

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

PETERS, Matthew William

Isle of Wight 1741 – Kent 1814

A pupil of Robert West (*q.v.*) at the Dublin Society school, his earliest known work is a curious charcoal self-portrait being drawn by his teacher (NPG). By 1759 he had moved to London, where he studied under Thomas Hudson; he visited Italy in 1762 with funds provided by the Dublin Society, becoming a member of the Accademia del Disegno di Firenze in 1763. He returned to London, becoming a freemason in 1769. He exhibited at the Society of Artists (1766–69), the Free Society (1769) and the Royal Academy, of which he became an associate in 1771 and a full member in 1778. His submissions from 1773 were sent from Venice, while in 1774 Walpole noted that he was “just returned from Rome”; he was in Paris in 1775 and 1783–84 (he was a friend of Boilly and of Vestier, *qq.v.*). His early work was in crayon but from around 1768 he seems to have worked mainly in oil or chalk. His slightly risqué portraits of young women were incompatible with his subsequent career as a clergyman (he was ordained in 1781 and became rector of Eaton and then Wolsthorpe in Leicestershire; and, in 1788 prebendary of Lincoln), and he resigned from the Royal Academy in 1790, the year in which he married. He continued painting, turning to religious and historical subjects, which were attacked by critics such as Paley and Peter Pindar.

Monographic exhibitions

Peters 1910: *Paintings by Rev. W. Peters*, Henry Graves Gallery, London, .XI.1910

Bibliography

Bénézit; Brieger 1921; Crookshank 1969; Crookshank & Glin 1994; *Dictionary of Irish biography*; Dublin 1969; Figgis & Rooney 2001; Grove 1996; London 2001c; Manners 1913; Passez 1989; Sée 1911; Stewart & Cutten 1997; Strickland 1913; Waterhouse 1981; Wright 2006; Wynne 1990

Pastels

The artist and his daughter Elizabeth Anne Peters, pstl, 23x16.5 (S. Peters 1910). Exh.: Peters 1910, no. 20

Miss BAMPFYLDE, lady in undress, pstl, Royal Academy 1776, no. 225. Lit.: Manners 1913, pp. 52, 56, 59 [print identified on BM copy]

~grav.: Dunkarton 1777, as Belinda

Lady FRANKLAND (∞ 1775 Sir Thomas, 6th Bt), née Dorothy Smelt (–1820), with her son Robert (1784–1849), pstl, 66x51 (PC) ◊



Photo courtesy owner

Mrs GRANT, bust, ¾ to left, evening dress, with blue sash, low neck, dark eyes, fair hair with

long ringlet on left shoulder, pstl/ppr, 26.5x21.5 (Xavier Haas; New York, Anderson, 20–21.I.1927, Lot 110 n.r.). Exh.: Paris 1919a, no. 154; Zurich 1920, no. 70

Mrs HADDEN-BROWN, 90x70 (Frantz Wittouck 1911). Exh.: Paris 1911, no. 91. Lit.: Sée 1911, repr. p. 161 ◊



Gentleman [Dr HILL], crayons, Society of Artists 1769, no. 131†

Mrs KENNEDY-TOMS, of The Manse, Surrey, 88x69, c.1790 (Kennedy 1911). Exh.: Paris 1911, no. 14, as by Cosway. Lit.: Cust 1911, attr. Peters; Sée 1911, repr. p. 119, as by Cosway; Jeffares 2006, p. 130Ci, as by Cosway ◊



Patience, Mrs Thomas Bridgeman LUXMOORE (1769–1855) of Fair Place in Okehampton, Devon, pstl, 35x45 ov. (Leyburn, Tennants, Lot 681; Boris Wilnitsky Kunsthandel, Vienna, 2005) ◊



Photo courtesy Boris Wilnitsky Kunsthandel

Mrs Matthew William PETERS, née Margaret Susannah Knowsley, and child, pstl, 23x19 (S. Peters 1910). Exh.: Peters 1910, no. 18

Mrs Matthew William PETERS, née Knowsley, and her two sons, pstl, 28.5x21 (S. Peters 1910). Exh.: Peters 1910, no. 16

Mrs Matthew William PETERS, née Knowsley, and a peasant girl, pstl, 28x21 (S. Peters 1910). Exh.: Peters 1910, no. 19

Miss Elizabeth Henriette PHELPS, amateur miniaturist, of 5 Downing Street, London, 75x61, Royal Academy 1778, no. 233, unidentified (Mr Phelps 1911). Exh.: Paris 1911, no. 90. Lit.: Brieger 1921, repr.,

frontispiece; Sée 1911, p. 167; Sée 1911b, p. 30 repr. ◊

Miss Elizabeth Henriette PHELPS, amateur miniaturist, of 5 Downing Street, London, 75x61, Royal Academy 1778 (Mr Phelps 1911). Exh.: Paris 1911, no. 90. Lit.: Brieger 1921, repr., frontispiece; Sée 1911, p. 167; Sée 1911b, p. 30 repr. ◊



Richard Brinsley SHERIDAN (1751–1816), dramatist, pstl, ov. (Berlin). Lit.: Brieger 1921, repr. p. 188 ◊



R. B. SHERIDAN, half-length, cr. clr, 22x16.5, sd 1784 (London, Sotheby's, 25.x.1933, £4)

Gentleman, crayons, Society of Artists, no. 131†

Lady, pstl, Royal Academy 1774, no. 208

Young lady, pstl, Royal Academy 1776, no. 224

Venetian lady, pstl, Royal Academy 1776, no. 226

~grav.: J. R. Smith 1776

Head of a woman, pstl, 61x44.5 (Tankerville Chamberlayne 1910). Exh.: Peters 1910, no. 25. Lit.: Manners 1913, p. 58

Lady (PC 1921). Lit.: Brieger 1921, repr. p. 186 ◊



Lady in blue and white drapery, pstl, 63.5x47 (London, Christie's, 13.vi.1927, Lot 2, attr.)

Lady in white dress with pink sash, pstl, 74x62 (London, Christie's, 25.vi.1943, 18 gns; Smith)

Lady in a straw hat with blue ribbons, pstl/ppr, 55x45.5 ov. (Köln, Van Ham, 14.v.2010, Lot 217 repr., attr.; Lowell Libson Ltd 2012) ♡



Two portraits, $\frac{3}{4}$, pstl, Royal Academy 1773, no. 223

A fortune teller, m/u

~cop. Miss Linwood, needlework (exhibitions Miss Linwood's embroidered pictures, Saville House; London, Christie's, 23.IV.1846; Lot 52, £10/15/-)

The three holy children, m/u (acqu. Boydell 150 gns)

~?Children in adoration, pnt., 198x145 (London, Christie's, 28.XI.1903)

~grav.: Peter Simon 1788

~pstl, 102x71 (Tankerville Chamberlayne 1910). Exh.: Peters 1910, no. 5. Lit.: Manners 1913, p. 58

The bird, pstl, 27x20 ov. (Sir Stuart M. Samuel, Bt, of 12 Hill Street, Berkeley Square, London, Christie's, 25.III.1927, 15 gns; Nicholson)

Three children with blue curtain background, pstl, 79x79 (Upsall Castle, Thirsk, North Yorkshire, a UK heritage asset, 2009)

Faith, Hope and Charity, pst/ppr, 60x48.5 (Oxford, Bonhams, 23.VII.2011, Lot 275 repr., follower of Peters, est. £300–400) φ

