

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

SLEDGE, Susanna

London bpt 1.VII.1726–brd 11.XI.1794

Foskett mentions this artist who produced miniature profile cutouts in the manner of Bateman or Bermingham (and possibly Mrs Harrington), but the example she cites is in pencil and wash; the label states “Miniature Profiles/accurately taken/By S. Sledge/Henrietta St./Covent Garden.” Another example with the same printed label has since come to light, in pastel; it is quite likely that this artist was responsible for a good many similar works hitherto anonymous or given to similar artists. The profile of Rochford in the V&A is sufficiently similar to justify a tentative reattribution.

In the *Morning chronicle* for 25.III.1775 appeared this advertisement:

PORTRAITS in SHADOW, executed in the highest taste and perfection by Mrs SLEDGE, who begs leave to return her most grateful acknowledgements for the very extraordinary encouragement she has already been honoured with, and hopes the improvements she has made in this art, with respect to likeness, as well as embellishments (specimens of which are to be seen at her shop in Henrietta-street, Covent-Garden) will recommend her to the future favours of the public.

Prices as usual, large size, 1s. 6d. reduced 2s 6d. neatly frames dna glazed. 4s. 6d. extraordinary ornaments to be paid for in proportion.

One sitting of five minutes is sufficient.

At the Royal Academy in 1784, William Hamilton exhibited a portrait of a naval officer (no. 321; identified elsewhere as Sir Roger Curtis, and known from a Dickinson engraving of 1783); the critic in the *Morning post* (10.V.1784) remarked—

Painted from one of Mrs Sledge’s profile shades; a tyger turned painter – the novelty of the thing will, no doubt, in his country, insure the beast many sitters.

The miniaturist Laurence J Cossé was also a lodger 1784–86, according to the Royal Academy catalogue (Graves misreads as Hedges).

In the *World*, 11.VIII.1788, appeared an advertisement for “SLEDGE and WELLINGS, The Original shop, No. 1, Henrietta-street, Covent-Garden”, who “continue as usual to take likenesses according to their well known and approved manner, in Miniatures, for Bracelets, Lockets, &c. &c. in whole and half length, coloured or black, shaded or plain, in Conversations, Busts, &c. &c.” They offered also “Portraits of the Performers of either Theatre, in any character that may be required, on a few day’s notice.” Mrs Sledge also advertised tickets for Pope’s performances. In the *World*, 18.X.1792, [William] “Wellings, miniature painter” advertised that he continued to paint portraits in is usual manner as he had done “during the 14 years of his residence at Mrs Sledge’s.” Best known for a silhouette of Jane Austen’s family, he died in Margate in 1796. Perhaps he is responsible for some of the works with her label.

From the legend on one print by Dickinson (Richard Edgecumbe, after Reynolds) referring to “Mr Sledge”, it was inferred that she was the wife of the printseller and publisher “S. Sledge”

recorded in Henrietta Street from 1771 to 1777, but it is more likely that this is her own name (given in some sources as Sarah): she advertised prints from Henrietta Street as “Mrs Sledge” from as early as 16.III.1768 (*Gazetteer and new daily advertiser*). She is presumably the Susannah Sledge recorded at various Covent Garden addresses in the rates books between 1768 and 1784, including Henrietta Street in 1784. When the topographical artist Samuel Hieronymus Grimm came to London in 1768 he took lodgings with “Susanna Sledge” at 1 Henrietta Street, and she was a co-heir in his will in 1794. She also appears in newspaper advertisements in 1769–82 (e.g. *Whitehall evening post*, 26.IV.1781) from this address selling cough mixture at 3s. a bottle; the same price secured a bottle of a never-failing remedy for rheumatism (*St James’s chronicle*, 13.IV.1769).

Since she was alive in 1794, she is most unlikely to have been the Susanna, widow of one Thomas Sledge of Chelsea, whose will was proved on 17.II.1752 (although a note on the probate copy indicates that administration continued until 1819, by which date Susanna had died intestate). His death was reported in the *Westminster magazine* for 21.XII.1751 at his lodgings in Chelsea, aged 80, “possessed of a large fortune”; it appears that “Thom: Sledge” of the parish of St James the Less, Thorndike Street, married “Susan: Gipps of the Savoy” on 2.III.1709; in 1712 a son, Richard, was born. He may be the Captain Thomas Sledge who resided in Beak Street 1732–49 according to the rate books; in the 1749 Westminster poll, “Thos Sledge gent.” appeared in Beak Street (he voted for Lord Trentham). Another son may have been Thomas Sledge, Jr, an apothecary of Broad Court, St Martin’s in the Fields, whose bankruptcy was recorded in 1750 and discharged the following January. Curiously the only marriage recorded for a Thomas Sledge, of the parish of St James’s Westminster, took place at St Olave’s, Old Jewry, 22.X.1745, with a Sarah Lorkin, of the parish of St Leonard’s, Shoreditch. According to the allegation of 18.X.1745, she was aged 22; he was 32. The rate books confirm that this Sledge lived in Swallow Street and other places in that area, not Chelsea. In Thomas Sledge’s will (written in 1751: the trustee was the Rev. John Entick, an author of illustrated books and fellow freemason) neither the dead Richard nor any Thomas Jr is mentioned, but two daughters are: Ann (baptised at St James’s Westminster 7.II.1715), who had married Joseph Lawrence in 1739 and was by now a widow, and her unmarried sister, Susanna Sledge. Despite the honorific “Mrs”, this daughter was most probably the printseller and artist. This is supported by the Sun Fire Office insurance record, 29.IX.1789, for “Susanna Sledge, 1 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, spinster.”

Research by Brian Wellings (2021) has uncovered the burial entry at St Paul’s Hammersmith for a Susanna Sledge, aged 69, which would match the age of the Susanna baptised at St James’s Piccadilly to Thomas and Susanna Gipps or Gibbs.

Bibliography

James Anderson & John Entick, *The constitutions of the ancient and honourable fraternity of free and accepted masons...*, London, 1767, II. p. 250; Andrews’s *New London directory*, 1789; Foskett 1987; John Howard Farrant, “Sussex depicted”, *Sussex Record Society*, LXXXV, pp. 45ff; Brian Wellings, pr. comm., 5.XI.2021

Pastels

J.683.101 Philip AFFLECK (1726–1799), RN, vice-admiral of the White, of Dalham Hall, Suffolk, pstl/ppr, cut out, 13x10.5 ov., label *verso* (Cambridge, Willingham Auctions, 21.VI.2014, Lot 845 repr., est. £100–150 with another) φ



J.683.103 William Henry Nassau de Zuylensteyn, 4th Earl of ROCHFORD (1717–1781), diplomat, ambassador in Paris 1766–68, in blue coat, wearing bicorn, no order, pstl, découpage, 13.5x10.8 ov. [c.1778], inscr. *verso* “The Earl/of Rochford K.G./Ambassador to Vienna/Groom of the Stole to George 2nd” (London, V&A, inv. E.1401-1989. Desc.: Alaric Jacob; Messrs Askew; acqu. 1958) [new attr., ?] φασ



J.683.105 ~version, in uniform of colonel of the West Essex militia (from 1759), with garter sash, m/u, profile, ov., c.1778 (PC 2004) Lit.: Ingamells 2004, p. 403, as watercolour, c.1778; Rice 2010, pl. 26 φφ



J.683.107 Officer in red coat, pstl cutout, 13x10.5
(Donnington, Dreweatts, 28.IX.2011, Lot 489
repr., attr. Bermingham or Bateman, est. £200–
300; PC; Banbury, JS Auctions, 23.III.2013, Lot
466 repr.) [new attr., ?] | φα

