

# Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

## Online edition

### PORTER, William

*fl.* Barton-upon-Humber; London 1788–1802  
Portraitist in oil, miniature and pastel; according to Waterhouse, he entered Royal Academy Schools on 31.XII.1791 “aged 15”. He had however exhibited crayons from 1788 (from Oxford Street), which does not seem consistent with a birth in 1776. Presumably the critic of the *Bee* was being ironic when he described the five portraits in the 1788 exhibition as “All the same family, by the striking resemblance to each other”. The reviewer in the *True Briton* in 1800 however thought his small portraits in crayons “excellent”: the comment is the only indication of the medium of these works which were omitted from Jeffares 2006. They were sent to the Royal Academy 1800 exhibition from Great Newport Street. The medium is not specified for his submissions in 1799 (from Henrietta Street), 1801 (where his subjects seem to have been Scottish) or 1802 (32 Newman Street). The Newman Street address is again given in *Holden’s triennial directory, 1802, 1803 & 1804*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.

A later label on J.5992.116 indicates that the artist came from Barton-on-Humber (the catalogue prints the name as Parker, but the handwritten label says Porter). This is confirmed by the label on J.5992.1105, which suggests the artist was active in the town, perhaps with a trade in portraits of naval officers waiting for their ships to be repaired in the dockyard.

No William Porter was born in the parish of Barton-upon-Humber in 1776 (one baptised in 1777 died in 1790), but an earlier date is possible. A William Porter, son of William (1738– ) and Elizabeth Hayes (1740– ), was baptised on 11.XII.1763. He married an Ann Elizabeth Benton (1775–1861), aged 15, there on 16.II.1790; they had at least three children: William, baptised 6.IX.1793; George Markham (later a doctor), 20.VII.1795; and Robert Benton (he became a coroner), baptised 26.VI.1807 at the age of 6, his father being then reported as deceased. No record of a local burial between 1802 and 1807 has been found, but death may have occurred in London.

### Bibliography

Bénézit; Graves; Sée 1911; Waterhouse 1981

### Salon critiques

Anon., *The bee; or, the exhibition exhibited in a new light: being a complete catalogue-raisonné of all the pictures [Royal Academy 1788]*, London, 1788

All the same family, by the striking resemblance to each other.

### Pastels

J.5992.101 Miss AUBIN, m/u, Royal Academy 1802, no. 453

J.5992.102 Mrs BRUN, Royal Academy 1800, no. 659

J.5992.103 Miss GOMM, Royal Academy 1800, no. 364

=?Sophia Gomm (–1817), sister of Sir William Gomm (Gomm; London, Christie’s, 6.III.1914, Lot 1 n.r.) [*v. English sch.*]

J.5992.105 Miss G. GORDON, m/u, Royal Academy 1801, no. 577

J.5992.106 Mrs Inchbold [Mrs Joseph INCHBALD, née Elizabeth Simpson (1753–1821), actress], Royal Academy 1800, no. 402

J.5992.107 Miss C. JONES, m/u, Royal Academy 1801, no. 518

J.5992.108 Vice-Admiral [Thomas] MACKENZIE [(1753–1813), vice admiral of the White], m/u, Royal Academy 1801, no. 543

J.5992.109 Mrs MARTIN [née Catherine Fanshaw], in blue dress, with her two sons [Admiral Sir William Fanshawe Martin and Henry Byam Martin], pstl, 25x20 ov. ([sitter’s son] Admiral Sir William Fanshawe Martin, Bt; sale p.m., London, Christie’s, 26.I.1923, Lot 130 n.r., as by “Porter”; 55 gns; Agnew) [Attr.]

J.5992.11 Mr NUNN, m/u, Royal Academy 1799, no. 518

J.5992.1105 Thomas PALMER (c.1765–1800), RN, lieutenant 1790, commander of HM sloop the Selby, pstl, 27.6x21.3 ov., inscr. *verso* “The Gift/of Tho<sup>s</sup> Palmer to/Mary Palmer done/by M<sup>r</sup> Porter at Barton/March 1788” (desc.: PC; Salisbury, Woolley & Wallis, 4.IX.2024, Lot 699 repr., est. £200–300) ov



J.5992.111 Miss URQUHART, Royal Academy 1800, no. 592

J.5992.112 A young lady, m/u, Royal Academy 1799, no. 520

J.5992.113 A lady, Royal Academy 1800, no. 660

J.5992.114 Five portraits, crayons, Royal Academy 1788, no. 172

J.5992.115 Portrait in a highland dress, m/u, Royal Academy 1801, no. 385

J.5992.116 A child, pstl, 26.6x21.3, Royal Academy 1801, no. 423 (Chiswick Auctions, 11.I.2023, Lot 167 repr., as by William Parker, ?artist’s son, est. £200–300) ov

