

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

LONSDALE, Countess of, née Lady Mary Stuart

London 20.I.1740 – Fulham 5.IV.1824

Daughter of the prime minister, John, 3rd Earl of Bute, in 1761 she married Sir James Lowther, Bt (1736–1802), a union Horace Walpole reported as that of “the great prince of the coal pits” with “the eldest infanta of the adjoining coal pits” (letter to Sir Horace Mann, 17.VIII.1761). Created 1st Earl of Lonsdale in 1784, Lowther was described as “a man of immense wealth and political influence...whose violence, arrogance, despotism, and caprice rose almost to the point of madness.” There were no children.

Lady Lonsdale was an accomplished amateur artist (her sister, Countess of Portarlington, *q.v.*, was also a pastellist). Four of her topographical drawings, in pencil, pen and ink and watercolour, are reproduced in Russell 2004 (figs. 14–17). A group of her pastels, undescribed except for one copy, are listed in the Bute inventory of Luton Park c.1800 (two further pastels, of Ladies Macartney and Northumberland, but not attributed, and may also be by her or perhaps by Katherine Read; “Countess of Northumberland” was her sister Anne’s title briefly, 1764–66, while her sister Jane married Earl Macartney in 1768).

A pastel self-portrait, said to date from c.1765, may be a version of a work sold as by Liotard (who portrayed her brother); it is reminiscent of the manner of Katherine Read (who portrayed her and her mother), and is similar to a pastel by Mary Black (*q.v.*). The two works apparently descended by different nieces of the artist. It is possible that the oval version was derived from the rectangular, or vice versa, and that one was by her teacher; but this cannot be resolved until both are compared.

Lady Lonsdale was the subject of a lost portrait by Hamilton, in 1771, while still Lady Mary Lowther.

Bibliography

W. E. Lecky, *A history of England in the eighteenth century*, 1890, p. 125; Russell 2004; Steegman 1962, p. 155

GENEALOGIES [Stuart](#)

Pastels

[J.4966.101](#) SELF-PORTRAIT, in a flowered brocade dress with blue ribbons, holding a porte-crayon, pstl, 76x64 ov., c.1765 ([?the sitter’s niece, Lady Congleton, née Lady Caroline Dawson-Damer; desc.:] Col. Henry Somerset Parnell Hopkinson (1899–), Llanvihangel Court, Abergavenny, 1957). Lit.: Steegman 1962, p. 155 n.r.

[J.4966.102](#) ~?version, pstl/ppr, 80x65, inscr. v “Countess of Lonsdale” (New Haven, Yale Center for British Art, inv. B2016.20.1. [?the sitter’s niece, Lady Ranfurly, née Mary Juliana Stuart; desc.:] Earl of Ranfurly; London, Christie’s, 21.VI.1929, Lot 80 repr., as Liotard, 155 gns; Gaskell; Milnes Gaskell family of Thornes House, Wakefield; desc.: London, Bonhams Knightsbridge, 29.IV.2015, Lot 264 repr., attr., £1875; Lowell Libson; don 2016). Exh.: Heaton Hall, Manchester City Art

Galleries. Lit.: Jeffares 2006, p. 574Biii; R&L R21, fig. 818 [new attr., ?] Φανσ



[J.612.105](#) Countess of NORTHUMBERLAND, née [Lady Anne Stuart (1746–p.1785)], crayons (Marquess of Bute; Luton Park, rough catalogue, s.d. [c.1800], f° 73, unattributed, among others by Lady Lonsdale) [?attr.]

[J.4966.111](#) A copy after Le Nain, m/u (Marquess of Bute; Luton Park, rough catalogue, s.d. [c.1800], f° 73)

[J.4966.121](#) Other pictures, undescribed, crayons (Marquess of Bute; Luton Park, rough catalogue, s.d. [c.1800], f° 73)