

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

CARNEGIE, Lady, née Agnes Murray Elliot

Edinburgh 1763 – Leamington 9.VI.1860

She was the second daughter of Andrew Elliot, a younger son of Sir Gilbert, Lord Minto, and was taken to New York in 1764 where her parents were based. Her mother was Elizabeth Plumsted. “Nancy” was married in Edinburgh on 30.IV.1783 to Sir David Carnegie, 5th Bt, MP for Kincardineshire, and deputy governor of the British Linen Company. He owned the castle of Kinnaird, and they also had a house in Gloucester Place, London. They had 12 children between 1784 and 1802, and her grandson became Earl of Southesk after the attained title was restored in 1855.

In 1791–92 the couple travelled to Italy, visiting Venice, Rome and Naples where they encountered Lady Malmesbury, who noted that Lady Carnegie spoke Italian “wonderfully”, and drew well. We know most about Lady Carnegie’s activities as an amateur pastellist from her mother’s letters to her aunt, Rebecca Gore. In a letter of 8.I.1793:

I have been at Kinnaird paying a visit to my daughter on her return from Italy, and she has taken my likeness, everybody says completely, in a portrait in crayons she has drawn of me, and one of her Father. Her talents in drawing are very great. Mr Elliot complains that it is the portrait of an old Gentleman, and you may believe not the less like for that, at his age.

A later letter of 2.IX.1796, from Kinnaird:

Lady Carnegie has a very good taste, and a most remarkable Genius for drawing. She has eight of her Daughters drawn in one piece, beautifully grouped, and so like you can name them instantly, looking on the picture. She has also taken Mr Elliot’s and my portrait in Crayons, and Admiral Elliot’s, all most striking likenesses.

It is tempting to suggest that she may have been responsible for the group portrait of the family of her sister, Countess Cathcart (V&A; [J.85.111](#)) which however was probably executed before 1776. She may nevertheless have known the picture and modelled the pastel of her daughters on it.

Bibliography

Devereux 1887; Ingamells 1997

GENEALOGIES, [Elliot](#)

Pastels

[J.1988.101](#) Eight daughters of Lady CARNEGIE, pstl, a.1799 (desc.: artist’s grandson, Lord Southesk 1887). Lit.: Devereux 1887, p. 163 n.r.

[J.1988.102](#) Andrew ELLIOT (1729–1797); & spouse, née Elizabeth Plumsted (1735–1799), the artist’s parents, pstl, a.1793. Lit.: Devereux 1887, pp. 139, 163 n.r.

[J.1988.103](#) Admiral John ELLIOT (1732–1808), pstl, a.1799. Lit.: Devereux 1887, p. 163 n.r.