 477 n.r.

J.496.1455 Felix YANIEWICZ (1762–1848), violinist and composer, pstl, c.64x51 ov., sd v “De Longastre/1799” (PC 2021). Lit.: yaniewicz.org, repr.φ



J.496.146 Man in blue coat, pstl, 62x51.5 ov., sd v “...e Longastre, 179[6]” (Dr Mark Sheppard, St Petersburg, Florida; legs: Historic Beaufort Foundation, deaccessioned; Asheville, North Carolina, Brunk Auctions, 13.VII.2008, Lot 603, est. \$600–1200, \$3200) φ



J.496.148 Gentleman, m/u, Royal Academy 1797, no. 522

J.496.149 Gentleman, m/u, Royal Academy 1797, no. 525

J.496.15 An artist, m/u, Royal Academy 1798, no. 755

J.496.151 Man in blue coat, black hat, nautical background, pstl, 62x51.5, s v “L de Longastre” (Nottingham, Mellors & Kirk, 16.IX.2015, Lot 694, est. £200–250; PC; Nottingham, Mellors & Kirk, 20–22.VI.2023, Lot 1066 repr., as follower of J. R. Smith, est. £200–250) φ



J.496.154 Lady, m/u, Royal Academy 1797, no. 459

J.496.155 Lady, bust length, white drapery, décolletée, grey eyes, face nearly full, light brown hair, blue ribbon, blue-grey sky background, pstl/ppr, 60x49.5, sd ← 1790 (Braithwaite Wilson. Émile Gross; Xavier Haas; New York, Anderson, 20–21.I.1927, Lot 88 n.r., \$50)

J.496.1555 Lady, in white dress and brown cloak, pstl, 60x44.5, sd 1803 (Lady Hughes-Stanton, Scarsdale Lodge, London W8; London, Christie’s, 16.VI.1939, Lot 2 n.r.)

J.496.156 Lady, neoclassical profile, crayon, 46x35.5, s (London, Phillips, 11.VII.1994, Lot 1 repr.) φ



J.496.158 Gentleman, pstl, 67x56 ov., sd 1799; & pendant: J.496.159 Lady in a cap, pstl, 67x56 ov., sd 1799 (John Lane; London, Sotheby’s, 1.VII.1925, Lot 126 n.r.) Φ



J.496.16 Gentleman in a black coat; & pendant: J.496.159 Lady in a black dress, pstl, 67x55 ov., sd -/s “L. de Longastre/1806” (Swanmore, Hampshire, Pump House Auctions, 26.II.2018, Lot 1575 repr., est. £180) φ



J.496.162 Gentleman; & pendant: J.496.163 lady, pstl, 63.5x53 ov. (Mrs Hannah Entwistle, The Oaks, Sunninghill, Berkshire; sale p.m., London, Christie’s, 1.II.1908, 5 gns; Richardson)

J.496.164 =?lady and gentleman in dark dresses, powdered hair, pstl, 62x53 (London, Christie’s, 18.XII.1909, Lot 92, 3 gns; Landstein)

J.496.165 Portrait, m/u, Royal Academy 1795, no. 323/336/362/373/426

J.496.166 Portrait, m/u, Royal Academy 1796, no. 405

J.496.167 Portrait, crayons, Royal Academy 1796, no. 505

J.496.168 Portrait, m/u, Royal Academy 1799, no. 445, as by W. de Longastre