

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

COYTE, Beeston

Hintlesham 1711 – Kingston, Jamaica 1775

Farrer 1908 provided few clues as to the identity of the Beeston Coyte of Nayland who signed in 1752–54 a series of eight portraits at Alston Court, of three sons and four grandchildren of John Alston and their housekeeper. (All descended within the Alston and Fenn families before being bequeathed to the Ipswich museum.) Among several homonyms the best known was William Beeston Coyte (1740–1810), physician and botanist (son of the physician William (1708–1775) and descendant of William Beeston (1671–1732), founder of Coyte's Gardens, Ipswich). But these pastels are beyond the skills of a twelve-year-old, and are in fact by his paternal uncle, a rather more obscure figure absent from standard references works.

Beeston Coyte was a younger son of the Rev. William Coyte (1680–1745), rector of Hintlesham from 1709, and his wife, née Frances Beeston. He attended school at Ipswich before matriculating at Peterhouse, Cambridge, 17.II.1727 aged 16. He was made a scholar that year, and took his BA four years later. He was evidently still in Suffolk in 1754 but then settled in Kingston, Jamaica where his death was commemorated in a poem printed in the *Gentleman's magazine* (I.1776, pp. 36f) under the signature “JW” (John Walker, one of the proprietors of the *Jamaica Gazette*). This “Elegy to the memory of the ingenious artist Mr Beeston Coyte, who lately died at Kingston, in Jamaica”, offers, in addition to the usual praise, mentions of two further portraits, one of the Scottish attorney general in Jamaica. The reference to “virtuous Graham.../Beams on her canvas with her infant fair” should probably be treated as poetic licence rather than proof that the artist had turned to oil (although this is possible); the lady concerned may have been Anne Taylor, who, in 1763, married Robert Graham, receiver general of Jamaica. Both subjects suggest that Coyte was close to the Scottish community on the island.

Bibliography

Farrer 1908; Oxford DNB; T. A. Walker, *Admissions to Peterhouse, a biographical register, 1615–1887*, Cambridge, 1912, p. 256

Pastels

J.249.101 John ALSTON (1680–1761), step-brother of Samuel Alston, pstl, 1754 (Ipswich Museum, Christchurch Mansion. Desc.: Dr Edward Living Fenn (1843–1907), great-grandson of Samuel II Alston, Alston Court, Nayland, 1906; desc.: his granddaughter Mrs Dudley Manning Hadwen, née Edith Nancy Alston Fenn (1917–2003); legs 2003). Lit.: Farrer 1908, p. 267, no. 1 n.r. φ



J.249.103 Samuel ALSTON (1690–1754), maltster at Boxford, pstl, sd *verso* “Mr Sam Alston of Edwarstone aged 62 Beeston Coyte 1752” (Ipswich Museum, Christchurch Mansion. Desc.; legs 2003). Lit.: Farrer 1908, p. 267, no. 2 n.r. φ



J.249.105 Samuel II ALSTON (1721–1796), attorney, pstl, 1752 (Ipswich Museum, Christchurch Mansion. Desc.; legs 2003). Lit.: Farrer 1908, p. 268, no. 3 n.r. φ



J.249.107 Thomas ALSTON (1693–1774), maltster at Kirby, Essex, pstl, 1754 (Ipswich Museum, Christchurch Mansion. Desc.; legs 2003). Lit.: Farrer 1908, p. 268, no. 7 n.r. φ



J.249.109 Rachel BOWEN, housekeeper to Samuel Alston of Boxford, full face, white cap, yellow dress, white shawl with yellow band, pstl, c.1770 (Ipswich Museum, Christchurch Mansion. Desc.; legs 2003). Lit.: Farrer 1908, p. 268, no. 8 n.r. φ



J.249.111 Mrs John EAST, née Ann Alston (1727–1761), pstl, 1753 (Ipswich Museum, Christchurch Mansion. Desc.; legs 2003). Lit.: Farrer 1908, p. 269, no. 9 n.r. φ



J.249.113 Rev. Tobias COYTE [(1718–1759), BD, rector of Stratford, brother of Beeston Coyte], pstl, inscr. *verso* “Tobias Coyte...died 1789...reputed to be by Gainsborough” (Cambridge, Cheffins, 21–22.III.2012, Lot 599 repr. Stowmarket, Bishop & Miller, 5.III.2016, Lot 444 repr., anon., est. £180–220) [new attr., ?] φav



J.249.115 Thomas GORDON [(–1780)], attorney general in Jamaica [member of the Jamaican Assembly for Port Royal], m/u. Lit.: *Gentleman's magazine*, .i.1776, p. 37 n.r.

J.249.116 Mrs GRAHAM [?Mrs Robert Graham, née Anne Taylor, ∞ 1763 receiver general of Jamaica] as a Madona with the infant in her lap, m/u. Lit.: *Gentleman's magazine*, .i.1776, p. 37 n.r.

J.249.117 Mrs William SENDELL, née Sarah Alston (1726–1760), pstl, 1753 (Ipswich Museum, Christchurch Mansion. Desc.; legs 2003). Lit.: Farrer 1908, p. 269, no. 12 n.r. φ



J.249.119 Mrs John SMITH, née Mary Alston (1731–1768), pstl, 1752 (Ipswich Museum, Christchurch Mansion. Desc.; legs 2003). Lit.: Farrer 1908, p. 269, no. 13 n.r. φ

