

Sir Richard Steele 1672 – 1729

By Sir Godfrey Kneller, Bt (1646 – 1723)

Oil on canvas, 1711

36 x 28 in. (91.4 x 71.1 cm)

Sir Richard Steele (1672-1729) was a dramatist, essayist and politician. Between 1709 and 1712, Steele founded, edited and contributed to journals such as the 'Tatler' and the influential 'Spectator'. Steele was an ardent Whig and engaged in violent controversy with the Tory government. He entered Parliament but was expelled in 1714 for committing seditious libel in his pamphlet 'The Crisis', in which he advocated the succession to the British throne of the elector of Hanover, later King George I. After the death of Queen Anne and the accession of George I, Steele was re-elected to Parliament, knighted, and made a justice of the peace, surveyor of the royal stables, and governor of the Theatre Royal of Drury Lane. There his last and most successful comedy, 'The Conscious Lovers', was produced in 1722. Steele's taste for good living kept him in continuous financial difficulty and he retired from London in debt at the age of 52 to live his final years in Wales.

The Kit-cat Club

Sir Richard Steele was a member of the Kit-cat club. Membership belonged to a group of influential men pledged to uphold the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688 and the Protestant succession. Members included Whig MPs and landowners as well as writers. Founded by John Somers, the Lord Chancellor, and the publisher Jacob Tonson, the club began meeting in Christopher Cat's tavern near Temple Bar, and took its name from his mutton pies known as 'Kit-cats'. Their patronage of poets and playwrights, such as Congreve and Dryden also established the club's reputation for culture and politeness, while their capacity for drinking gained the club a name associated with riotous good humour.

Godfrey Kneller, the club's resident artist, painted nearly forty club portraits between 1697 and 1721. The sitter faces the viewer with head slightly turned and the right arm bent. Kneller focussed on the upper body and face in lifesize, giving a greater intimacy to the relaxed posture of his sitters. This conferred on them an approachable and engaging character. To achieve this he slightly enlarged the standard portrait canvas of 30 x 25 inches, adopting

instead a size of 36 x 28 inches, which became known as the 'kit-cat' format.

The series was much admired for its unpretentious and straightforward manner. Kneller was court painter to four sovereigns and dominated English art for more than thirty years.

Sir Richard Steele is a very self-assured, perhaps arrogant looking character brightly illuminated in front of an evening landscape. White clouds cross a dark blue sky behind his right shoulder while a leafy tree with a curving trunk stands behind his darkened left hand side. Sir Richard looks at you with a direct and intense gaze framed by a large very dark brown wig falling in long curls across his shoulders. The wig is centre-parted with curls resting on his broad rounded forehead on either side. His face is soft and plump and his expression alert. He has dark eyebrows arching above heavy eyelids and dark sharp eyes. His nose is short and his mouth and chin small. His cheeks are smoothly rounded and the flesh of his neck hangs in a double chin. A white neck cloth is tied around his collar at the opening of his casually unbuttoned purplish-grey velvet coat.

He has a relaxed manner, leaning forwards with his right elbow for support on a ledge beside him and holding his lower arm horizontally across his body so that the back of his right hand faces you in front of his waist with fingers extended. His coat sleeve is unbuttoned and the loose cuff of his white shirt sleeve hangs from his wrist.

Sir Richard Steele 1672 – 1729



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Sir Christopher Wren 1632 – 1723

By Sir Godfrey Kneller, Bt (1646 – 1723)

Oil on canvas, 1711

49 x 39 1/2 in. (124.5 x 100.3 cm)

Sir Christopher Wren (1632 – 1723) was an architect and a scientist. In 1711, the year this portrait was made, Sir Christopher Wren was seventy-nine and had finally completed his masterpiece, St Paul's Cathedral. Wren's magnificent structure replaced the original Elizabethan cathedral that had burnt down during the Great Fire of London of 1666.

Wren rebuilt St Paul's, and many other churches in London, in a simplified, English version of the Italian Baroque style. He also designed the Sheldonian Theatre in Oxford, Trinity College Library in Cambridge, Chelsea Hospital and Greenwich Hospital. Wren was in his late thirties when he turned to architecture in order to plan the rebuilding of St Paul's. He had already pursued an outstandingly successful career as a mathematician and scientist. Even as a student he had won acclaim for significant contributions to mathematics. He was Professor of Astronomy at Oxford and one of the brilliant generation of scientists who formed the core

of the Royal Society. He eventually became its President. As a scientist he was admired by Sir Isaac Newton and Blaise Pascal.

Sir Christopher Wren sits in profile, to the left on a highbacked crimson chair in this three-quarter length portrait. With his left hand on his hip he turns his head to give you a tight smile, but his expression could very nearly be interpreted as a sneer. Beneath pale eyebrows heavy lids and pouches surround his sharp dark eyes. He has a long slightly hooked nose with long nostrils above a mouth that has a narrow top lip and a protruding lower lip. His cleft chin is firmly set. A large dark wig frames his high domed brow and face. It is a wide centre-parted mane of brown curls that falls onto his shoulders. At his neck is a plain white neck cloth. His dark purple coat has ten gold fabric-covered buttons down the front and buttonholes set within horizontal finger-length lines of gold-braid. It is unbuttoned to the waist. Similarly spaced buttons and buttonholes are used to turn back the sleeves.

Sir Christopher rests his right elbow on a table draped with red velvet. His slender right hand dangles from the wrist over the front edge of the

table loosely holding an open pair of dividers between thumb and forefinger. Beside his right hand a leather-bound book with the name 'Euclid' lettered on its spine rests on top of an unfurled architectural plan that spreads under his arm and falls over the front of the table beneath his hand. It is a plan of the west end of the new St Paul's. Sir Christopher Wren's name, title and the age at which he died are inscribed in gold letters on the dark background above the table.

The 18th Century

The Arts in the Early 18th Century

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Sir Christopher Wren 1632 – 1723



Sir Christopher Wren 1632 – 1723



Alexander Pope 1688 – 1744

By Jonathan Richardson (1667 – 1745)

Oil on canvas, about 1737

24 1/8 x 18 in. (61.3 x 45.7 cm)

Alexander Pope (1688 – 1744) was a challenging literary figure with a large circle of friends and enemies. A satirical poet of exceptional skill, Pope mocked, praised and moralised with wit and elegance. Some lines of his poetry have become popular sayings such as ‘For fools rush in where angels fear to tread’, ‘To err is human; to forgive, divine’ and ‘Hope springs eternal in the human breast’. Pope is also known in landscape gardening for the grounds of his villa at Twickenham.

Alexander Pope was a Catholic and therefore barred from studying at university under the severe anti-Catholic laws of William III. After contracting a spinal disease in his youth he grew no taller than 4ft 6in, or 138cm. Pope referred to ‘this long disease, my life’ and gained a reputation for being oversensitive, irritable, and quarrelsome. Pope took a serious interest in painting and was sensitive about his image. There were eventually nineteen major portraits, many circulating in printed and painted

copies. Pope had known Richardson for almost a decade when the artist made this classically-inspired portrait of him.

This is a head-and-shoulders portrait in profile, from the left hand side, wearing a wreath of bay leaves and a blue robe with a collarless white shirt. He is presented as a figure from classical antiquity. There is a lightness of touch so that the brushwork of the painting looks rapid and direct. This combines with the austere simplicity of the image to resemble Roman portraits painted with wax.

Against a dark brown background Alexander Pope looks almost gaunt. Lifting the rounded tip of his long straight nose so that his lower jaw is almost horizontal, he looks steadily ahead into the light. His light brown eyebrow is a near horizontal line curving down slightly to end above a prominent cheekbone. His proud nose rises from above a strong chin and a full mouth to a high domed forehead with a receding hairline. The back of Pope's head is surrounded by the wreath. Grey hair at his temples is overlaid by leaves that also conceal the outer curve of his ear above the lobe.

The picture-frame is a striking example of the

rococo style. Dating from around 1750, it is ornamented by water rushes and a shell pattern along the sides with a shell-crested top.

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National
Portrait
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Alexander Pope 1688 – 1744



Alexander Pope 1688 – 1744



Prince Charles Edward Stuart 1720 – 88

By Louis Gabriel Blanchet (1705 – 72)

Oil on canvas, 1738

75 x 55 1/2 in. (190.5 x 141 cm)

‘Bonnie Prince Charlie’ (1720 – 88) was the grandson of James II. He mounted an unsuccessful attempt to capture the throne of England from George II but was defeated by the Duke of Cumberland at the battle of Culloden in 1746.

This is a theatrical, full-length portrait of the seventeen-year old Prince standing in a pose that conveys absolute confidence. His right foot is turned to display both the red heel of his shoe, (a symbol of rank) and the shape of an elegant calf, clad in white hose. He gazes levelly at the viewer, with left hand on hip and right hand gracefully touching a plumed helmet on a table at his side. His dark brown eyes are striking in a youthful, clean-shaven face.

The Prince is dressed magnificently in a knee-length, fullskirted coat of scarlet-red velvet which is edged with gold lace. The large cuffs are turned back to show green velvet lining. Over the coat, he wears a silver breast plate, a royalblue shoulder belt and a long, billowing sash of shiny white fabric, tied

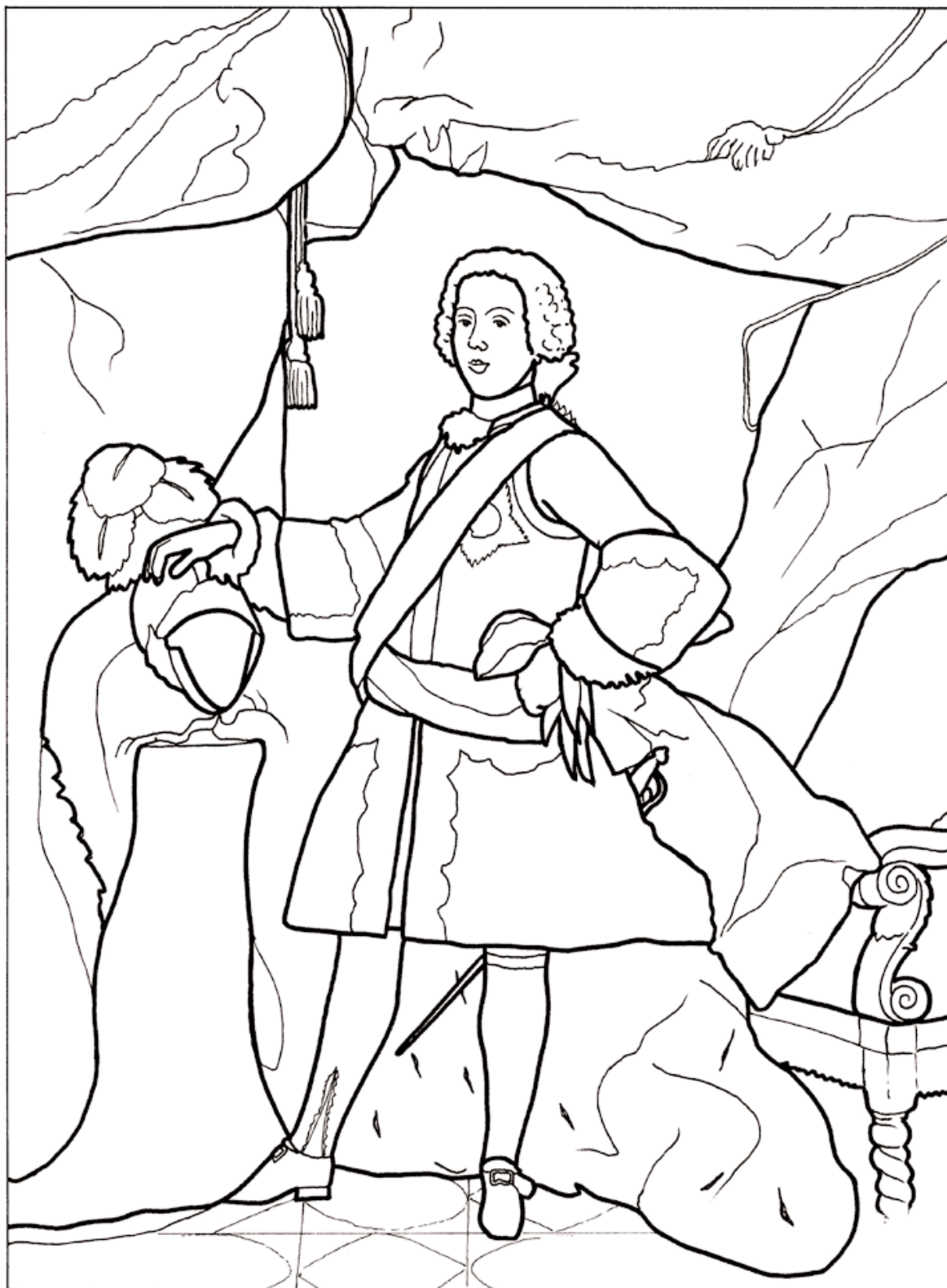
at the waist.

He is framed at the top and edges of the portrait by the sumptuous folds of a blue-green velvet drape that is lined with gold and embellished with gold tassels and fringes. An ermine stole covering part of the table at his side, falls to the floor and spreads out behind his legs. Just visible to our right is a gilded chair, upholstered in green velvet.

Prince Charles Edward Stuart 1720 – 88



Prince Charles Edward Stuart 1720 – 88



Sir John Fielding 1721 – 80

By Nathaniel Hone (1718 – 84)

Oil on canvas, 1762

49 x 39 1/2 in. (124.5 x 100.3 cm)

Sir John Fielding (1721 – 80) was a magistrate and social reformer. He was also the younger half-brother of the renowned novelist Henry Fielding who was also an esteemed London magistrate. The brothers worked together to raise the standards of honesty and competence amongst those engaged in the administration of justice. When Henry Fielding died in 1754, Sir John succeeded him as Chief Magistrate at Bow Street. He remained in this position for twenty-five years and became very familiar with London crime, blaming the high crime rate on the breakdown of family and community life among people who flocked to London seeking an easy living.

He campaigned to provide employment for distressed youths and reorganised Bow Street with a team of efficient, paid constables called the 'Bow Street Runners', the foundation of our modern police force. He put forward several ideas for dealing with crime in London, most of which the

government ignored at the time, but eventually they were taken up. Although Sir John was blind, he was said to be able to recognise more than three thousand London thieves by their voices alone.

Sir John Fielding looks at ease even though he is sitting in a severe official interior with a plain stone wall behind and a classical column beyond his left shoulder. His body is slightly angled to your right while his face is turned towards your left. His smallish eyes are half closed and just above them is a stark blue-black band across his forehead, hiding his eyebrows and passing round his head under his long white hair. The headband signalled to others that he was blind. His white hair has a short fringe across his high broad brow and falls in loose curls over his ears to his shoulders. He has a full fleshy face and double chin. His nose is broad at the tip with round nostrils and his pink mouth looks relaxed. His face is friendly and warm in its expression, which is almost smiling.

Sir John Fielding wears white silk tied at the collar of his shirt. His dark blue-black coat with gold trim is wide open, revealing an ornately embroidered gold waistcoat unbuttoned to the top of his very round

stomach. He wears black breeches and white stockings. Sir John rests his right forearm on two large closed books on the table beside him. He wears a red and gold signet ring on the little finger of his right hand, curling his fingers round the spine of a leather-bound black Bible with gold lettering. Underneath a pale brown law book bears the title 'Magna Charta' whose statutes granted rights to a fair trial and freedom from arbitrary arrest. His left hand holds a rolled-up copy of a blue covered pamphlet. The brothers, Henry and John Fielding wrote several pamphlets in their campaigns to improve the law.

Sir John Fielding 1721 – 80



Sir John Fielding 1721 – 80



John Wesley 1703 – 91

By Nathaniel Hone (1718 – 84)

Oil on canvas, about 1766

49 1/2 x 39 1/4 in. (125.7 x 99.7 cm)

John Wesley (1703 – 1791) was the founder of the Methodist movement which, under his organisation, grew from the 'Holy Club' of his Oxford friends into a great religious revival. John Wesley and a group of his followers formed the first Methodist society in London in 1739. The movement expanded, with two similar groups becoming established in Bristol. He was the brother of Charles, the hymn-writer, and uncle of Samuel Wesley, the composer and organist.

An indefatigable traveller, preacher and writer, Wesley averaged 8,000 miles a year on horseback and gave 15 sermons a week. Wesley was a prolific writer, and the low price at which his books were sold made his ideas widely accessible, even to the poor. The reluctance of the Anglican clergy to lend him their pulpits led him to give sermons in the open air, a decision that enabled him to reach poorer sections of society not accustomed to going to church. Wesley is depicted out-of-doors in a rural

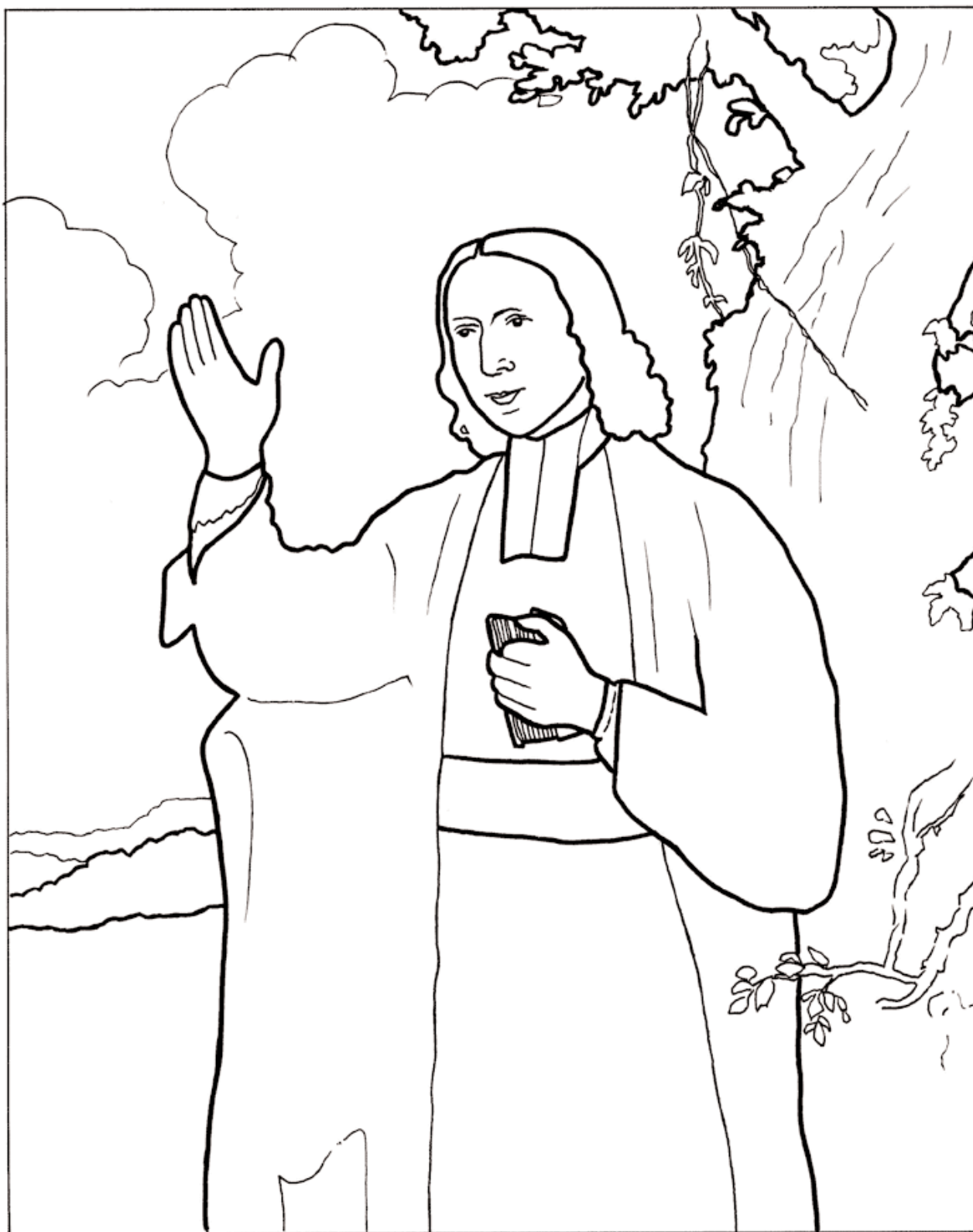
landscape preaching from an elevated position in front of an oak tree, growing at the extreme right hand side of the painting. The horizon shows that your eye is at the level of his waist. He stands quite close, with his body towards you, but his gaze is directed away as if addressing a congregation, unseen beyond the frame of the picture, beside you on your left. He tilts his head slightly and with a gentle smile raises his right hand as if to bless them or to make a point in his sermon.

In his left hand he clasps a small red book to his chest. His index finger keeps his place between the pages, so that it is ready to be opened. He wears a black cassock and simple black robe with a white neck-cloth whose two ends hang down to make a white rectangle beneath his face. The white cuffs of an undergarment appear at the opening in his sleeves. John Wesley has a high forehead, a long narrow nose which is slightly hooked, pale eyebrows and rosy cheeks. His eyes are small and dark but wide set, surrounded by pouches and wrinkles that show his age. His ears are hidden by shoulder length black hair. It is centreparted and falls very flat and straight until becoming thick and curly at the ends.

John Wesley 1703 – 91



John Wesley 1703 – 91



Frederick, Prince of Wales and his sisters, Anne, Princess Royal, Princess Caroline and Princess Amelia (The Music Party)

By Philip Mercier (1691 – 1760)

Oil on canvas, 1733

17 3/4 x 22 3/4 in. (45.1 x 57.8 cm)

George II did not allow his son Frederick to come to London from his native Hanover until the age of twenty. The Prince (1707 – 51) soon established himself as a focus of political opposition to his father and became the patron of the most avant-garde artists of the time.

In this small portrait, the figures are stiff and doll-like. Prince Frederick is shown seated in the centre, playing the bassviol with three of his younger sisters gathered around him. He leans to his right in order to read a sheet of music on a music stand at his side with an expression of intense concentration. He bears a resemblance to his sisters, with a round, pale face, rosy cheeks, a narrow pointed nose and large eyes. He wears a short, light-grey, curly wig and a bright red, full-skirted coat with a royal blue sash across the left shoulder. His slim legs are clad in black breeches and silver-grey stockings.

The sisters are in their early twenties and dressed in the height of fashion; each wears a gown with full skirts, three-quarter length sleeves and a low neckline. The gown has a bodice which is fastened down the centre with a row of bows. A soft piece of white fabric like a kerchief is folded over the chest and secured at the neckline. Their white caps are trimmed with lace. On our left, Anne, Princess Royal sits at a harpsichord. Her gown is of silvery-white silk with pink bows on the bodice and cap. Behind her, Princess Caroline stands, leaning to her left, plucking the strings of a mandora (a form of lute). She wears a pale blue gown. Next to Prince Frederick on his left, Princess Amelia sits, clasping a volume of Milton in her lap. She gazes dreamily out of the painting, right elbow resting on top of the harpsichord, hand against her right cheek. Her own is of green silk, tinged with gold and finished with blue bows on the bodice.

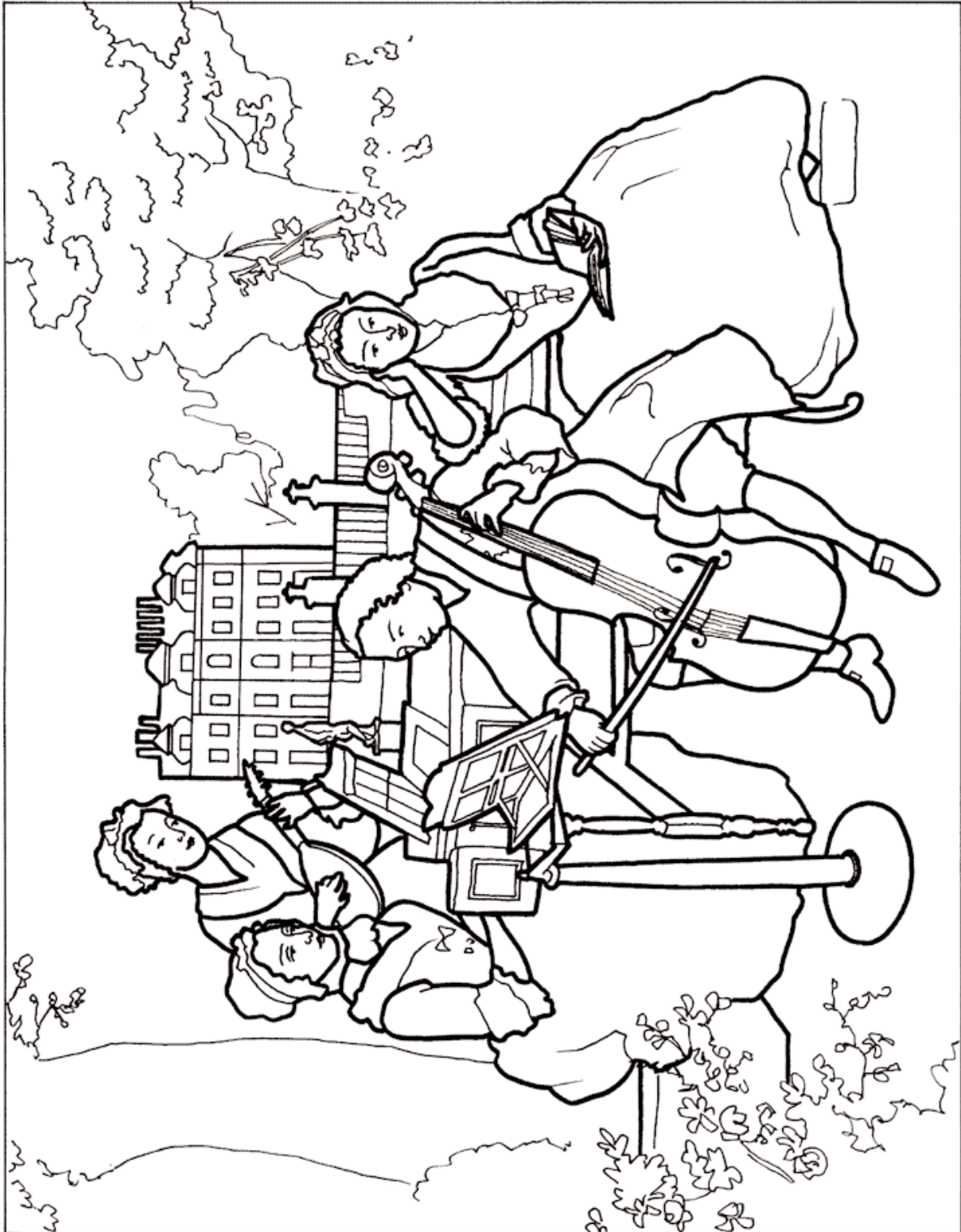
The figures are framed at the left and right edges with dark trees and foliage, and there is a bush of pink roses at the bottom left corner. In the background, behind Prince Frederick is the Dutch House at Kew where Anne lived before her marriage in 1734 to Prince William of Orange.

The suggested harmony between the siblings belies the antipathy felt by his family for Frederick. It is said that he was barely on speaking terms with Anne in the year that this portrait was painted.

**Frederick, Prince of Wales and his sisters,
Anne, Princess Royal, Princess Caroline and
Princess Amelia (The Music Party)**



**Frederick, Prince of Wales and his sisters,
Anne, Princess Royal, Princess Caroline and
Princess Amelia (The Music Party)**



Flora Macdonald 1722 – 90

By Richard Wilson (1712 – 82)

Oil on canvas, 1747

46 x 36 3/4 in. (117 x 93.3 cm)

Flora Macdonald (1722 – 90) helped Bonnie Prince Charlie to reach Skye after his defeat at Culloden in 1746. Convincing authorities that she was visiting her mother, she set sail for Skye with her manservant, a crew of six men and the Prince, who was disguised as an Irish spinning maid. She was later captured by the English Navy as she attempted to escape to France and possibly imprisoned in the Tower of London.

Samuel Johnson met Flora Macdonald in 1773 and described her as 'a woman of soft features, elegant manners and gentle presence'. In this three-quarter length portrait, she is seated on a hillock in front of a shadowy crag. In an elegant pose with a straight back, hands crossed demurely in her lap, she gazes out of the painting with a thoughtful expression in her dark eyes. Glossy, black hair, parted neatly in the centre and arranged in ringlets on either side of her face is striking against the mid tones of the background and accentuates the oval shape of her

pale face with its high, wide forehead and small, rounded chin.

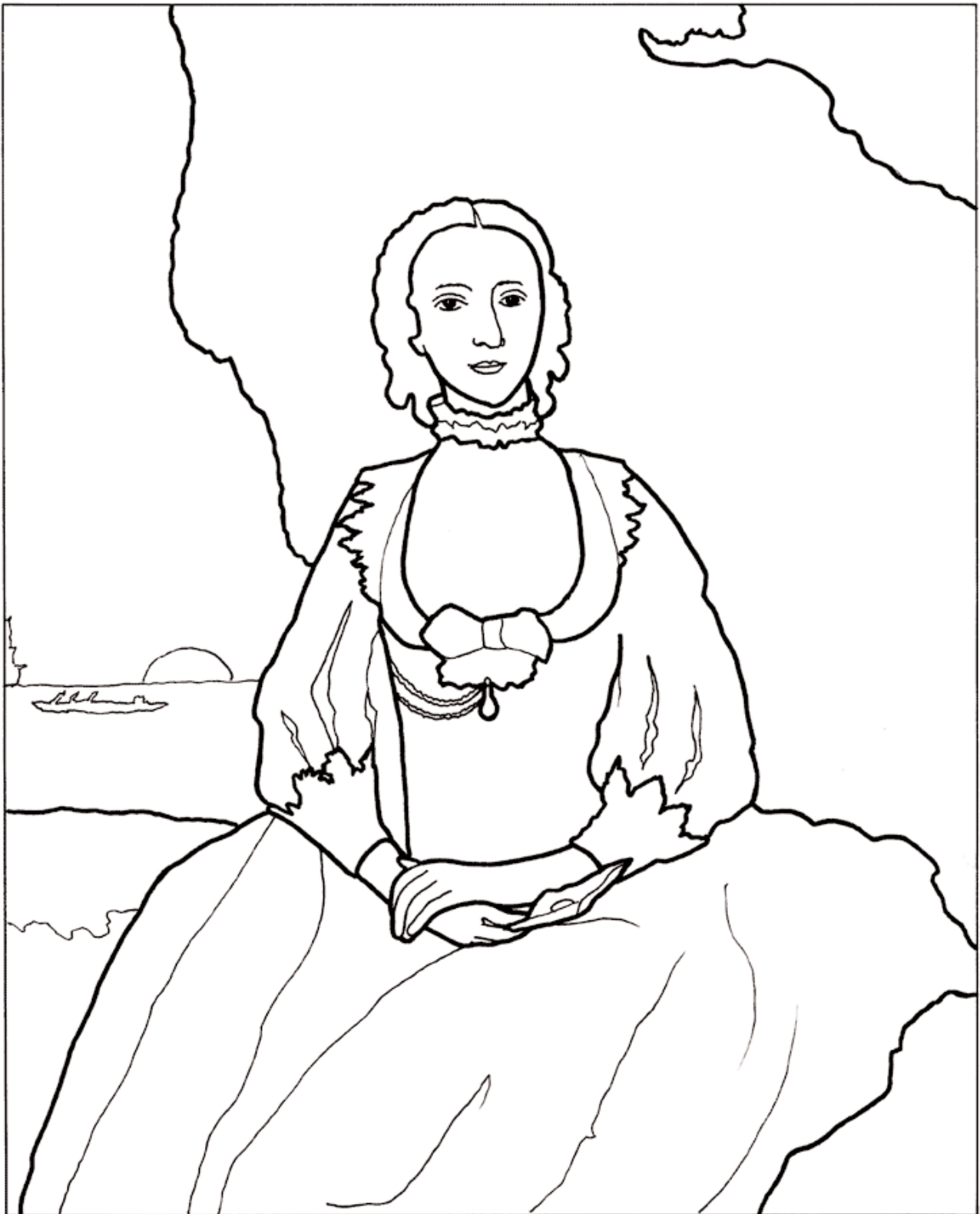
Her gown is of muted aqua-blue silk; the low neckline is finished with scalloped lace and there are lace cuffs on the long sleeves that are slashed to reveal pale blue fabric beneath. Secured at the centre of the neckline is a large dark blue and red tartan bow from which hangs a jewel and two loops of pearls that curve across her right breast. A small lace ruffle emphasises her graceful neck. In her right hand she holds a sealed letter. The touches of red on the seal and the bow are the only hot tones in the painting and are used to subtly enliven the composition.

In the background to our left, a pale orange sun sinks below the horizon, casting its reflection on a grey sea where a small boat in the distance reminds us of her past adventures.

Flora Macdonald 1722 – 90



Flora Macdonald 1722 – 90



Sarah Siddons 1755 – 1831

By Sir William Beechey (1753 –1839)

Oil on canvas, 1793

96 1/2 x 60 1/2 in. (245.6 x 153.7 cm)

Sarah Siddons (1755 – 1831) was known as the greatest tragic actress of her era. Born in Wales, her acting career began in childhood as a member of the travelling company of her father, the actor Roger Kemble. In 1773 she married William Siddons, another member of the company, against her parents' wishes. Her first major success on the stage came in 1782 with her portrayal of Isabella in David Garrick's version of Southerne's play 'The Fatal Marriage'. She went on to play a succession of leading roles in classic and contemporary drama. With a resounding voice and a noble manner she excelled at Shakespeare and her most famous role was that of Lady Macbeth. Siddons remained aloof from her colleagues and admirers but enjoyed the company of Samuel Johnson and Horace Walpole. Sir Joshua Reynolds, Thomas Gainsborough and Sir Thomas Lawrence all painted her portrait.

Sarah Siddons is standing full length in profile from

the left. She is dramatically caught in bright moonlight standing under dark autumnal trees with her back turned towards a statue. Her left hand holds up a severe grey mask, symbolising tragedy, near her face. Her right hand holds a dagger at waist level which seems poised to strike. She leans forwards slightly in readiness. This is a celebration of Sarah Siddons's talents as a tragedian and refers particularly to the role of Lady Macbeth. She wears a longsleeved black satin dress with a white muslin collar and a large white turban.

Sarah Siddons turns her face to engage you directly with her large dark brown eyes. Her complexion is flushed with pink, suggesting that she is acting energetically. Strands of her grey powdered hair emerge from her turban and lie across her forehead down to her dark eyebrows. Bunches of grey curls also emerge beside her cheeks. She has a long face with high cheekbones, a strong jaw and a cleft chin. Under a long pointed nose, her bow-shaped mouth conveys a subtly knowing smile.

Behind her back the stone statue is level with her head. The figure of a seated naked child with wings, a putto, turns its back to Sarah Siddons so as to

weep over an urn. Propped against the foot of the urn in the shadows is a smiling mask, symbolising comedy, suggesting that Sarah Siddons also excelled in comic acting. On the broad plinth beneath there is a Latin inscription to Shakespeare.

Sarah Siddons 1755 – 1831



Sarah Siddons 1755 – 1831



Sir Joshua Reynolds 1723 – 92

By Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723 – 92)

Oil on canvas, about 1747- 49

25 x 29 1/4 in. (63.5 x 74. 3 cm)

Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723 – 92) was one of the most important and influential of eighteenth-century English artists. He established himself as a fashionable portrait painter, borrowing from classical antiquity and the Old Masters, to endow his sitters with the nobility of characters in heroic narrative painting. First President of the Royal Academy, his annual discourse to students, in which he outlined the academic principals of art, have remained an important document in the history of artistic theory.

Reynolds has painted his head and upper body in this small, horizontal self-portrait. Youthful in appearance with a round face, broad nose and cleft chin, he is positioned in the centre, turned to face the viewer, left hand raised to shield his eyes against a bright light. His hand casts a dark masklike shadow across the eyes and the top of his nose. His full lips, slightly open, the lines between the eyebrows and eyes that stare to our right convey an expression of deep concentration on something

that has caught his attention but is not visible in the painting.

His hair, coat and the background are painted in rich tones of brown and the brush work is handled boldly. The coat is open to reveal a vivid blue waistcoat, the only cool note in the portrait. In his left hand he clutches a mahlstick (used to steady the hand and keep it away from areas of wet paint), brushes and a paddle-shaped palette. The palette, angled to the left and mahlstick, angled to the right across his body, form a V shape which is mirrored by his raised arm, providing a dynamic structure and sense of immediacy to the composition.

Sir Joshua Reynolds 1723 – 92



Sir Joshua Reynolds 1723 – 92



Kitty Fisher, about 1741 – 67

By Nathaniel Hone (1718 – 1784)

Oil on canvas, 1765

29 1/2 x 24 1/2 in. (74.9 x 62.2 cm)

Catherine Maria Fisher, known as Kitty Fisher (about 1741– 67), was a courtesan, famous for her beauty, wit, daring horsemanship and high profile affairs with men of wealth. She became the wife of John Norris of Benenden.

In this half-length portrait she is seated, turned to our left, wearing a low-cut gown of silvery fabric. A dark grey - purple drape in the background accentuates her smooth white skin and the faint blush of pink on her cheeks. Black hair dressed high and full at the front frames an oval face. Curls fall across her right shoulder. Described as a great beauty, a well-defined nose gives a certain strength to her striking good looks. Shrewdly enticing the viewer with large dark eyes, a hint of a smile playing on her small shapely lips, she demurely holds up a gauzy silver cloth, patterned with shimmering gold flowers against her chest. A necklace of tiny, sparkling red coral beads looped around her neck is vivid against her skin and a bracelet of four strands

of pearls encircle her left wrist.

The artist has given us an amusing pictorial riddle on her nickname and character. At the bottom right edge in the foreground, a black kitten with a white patch on its face has jumped up onto a large fish bowl. Watching intently, it dangles its paws over the water, poised to catch one of the flashing goldfish. A tiny, bright reflection on the bowl showing a crowd staring in at a window provides a striking comment on the nature of celebrity.

This painting would appear to be the one exhibited at the Society of Artists in 1765 and described by the 'Public Advertiser' as a 'portrait of a lady whose charms are well known to the town'.

Kitty Fisher, about 1741 – 67



Kitty Fisher, about 1741 – 67



**David Garrick 1717 – 79 and Eva Maria Garrick
(née Veigel) 1724 – 1822**

By Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723 – 92)

Oil on canvas, 1772 – 3

55 1/4 x 66 7/8 in. (140.3 x 169.9 cm)

David Garrick (1717 – 1779) was regarded as one of the greatest actors of the British theatre. He was also a theatrical manager and playwright. Garrick made his first appearance on the London stage in 1741. He was equally skilled in tragedy, comedy, and farce. A small man, his acting was noted for its naturalness, vivacity, and power of characterization. As a theatrical manager Garrick produced twenty-four Shakespeare plays, which revived the playwright's reputation. He introduced stage lighting and naturalistic, painted backdrops. A close friend of Reynolds, Garrick was painted by the artist on several occasions, notably as 'David Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy', in 1762. In 1749 he married the Viennese dancer Eva Maria Veigel. Eva had arrived in London in 1746 and drew much attention in society and on stage as 'La Violette'.

David and Eva Garrick sit in the garden reading a book together. He is rather rotund sitting to your left, with knees spread wide apart, on a stone garden

seat under the open sky. She is a delicate figure on your right, sheltered by a dense tree. Eva sits a little closer and a little higher, almost as if sitting on David's leg in her white satin dress. David wears a jacket, waistcoat and knee-length breeches all in rich red-corded velvet with a fine white silk neck cloth. He has a smooth domed grey wig with two horizontal ridges of ringlets above the ears. His thick dark eyebrows arch gently as he watches her with sensitive dark brown eyes. His nose is long and narrow with a high bridge, his red cheeks are broad and he has a double chin. His right elbow on his right thigh, he leans back, dangling an open book in his right hand between his knees while he studies her face.

Eva's right hand rests on her lap very near David's hand and book. Serenely rapt in thought, she leans her left elbow on the back of her seat with her left hand touching her cheek. She gazes past David low down, far away. Delicate white lace frills decorate her long-sleeved low cut dress, and circle her neck with a butterfly shaped ruff. Eva's complexion is fresh and very white on her forehead and chest, her cheeks are bright pink and her lips strong red. Her angular face is fine featured with a long straight

nose and narrow dark eyes. Her eyebrows are gently arching fine dark lines. Her thick grey brown hair is piled up high on her head under a dainty lace cap.

The Maratta frame, a type used by Reynolds, is probably the original in which the picture was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1773.

**David Garrick 1717 – 79 and Eva Maria Garrick
(née Veigel) 1724 – 1822**



**David Garrick 1717 – 79 and Eva Maria Garrick
(née Veigel) 1724 – 1822**



Samuel Johnson 1709 – 84

By Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723 – 92)

Oil on canvas, 1756 – 7

50 1/4 x 40 in. (127.6 x 101.6 cm)

Samuel Johnson (1709 – 84) was usually referred to as Dr Johnson by his contemporaries and later generations. He was a poet, essayist, critic and dictionary author, renowned both for his witty conversation and for his balanced yet forceful prose style. Dr Johnson's first important poem 'London' was an immediate success, and won high praise from Alexander Pope. He began the famous 'Dictionary of the English Language', in 1746. It remains a monument to his scholarship and involved great labour. It contained 40,000 entries with vivid, idiosyncratic, still-quoted definitions and a great range of illustrative examples. This portrait of him as a man of letters was painted by his friend Reynolds shortly after the publication of the Dictionary in 1755. Johnson's other works include an edition of Shakespeare, 'Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland', and 'Lives of the Poets', produced when he was 70.

Ungainly and plagued with nervous tics, Dr Johnson

could not bear solitude, and was always burdened with poverty.

Nevertheless he had an immense circle of friends, including David Garrick, Charles Burney, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Oliver Goldsmith, Hester Thrale and James Boswell. Boswell recorded the character of Dr Johnson's activities and conversation in one of the greatest biographies ever written.

Samuel Johnson pauses in the process of writing to search for the most apt expression. He tilts his head to the right and he looks up into the light to his left out of the corners of his eyes. His dark eyebrows frown in concentration and his forehead wrinkles. He is sitting at a small writing table facing you before a plain brown wall: a hefty figure in a dark interior. His chair back is visible behind his shoulder, covered in a pattern of bold green and white check. Compared to his bulk, the writing table is very small. Draped with a green cloth, it hides his left leg. He clenches the fingers of his left hand against the paper on the table in the struggle for words. The quill pen in his right hand remains far from the paper on which it will write, held at arms length down beside his right thigh.

Dr Johnson has a large rectangular face with alert blue-grey eyes. He has a large nose, wide mouth and thick lips. His forehead is broad under a powdered shoulder-length wig which is thick and curly at the sides. An unbuttoned dull brown coat and a matching waistcoat with dark grey breeches fit the description of him as habitually wearing 'clothes of the darkest and dirtiest colours, and in all weathers, black stockings'.

The 18th Century

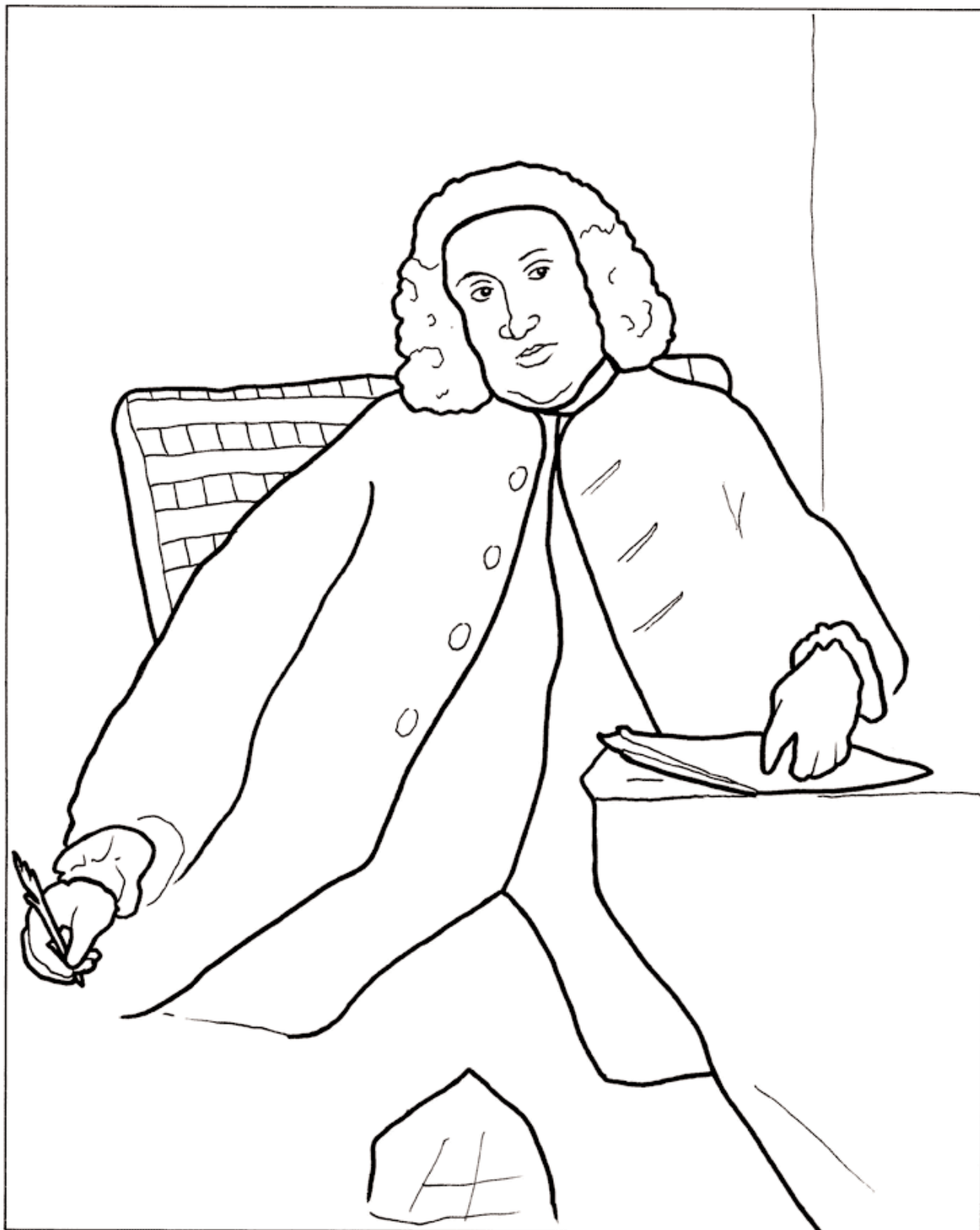
The Arts in the Later 18th Century

National
Portrait
Gallery

Samuel Johnson 1709 – 84



Samuel Johnson 1709 – 84



George Frideric Handel 1685 – 1759

By Thomas Hudson (1701 – 79)

Oil on canvas, 1756

94 x 57 1/2 in. (238.8 x 146.1 cm)

George Frideric Handel (1685 – 1759) composed music that is still widely performed. Born in Saxony, he was appointed to the court in Hanover at the age of twentyfive, but took leave to visit London. In 1711 he impressed the audiences in London with the opera 'Rinaldo' and performed before Queen Anne. Negotiations concerning Handel's employment ensued between the courts of Hanover and London. The problem was resolved following the death of Queen Anne in 1714 when the elector of Hanover came to the throne of England as George I.

Handel resumed his service in London. For nearly fifty years he poured out opera, oratorios, concertos and music for special occasions, including music for the coronation of George II, used at coronations ever since. Handel's 'Messiah' became a national institution and within Handel's lifetime raised more than £6000 for charity. He was one of the first composers to be the subject of a biography. This portrait was painted for Handel's friend, the librettist

Charles Jennens. Handel was seventy-one and blind but that is not apparent in this full-length portrait.

This is an imposing life-size portrait of Handel, in a grand interior. Handel is shown from his left, sitting on a highbacked chair. A sword hangs discreetly at his side. Your eye is level with his knees. The edge of the stone floor at the bottom of the painting shows that he is raised by steps above the level on which you stand. Behind him a large velvet curtain is gathered to reveal, at the right of the picture, a tall arched balcony window. It shows a blue sky with fleeting pink clouds and a very low horizon.

A centre-parted white wig frames his face like a thick mane and tapers away behind his shoulders. Handel's plump face has a double chin. Gently arched dark grey bushy eyebrows give a relaxed expression to his pale grey-blue eyes under their heavy lids. His nose is long and slightly upturned and his mouth is small with a slightly protruding lower lip. Around his neck is a white lace cravat. Handel gazes towards you over his left shoulder. With a black tricorne hat beneath it, he bends his left arm to tuck the hand into his jacket.

He wears a grey velvet suit with a three-quarter length jacket edged with gold lace. A double band of gold lace surrounds the sleeve at the cuff where white ruffles appear.

Handel's left foot almost reaches the bottom corner of the painting. He wears grey silk stockings and black leather shoes with a rectangular brass buckle. On the far side, above his right knee, he clasps the head of a gold-headed cane with his right hand. Nearby the word 'Messiah' appears from the shadows across the page of an opened manuscript standing on the corner of a table.

The highly decorative frame is the original, carved in the 'rococo' style with musical instruments and scores at top and bottom. It may have been created by Joseph Duffour a leading carver and gilder of French origin.

The 18th Century

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George Frideric Handel 1685 – 1759



George Frideric Handel 1685 – 1759



**Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689 – 1762)
With Her Son, Edward (1713 – 76)**

**Attributed to Jean Baptiste Vanmour
(1671 – 1737)**

Oil on canvas, about 1717

27 x 35 1/2 in. (68.6 x 90.2 cm)

The writer and traveller, Lady Wortley Montagu (1689 – 1762) was the daughter of the Duke of Kingston. In 1712 she secretly married Edward Wortley Montagu and in 1716 accompanied him on his mission as ambassador to Constantinople, where she pioneered the use of the smallpox vaccine by immunizing her children against the virus. In London she became a leader of society but left her husband and England in 1736 to live abroad. Her celebrated letters, detailing her travels, were published posthumously.

Lady Wortley Montagu, her son Edward of around four years old and two Turkish attendants appear as small figures in a dim stage-like setting. Raised up in the centre of the painting on a shallow platform, covered with a carpet, she stands elegantly, turned to our left. Behind her in the background, dark fabric swathed between two columns reaches just over half the way into the painting from the left. A floor

composed of flagstones is visible around the platform.

She is dressed in an ornate Turkish-inspired costume of several layers. A full-length sky blue coat edged with white fur and fastened under the breasts with a golden bow accentuates her slim figure. The sleeves are long and tightfitting. The coat is open at the front to reveal a golden skirt, looped up and clasped at the waist with a wide golden girdle. Beneath this skirt the folds of a white underskirt fall to the floor. A strand of pearls encircles her neck and her head is adorned with a turban which she refers to in her letters as a talpac and describes it as '.... of a light, shining silver stuff. This is fixed on one side of the head hanging a little way down with a golden tassel and bound either side with a circle of diamonds...'. She stares out of the painting, a grave expression on her doll-like face.

Edward stands to her right, his small, chubby figure clothed in a long robe of light white fabric, buttoned at the neck. His mother holds his left arm up and like her, he stands gracefully with his left toe pointing forward.

One female attendant wearing diaphanous robes plays a Turkish lute. She is seated crossed-legged at the left edge of the painting on a red divan which stretches just behind Lady Wortley Montagu and her son. The male attendant at the right edge strides forward offering a letter in his outstretched hand. Behind him the minarets and domes of Constantinople are vaguely discernable beneath a sunlit sky.

**Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689 – 1762)
With Her Son, Edward (1713 – 76)**



Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689 – 1762)

With Her Son, Edward (1713 – 76)



Sir Hans Sloane, Bt 1660 – 1753

By Stephen Slaughter (1697? – 1765)

Oil on canvas, 1736

49 1/2 x 39 3/4 in. (125.7 x 101 cm)

Sir Hans Sloane (1660 – 1753) was a physician and botanist. A key figure of the Enlightenment, he became landlord of the Chelsea Physic Garden in 1721 and acted as President of the Royal Society from 1727 to 1741. His collection of natural history specimens, art objects, coins and books formed the nucleus of the British Museum and later, the National History Museum. From 1687 he was physician to the governor of Jamaica and after the governor's death in 1689 he returned to Britain. He became physician to Queen Anne in 1712 and physiangieneral to the army. He was made a baronet in 1716.

This portrait of Sloane is just over half-length. He is shown at the age of 66, seated on a throne-like chair that is upholstered in dark blue velvet with carved wooden arms. His thin lips are pursed and he gazes directly at the viewer with small, dark, heavy-lidded eyes inviting us to study a picture of a Jamaican plant on a scroll of paper held in his

left hand. Behind his hand on a table covered in the same dark blue velvet as the chair, a golden ceremonial mace lies on a pale purple cushion.

Sloane has a round fleshy face, framed by a grey fullbottomed wig and a prominent nose. He wears a dark coffee-brown velvet coat against which his long white cravat and the white ruffles at the cuffs of his shirt stand out in contrast.

A pale blue-grey curtain in the background which extends just over half the way across the top of the painting from the left is pulled back to reveal a shadowy figurine of eastern origin standing in a stone niche. The colour of the curtain accentuates a bright red patch on a coat of arms attached to the top of his chair.

Sir Hans Sloane, Bt 1660 – 1753



Sir Hans Sloane, Bt 1660 – 1753



Sir Joseph Banks, Bt 1743 – 1820

By Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723 – 92)

Oil on canvas, about 1771 – 3

50 x 40 in. (127 x 101.5 cm)

Sir Joseph Banks (1743 – 1820) sailed with Captain Cook to the Pacific aboard the Endeavour from 1768 to 1771 and on this expedition he compiled a complete natural history collection. He held a position of great influence in the scientific world and is credited with the introduction to the West of such plants as eucalyptus, acacia and the genus named after him, Banksia.

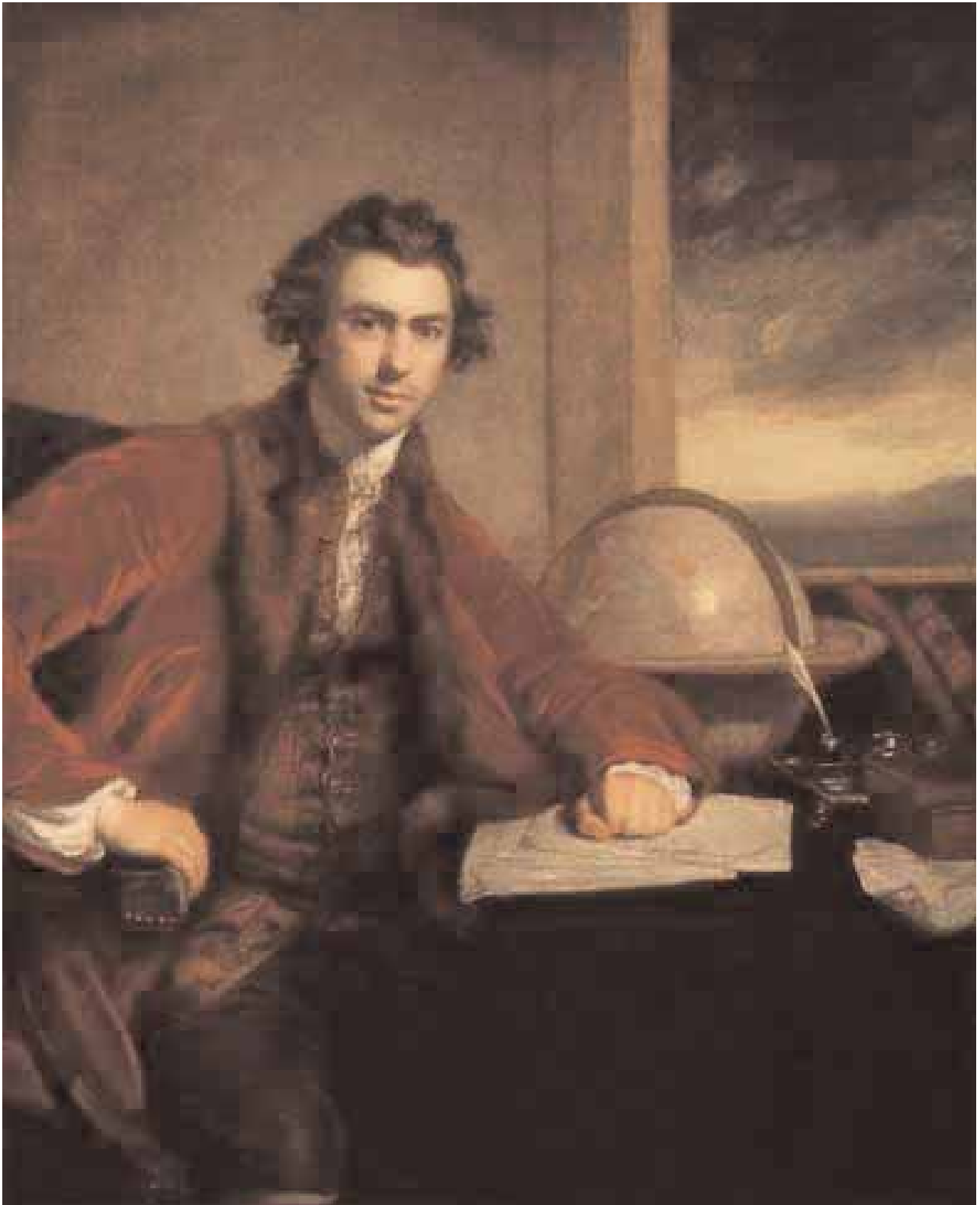
This painting portrays Banks to just below the knee, seated to the left next to a table. On the table behind his left arm there is a large globe showing the vague outlines of continents. A quill pen and some inkwells catch the light. He faces the viewer, grasping the arm of his chair, left fist holding down a sheaf of papers in front of the globe. The top sheet has a Latin inscription which may be translated as 'tomorrow we'll sail the vast deep again'. His expression is rapt and his pose conveys a sense of resolve; large dark eyes beneath heavy eyebrows gaze downwards as if lost in thought and

a faint smile curls his lips, perhaps at the anticipation of future adventures.

Bank's youthful face is very pale and a greyness around the mouth suggests stubble. His dark hair is brushed back from the forehead leaving slightly dishevelled curls covering the ears. The artist has described with visible brush strokes the textures of his rich, red, velvet coat and fur collar, waistcoat of dark, golden-brown brocade and the brilliant white ruffles of his cravat.

Through a large window to our right, there is a vista of loosely painted storm clouds gathering in a sky still luminous over the horizon. Beneath the sky, a narrow strip of sea and faraway hills fade into the distance.

Sir Joseph Banks, Bt 1743 – 1820



Sir Joseph Banks, Bt 1743 – 1820



King George III 1738 – 1820

By studio of Allan Ramsey (1713 – 84)

Oil on canvas, about 1761 – 2

58 x 42 in. (147.3 x 106.7 cm)

King George III (1738 – 1820) was the first Hanoverian King to be born and bred in England. His reign of sixty years was one of the longest and most eventful in modern times. At the same time he was also Elector and then King of Hanover, but his attention was devoted to Britain. Although plagued by bouts of delirium, King George maintained a meticulous personal interest in government until 1811. A patron of the arts and sciences, he amassed an extensive library and took an active interest in agriculture. However, his obstinate attitude towards the demands of the American colonies led to the loss of these territories and the close of the first British Empire.

This portrait is one of the replicas produced relentlessly by Ramsay, from the coronation portrait that he painted in 1761.

As early as 1765 the king suffered an apparent dementia probably caused by the condition porphyria, and in 1788 this recurred to such a

degree that a regency bill was passed.

However, the king recovered the following year. It is now established that the medication he was continuously given for stomach pains, 'James' Salts', would ironically have triggered serious attacks of porphyria. Stomach pains are often the only symptom of the condition but the salts given to alleviate this contained arsenic, which would have produced the more extreme symptom of delirium. In 1811 he succumbed to sustained dementia, and his son, later George IV, acted as regent for the rest of his reign. In 1809 the king also became blind. George III died at Windsor on January 29, 1820.

This three-quarter length portrait shows a dashing young King looking regal in his coronation robes. He wears an ermine cloak of white fur with black dots. The King is standing facing you in a confident and relaxed pose in front of a large pink curtain. His oval face is youthful with a pink complexion and smooth cheeks and rounded jaw. Wide light brown eyebrows curve above large blue eyes. Beneath his long narrow nose, his lips are full and he has a strong chin. King George has a high parting in his white powdered hair. Brushed away from the face,

there are sprays of curls at the sides, and a ridge of curls slanting over his ear, above a grey ribbon at the back of his neck.

The ermine cloak spreads wide across King George's shoulders under which he wears a damask-patterned gold suit with blue-grey sword belt. The golden sleeves are very wide and turned back with several gold buttons. Over his heart a relief image of Saint George on a white horse hangs from a ceremonial chain studded with amber. He lightly props himself with an extended left arm, resting his left hand on a table that is draped with his cloak. The bulk of the King's weight rests on his straight right leg and he stretches his left leg wide in a relaxed stance. With his right hand on his hip he gazes with calm assurance into the distance, towards the right.

King George III 1738 – 1820



Robert Clive, 1725 – 74, and Mir Jafar, 1691 – 1765, after the Battle of Plassey, 1757

By Francis Hayman (1708 – 76)

Oil on canvas, about 1760

39 1/2 x 50 in. (100.3 x 127 cm)

Robert Clive, 1st Baron Clive (1725 – 1774), is often referred to as 'Clive of India'. He was a key figure in establishing British rule in India, which is often described as having begun in 1757. On June 23rd of that year, at the Battle of Plassey, the forces of the East India Company under Robert Clive defeated the army of Siraj-ud-daulah, the nawab of Bengal. The outcome of the battle was decided long before the soldiers came to the battlefield. The aspirant to Bengal's throne, Mir Jafar (1691 – 1765), was induced to defect to the British side by Robert Clive, and by far the greater number of the nawab's soldiers were bribed to throw away their weapons, surrender prematurely, and even turn against their own army. This victory firmly embedded British power in India. The more compliant Mir Jafar was installed as nawab and secured the position of the East India Company in Bengal.

Clive bought a seat in Parliament in 1760 with the

gift and bribes he received in India. He was elevated to the Irish peerage in 1762 and knighted in 1764. In 1765 he returned to India as governor and commander in chief of Bengal. The Mughal emperor of India granted Clive decrees that gave the British East India Company control over Bengal and other regions in India, thus establishing the empire of British India.

In the top right-hand corner of the painting a huge elephant approaches carrying a turbaned rider high on its neck. Large sunlit clouds rise into a blue sky in the background. Down in the opposite corner, at the left, a whinnying horse rears up with its back to you and gives a startled look towards the elephant as it shies away. A wounded man with a bandaged head pulls down on the bridle in the horse's mouth to control it. Between these two creatures the main action of the picture takes place.

At the centre, a British soldier stands on a tall stool raising high the crimson cavalry standard of the East India Company. This bears the union flag in its top corner. British soldiers are in attendance on either side. Beneath the flag Robert Clive steps forwards from the left with open arms and upturned

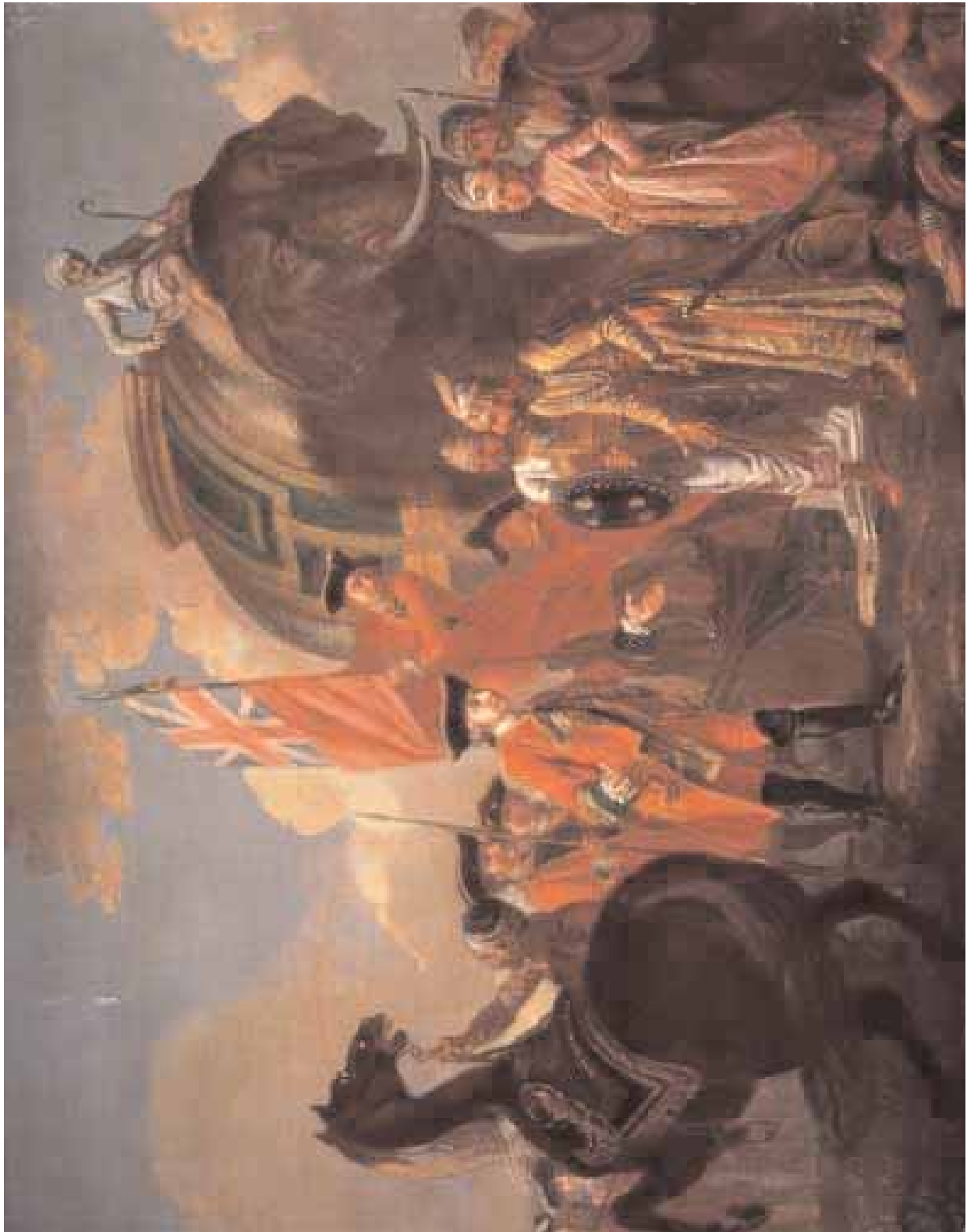
palms extended. He wears knee-length black riding boots and the British Uniform of crimson jacket and breeches with a black tricorne hat decorated with gold braid. His grey hair is long at the back of his neck and curls cover his ears. His nose is long and straight. His gaze meets the approaching figure of Mir Jafar who bows deferentially with open palms extended. Mir Jafar has a trimmed dark beard and wears a bejewelled turban with a plume on top, and a heavy necklace. His robes are gold with a red sash at the waist and he wears golden slippers.

On Mir Jafar's right hand his attendant in a white tunic and red slippers holds a black circular shield and looks apprehensively at Clive. Behind Mir Jafar, another Indian soldier in pink tunic and plumed turban looks on, while three others with simpler turbans crane their heads to see over his shoulder. In the shadows at their feet lies a fallen Indian soldier in battle armour.

This is a preliminary design for a much larger painting, now lost, which was one of several highly patriotic works placed on display at Vauxhall Gardens in 1762, during the seven years' war with France. Under the leadership of Robert Clive

the British had expelled the French from India.

**Robert Clive, 1725 – 74, and Mir Jafar, 1691 –
1765, after the Battle of Plassey, 1757**



**Robert Clive, 1725 – 74, and Mir Jafar, 1691 –
1765, after the Battle of Plassey, 1757**



Captain James Cook 1728 – 79

By John Webber (1751 – 93)

Oil on canvas, 1776

17 x 13 3/4 in. (43 x 35 cm)

James Cook (1728 – 79) was the son of a Yorkshire labourer. ‘a good mathematician and very expert in his business’, he was chosen to command the Endeavour in 1768 on a mission to observe the transit of Venus across the sun from the North Coast of Tahiti. On August 22, 1770 he took possession of the whole of the east coast of Australia in the name of George III, naming it New South Wales. In 1776, Cook set sail on his second journey in the Resolution with the newly purchased Discovery as consort. His intention was to search for a possible northern sea route between Europe and Asia.

In 1778 he reached the Hawaiian Islands. Later in 1778, Cook sailed up the northwest coast of North America and was the first European to land on Vancouver Island in British Columbia. He continued to explore the coast and entered the Arctic Ocean. Great walls of ice blocked the expedition and Cook was forced to head back to the Hawaiian Islands. In 1779, he was killed by natives while investigating

the theft of the *Discovery's* cutter, its small pilot boat.

This portrait was made by the official artist to Cook's third major expedition. It is painted in muted tones and shows his head and upper body through an oval frame. He is turned to our right against a shadowy grey background and gazes out of the painting with small dark eyes and thin lips set in a serious expression. His face is strong with high, broad cheekbones, a long nose, slightly flattened at the tip and a square chin. There is a slight ruddiness to his complexion.

He is dressed in naval uniform. The very dark blue-black coat has a small stiff collar and the openings at the front are turned back crisply to display a pale dove-grey lining edged with gold braid and a row of gold buttons. The waistcoat, of the same colour as the lining is open at the top to show a little of his white neck cloth which has a high starched collar.

Captain James Cook 1728 – 79



Captain James Cook 1728 – 79



**John Wilkes 1727– 97 and his daughter
Mary Wilkes 1750 – 1802**

By Johan Zoffany (1733 – 1810)

Oil on canvas, exhibited 1782

49 3/4 x 39 1/2 in. (126.4 x 100.3 cm)

The imprisonment of John Wilkes (1727 – 97) for libel and his banishment from the House of Commons brought into question the validity of Parliamentary elections. He was arrested in 1763 for publishing an attack on the king's speech, advocating peace with France in his newspaper, 'The North Briton'. His case became a popular cause, sparking violent protests to the cry of 'Wilkes and liberty'. He was finally permitted to take his seat in 1774 and was elected Lord Mayor of London the same year.

John Wilkes is seated in the centre of the painting with legs crossed, inclined towards his daughter Mary who stands on his right. A white spitz dog lies at their feet. They are positioned against dark foliage and trees that sway in the breeze. A tall branch behind Wilkes emphasises the angle of his body. The scene opens out on the right to a distant landscape of water and fields. Holding his daughter's left hand, he looks up at her

affectionately. His squinting eyes, prominent chin and rounded forehead make his face memorable. In the fashion of the time, his white wig is brushed back from the forehead with hair curled above the ears. He wears a navy blue, full-skirted coat, the collar and front edges turned back to reveal a brilliant red lining with two rows of button holes, finished in gold braid. Beneath, a long buff-coloured waistcoat is open at the chest to show the white linen of shirt and cravat. Breaches in a matching colour and black knee-length boots are fitted to the leg.

Mary Wilkes, known as Polly, is turned towards her father and looks out of the painting with lively dark brown eyes. Her elaborate grey coiffure is stiffened with pomade and powder, it is very high at the front and topped with white plumes and vivid pink flowers, and accentuates her long face and prominent chin. Her pale rose-pink gown has a round neckline, edged with gauze and decorated with pink satin ribbons at the breast and on the sleeves. The skirt is open at the front, looped up at the sides and trimmed with narrow pleating. The underskirt is of quilted sage-green silk with a white gauze ruffle at the bottom. An apron of transparent

fabric, decorated with several pink bows hangs down at the front. The pink of her skirt is picked out in some roses growing at her side. Horace Walpole viewed this portrait in Zoffany's studio in 1779 and pronounced it to be 'horridly like'. He commented that Wilkes was '... squinting tenderly at his daughter - it is a caricature of the Devil acknowledging Miss Sin'.

**John Wilkes 1727– 97 and his daughter
Mary Wilkes 1750 – 1802**



**John Wilkes 1727– 97 and his daughter
Mary Wilkes 1750 – 1802**

