

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

BORCKHARDT, Christian

London 24.X.1762 – brd 13.V.1826

The artist C. Borckhardt (whose first name is erroneously copied in many sources as Charles) exhibited pastels in 1784 and 1785 from Little Castle Street. He is undoubtedly the miniature painter Christian Borckhardt listed in 1790 in Goodge Street in *Wakefield's directory*. “Christian Borckhardt” [sic], portrait painter, of 46 Goodge Street, also appears as the insured in the Sun Fire Office records (22.IV.1790). Although his own work was signed “C. Borckhardt”, one print by George Noble is inscribed “Cha^s Borckhardt”, no doubt the source of the widespread error in his first name.

Christian Borckhardt was apprenticed for seven years from 10.IV.1777 for a premium of £5 to George Michael Moser, described as a painter, of St Clement Danes, but in fact the chaser, enameller, medallist and keeper of the Royal Academy. It is possible that his apprentice also had Swiss origins, but he is not to be confused with Johann Christian Burckhardt (*q.v.*). Borckhardt subsequently exhibited miniatures, drawings and works in unspecified media at the Royal Academy (from 3 Howland Street, 1791, 5 Poland Street, 1797, and Church Row, Hampstead, until 1810), and was also recorded in Maidstone on 1.VII.1800. The exhibited works included an enamel (“from memory”) of the deceased Mrs Moser, as well as portraits of members of the Boydell family (he made numerous drawings for the engraver, and portraits of him and his family are known from Noble’s and other prints), and of the artist’s sister, Mrs Wentworth. “Master Dashwood”, the boy exhibited in 1784 (possibly the “Good boy” of the colour mezzotint made by Charles Howard Hodges in 1786), might also be a relative, as a Mary Borckhardt (1754–1830) married a watchmaker, Joseph Dashwood (1745–p.1819) at St Margaret’s, Westminster in 1782. Christian Borckhardt himself married a Frances Pritchert (who was illiterate) at St Pancras, in 1803; several children, including the future vicar of Lydden, had already been christened to Frances and Christian. He was buried at St John’s Hampstead on 13.V.1826, aged 64. His wife had been buried there six months before, aged 53.

Following the death of Charles Forrest, the artist charged with making an ambitious stained glass window for St George’s Chapel, Windsor (and homonym of the Irish pastellist, *q.v.*), his widow, unable to complete the project herself, invoked the aid of Benjamin West, who, in 1808, recommended that the king appoint “Mr Borckhardt”, who was to be paid £10 per square foot in the contract. However the work was not undertaken, possibly because Borckhardt was unable to master the specialised technique required.

One miniature is in the V&A, and numerous drawings are known. Two subjects by Borckhardt were engraved by William Blake. He also made a series of drawings after glass paste intaglios in the Townley collection in the 1780s (British Museum).

Bibliography

Alexander 2021; Bénézit; Sarah Brown, *A history of the stained glass of St George’s Chapel, Windsor Castle*, 2005, p. 94f; Foskett 1987; *Holden’s triennial directory*, 1805; *Register of duties paid for apprentices’ indentures, 1710–1811*; Saur; Sée 1911; *Wakefield’s merchant and tradesman’s general directory for London*, 1790; Waterhouse 1981

Pastels

- J.1694.101 Boy reading [Master DASHWOOD], Royal Academy 1784, no. 193
- J.1694.103 Gentleman, crayons, Royal Academy 1784, no. 195
- J.1694.104 Lady, crayons, Royal Academy 1784, no. 233
- J.1694.105 Child, crayons, Royal Academy 1785, no. 434