

# Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

## **MORESBY, Sarah**

*fl.* London 1778

Amateur exhibitor. Her father, Fairfax Moresby (–1788), was an apothecary in Derby, and married Mary Kirk in 1745 at Kirk Ireton. She was one of four daughters, probably born in Matlock c.1750–60, and in 1773 the scientist John Whitehurst used his friendship with Benjamin Franklin to get her taken on by Benjamin West. On 30.I.1774 Whitehurst reported back to Franklin that “Miss Moresby...is rendered extremely happy by Franklin’s intercessions; she takes pleasure in nothing but drawing.” What happened is unclear; in 1777 Whitehurst wrote again to Franklin on 12.IV.1777: “Miss Moresby, for whom Franklin so kindly applied to Mr West, is now at a loss for an introduction; would esteem it a singular favour if Franklin would do her that friendly office.” Perhaps she did not meet the American painter’s standards. She did however appear in Tassaert’s exhibition in 1777, sending a crayon as well as a miniature (the head of a lady reduced for a ring, and possibly “Prometheus, a gem”: the typography is unclear if this is hers), from 13 Norton Street, near Portland Chapel.

### **Bibliography**

Maxwell Craven, *John Whitehurst of Derby*, 1996, p. 215; Franklin correspondence; Waterhouse 1981

### **Pastels**

- J.5454.101 An old woman’s head, in crayons, exh. London 1777, no. 164  
J.5454.102 Portrait, crayons, Free Society 1778, no. 148