

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

TOWNSEND, John

fl. London 1773–82

Exhibited portraits at the Society of Artists (1776–78) from Fenchurch Street and Moorgate. This notice appeared in the *Public advertiser*, 10.XI.1775 (repeated a week later):

PORTRAITS

Mr TOWNSEND, Portrait Painter, begs Leave to acquaint his Friends, and the Public, that he now exhibits several Pieces in Crayons at the Rainbow Coffee-house, opposite the Royal Exchange. Any Gentlemen, desirous of having their Portraits drawn with as little Expence of Time as possible, may be attended for that Purpose at the above Coffee-house. The Terms may be known by enquiring at the Bar. Letters directed for him there, or at his home in Homerton, will be fully answered.

It is possible, but no connection has been established, that he was related to the philanthropist Charles Townsend (1732–1803) of Homerton; he had a brother John (bpt Painsiwick 9.XI.1730–) of whom nothing more is known.

The 1773 and 1780 pastels seem more likely to be by him than by George, Marquess Townshend (*q.v.*); they share a somewhat pedestrian execution with characteristic pale fleshtones and impassive, compressed mouths. At least two of his portraits were engraved, including those of James Ferguson FRS (1776, by Robert Stewart) and the Quaker poet John Scott.

Bibliography

Waterhouse 1981

Pastels

J.7244.101 Levi AMES (1726–1799), of Carlton, pstl/ppr, 60x48, sd “Townsend 1780” (Beverly, Massachusetts, Kaminski, 31.V.2008, Lot 1065 repr., est. \$1000–1500, \$650) [new attr., ?] φαν



J.7244.103 Gentleman in a brown coat, pstl, sd ✓ “Townsend/1773” (Dorchester, Duke’s, 29.IV.2008, Lot 594 repr., est. £100–200) [new attr., ?] φαν



J.7244.105 Gentleman, crayons, Society of Artists 1777, nos. 147–49; 1778, 240

J.7244.106 Lady, crayons, Society of Artists 1777, no. 146

J.7244.107 A grey mare and chestnut foal in a wooded landscape, pstl, 46x57.5, sd ✓ “Townsend 1782” (Bath, Bonhams, 15.I.2007, Lot 105 n.r., attr., est. £300–500) φ

