

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

MILBOURN, John

fl. London 1763–1816

Awarded premiums at the Society of Artists in 1763, 1764 and 1765, John Milbourn (also Melbourn, Milbourne) was admitted as a student at the Royal Academy Schools on 14.II.1769, obtaining a silver medal the following year. He was a pupil of Cotes (and witnessed his will in 1769), whose influence is said to be evident. His fellow pupil John Russell (*q.v.*) appears to have tried to convert him to Methodism, and recorded in his diary (11.V.1768) “Cotes ordered Milbourn never to go near me again.” Russell and Milbourn (along with Liotard, Bartolozzi and Lawranson, *qq.v.*) were both consulted by the Society of Arts in 1772 in connection with Charles Pache’s pastels: on 4.XII.1772–

the Secretary acquainted the Committee that he had seen Mr Russell & Mr Milbourne two Pupils of the late Mr Cotes & who frequently had been employ’d in making Crayons for him, who inform’d the Secretary that [Pache’s] Crayons were in every respect equal to the best made by Mr Stoupan of Lausanne of whom Mr Cotes always bought crayons.... Mr Russell, & Mr Milbourn added also that the Dark Colours made by Mr Pache are superior to those made by Mr Stoupan, or any others they have seen.

Milbourn exhibited pastels including some full-lengths in small format at the Royal Academy between 1772 and 1774 (from Harley Street, 1772; Mr Gibson’s, Berwick Street, 1773; and Mr Conaway’s, Queen Street, 1774). He worked in oil and pastel, and made genre pictures as well as portraits (he is not to be confused with the Charles Milbourne, a theatrical scene painter active at Covent Garden who visited the USA in 1792). His versatility extended to restoration and copying (Walpole was among his clients, and the Strawberry Hill sale included his copy of a Holbein), and according to Farington earned some £500–600 p.a. as a drawing-master. He is recorded as such in the New Road, Marylebone in 1795 (by Walpole and *The gentleman’s magazine*, carrying a report of the death of his 15-year-old son). A letter from Sir Christopher Sykes to Milbourne includes a list of pictures with a bill for cleaning, 23.IX.1799 (East Riding of Yorkshire archives). A document in the papers of the Baker Wilbraham family of Rode Hall (Cheshire and Chester Archives, DBW/N/A/A/105) of 1811 records the address of Mr Milbourne of Marylebone, crayon painter, with a note in Maria Baker’s hand: “repaired my F[ather]’s Picture July 1811”; it is unclear if he made the original.

Possibly the same John Milbourn married a Sarah Pool at St George’s Hanover Square, 26.VIII.1769 (allegation); and, as a widower, the 22-year-old Hannah Lumley, St James’s, Westminster, 3.II.1775. A John Milbourne, son of John and Sarah, was baptised 21.III.1747 at St Martin-in-the-Fields.

Bibliography

Oxford DNB; Society of Arts minutes, reproduced in TREATISES; Sée 1911; Waterhouse 1981; Williamson 1894, p. 10

Pastels

- J.539.101 ?Sir George BAKER, 1st Bt (1722–1809), physician, m/u (family PC 1811)
- J.539.102 Gentleman, crayons, Royal Academy 1773, no. 196
- J.539.103 Gentleman, crayons, Royal Academy 1774, no. 183
- J.539.104 Lady, crayons, Royal Academy 1772, no. 157
- J.539.105 Child, 58x49 ov. (Young 1911). Exh.: Paris 1911, no. 86