

Notes on some Christ Church Portraits, including one of Oriel and two of Pembroke College

By W. G. HISCOCK

A RECENT examination of the Disbursement Books and other records in Christ Church has revealed some new points of interest—unknown to Mrs. R. L. Poole¹—relating to the history of the Christ Church portraits. As the main items concern portraits by known artists, it will be convenient to begin with them—in alphabetical order.

BATE, C. FORTESCUE : Portrait of Lord Wellesley (Ch. Ch. 253). In 1840 this artist—who was then living at 82, York Road, near Waterloo Bridge—painted the present portrait from a larger, full-length portrait then in the Dean's possession which was sent up to London for this purpose. Bate hoped that the Duke of Wellington would take the larger portrait; he 'approves of it but did not decide upon taking it at present' (6 January, 1841). It was as early as 1806 that Lord Wellesley was requested—in the usual formula—'that he would enable the Chapter to place his portrait in the Hall' and responded by presenting the portrait—the artist of which is unknown—relegated to the deanery by 1840. Bate's smaller portrait was painted to the size of William Owen's *Lord Grenville*—'to be pendant to that Picture on either side of the doorway of the Hall'. Bate's copy bore the name of *Bates*, of whom Mrs. Poole could, of course, say nothing; though she hazarded a well-aimed suggestion² that it was a copy from one painted when the subject was in Ireland.

KNELLER, SIR G. : Portrait of Henry Compton, Bishop of London, 1675 (Ch. Ch. 111). This was assigned to Kneller by Gutch; it is also attributed³ to Riley, who died in 1691. We now know⁴ that it was sent to Christ Church in 1704—a fact which may not alter the attribution either way, but it ought to be made known.

LAWRENCE, SIR T. : Portrait of George Canning (Ch. Ch. 232). Mrs. Poole said it was acquired before 1833; actually it was received in the latter part of 1810,⁵ in response to the Chapter's request to Canning for a portrait in January, 1808.

¹ *Catalogue of Oxford Portraits*, 3 vols., O.H.S., LVII (1911), LXXXI and LXXXII (1924).

² *Op. cit.*, III, 94.

³ *Historical Portraits*, 1909-19, II, 296.

⁴ Disbursement Book, 5 Aug., 1704.

⁵ Disbursement Book.

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Id. : Portrait of William Bissett, Bishop of Raphoe, 1822 (Ch. Ch. 227). Mrs. Poole said it was in the Hall before 1833. As the Chapter's request for it was dated 15 May, 1824, it may well have been received by 1826.

LELY, SIR P. : Portrait of Thomas Wood, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, 1671 (Ch. Ch. 85). Mrs. Poole, in suggesting that this portrait was acquired *c.* 1691 when Wood gave the House £7,000, thought that the record of the acquisition 'was perhaps lost with the missing Disbursement Books of Dean Aldrich's time'. Happily, these Books are not missing; they are in the Treasury with the rest of the series, and must have been overlooked by her. An Aldrichian account book tells us that 2s. 6d. was paid for the carriage of this picture from London by barge in 1707, and £13 6s. 6d. for the 'Picture and case', which, presumably was for framing and packing in London.

MURRAY, THOMAS : Portrait of William Wake, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1716 (Ch. Ch. 147). This was bequeathed by T. Vere Bayne, student of Christ Church, in 1908; the library records—not seen by Mrs. Poole—provide the artist's name.

OWEN, WILLIAM : Portrait of William Wyndham Grenville, baron Grenville (Oriel College, 38). This is not by Owen, but is a copy of his Christ Church portrait (no. 245), and made in 1834 by the local painter, J. Bridges, for Dr. Hampden, then Principal of St. Mary Hall. Mrs. Poole was therefore in error in saying that the Oriel portrait was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1812; it was the Christ Church original that was so exhibited. Leave for permission to make the Oriel copy was granted to Bridges in a Chapter minute of 17 June, 1834.

Id. : Portrait of Cyril Jackson, Dean of Christ Church (Ch. Ch. 224). This portrait—which hangs in the deanery—was described by Mrs. Poole as a copy. It was not, however, so regarded by the donor, William Carey, Bishop of St. Asaph, 1830, whose will, quoted in a Chapter minute of 14 October, 1846, stated that 'it is an admirable likeness, and painted by Owen'. Furthermore, in December of the same year, the Chapter, obviously impressed by its merit, ordered that it 'be placed in the deanery with the understanding, however, that in the event of the larger Portrait in the Hall [no. 217] being injured, it is competent to the Dean and Chapter to replace it at any time with that now consigned to the deanery'.

POWELL, — : Portrait of Tobie Matthews, Dean of Christ Church, 1576, Archbishop of York, 1606 (Ch. Ch. 51). A payment of 15s. was made for this picture in 1610-11 to one Powell, which item Mrs. Poole quoted from the Disbursement Book. She did not, however, attribute the picture to Powell, but I suggest, somewhat tentatively, that he may have been an artist and a

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forebear of Martin Powell the painter-stainer, who lived in Cat Street at the end of the 17th century.⁶

REYNOLDS, SIR J. : Portraits of John Nicoll, Head Master of Westminster School, 1733 (Ch. Ch. 176), Richard Robinson, baron Rokeby, 1777 (Ch. Ch. 190) and General John Guise (Ch. Ch. 174). Permission was granted by the Chapter on 3 March, 1819, to S. W. Reynolds to make engravings of them.

ROMNEY, G. : Portrait of David Murray, Viscount Stormont (Ch. Ch. 194). This was not, apparently, sent straight from the painter's studio to Christ Church in 1783 as Mrs. Poole states; it was received in 1786—a letter of thanks being written to Lord Stormont at the end of April in that year.⁷

SAY, F. : Portrait of William Pitt, first Lord Amherst (Ch. Ch. 266). This is stated to have been in the Hall by 1833; to be exact, it was asked for in 1828 and received in 1830.⁸

SOEST, GERALD : Portrait of William Fuller, Bishop of Lincoln, 1667 (Ch. Ch. 70). This is attributed to Lely by Gutch. Vertue saw it on 13 July, 1741, in the audit house; he says it is 'painted very well by Soest' (Vertue, IV, 190, 191, Walpole Soc.)—a reference that Mrs. Poole missed.

STRONG, SAMPSON : Portrait of Wolsey (Ch. Ch. 11) and the anonymous portrait of Thomas Godwin, Bishop of Bath and Wells, 1584 (Ch. Ch. 34). These were copied by an unknown artist in 1827 for the episcopal palace at Wells.⁹

ZEEMAN, ENOCH : Portrait of William Bradshaw, Dean of Christ Church, 1724 (Ch. Ch. 140). Mrs. Poole states that it first appears in Gutch's list of 1790; in fact, it was in Christ Church five years earlier, as a Chapter minute of 20 October, 1785, orders that thanks be returned for the picture 'to Mrs. Jones'.

The Portraits of Henry VIII. As there are no less than five portraits of Henry VIII without provenance in Christ Church, any entries in the records concerning the date of acquisition by the House may help towards their identification. In 1686 the Library Donors Register recorded that John Fell bequeathed a portrait of Henry VIII, but there is no indication that it was ever put into the library; the 1776¹⁰ catalogue includes only one portrait of Henry VIII as being there, and that is certainly the gift of Dr. Philip Barton,

⁶ *Op. cit.*, III, 218, note.

⁷ *Chapter Minute Book.*

⁸ *Ibid.* and Disbursement Book.

⁹ *Chapter Minute Book*, 27 Dec., 1826.

¹⁰ Not *c.* 1770 as given by the British Museum, and followed by Dr. Borenius and Mrs. Poole: an entry in the *Peckwater Library Accounts* for printing the catalogue gives 1776.

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who died in 1765. Fell's portrait of the Royal Founder would, in all likelihood, remain in the deanery, and may be identified, with reasonable confidence, as the fine half-length panel (Ch. Ch. 19) still in the deanery. Another portrait of Henry VIII was acquired in 1803, when, according to the Disbursement Book, one Williams was paid £3 13s. 6d. 'for a portrait of King Henry 8th'. No artist of this name is known to have been working in Oxford at that period, and a price in round guineas would have sounded more like a dealer's transaction. If we think the price indicates a copyist's charge, the modern copy (no. 26) of no. 18 may be this 1803 acquisition.

BOYLE, CHARLES, fourth Earl of Orrery (Ch. Ch. 137). This portrait by an unknown artist could not with certainty be identified as the Earl of Orrery by Mrs. Poole, owing to an error in Gutch's list of 1790, wherein he includes a portrait of Richard Boyle, Earl of Burlington, of whom the House possesses no portrait. But according to the Disbursement Book 9s. 6d. was paid for the carriage of 'Lord Orrery's picture' to Christ Church in 1766.

STONE, ANDREW (1703-1773), Under-Secretary of State, bequeathed two pictures to Christ Church which were received in 1774: in the Peckwater Library Accounts is the entry 'Paid carriage to the Inn of Mr. Stone's two Pictures, 7s. 6d.' No hint of Stone's name as a benefactor appears in any Christ Church catalogue, but it is likely that his correspondence in the B.M. Addl. MSS. may throw some light on the identity of these pictures. For the present, we will guess that the portrait believed to be that of Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex (Ch. Ch. 37), whose features, as Mrs. Poole says, 'might equally well be described as those of Sir Christopher Hatton', was one of them. The descriptions of the library pictures in the 1776 catalogue, wherein it would first appear, are often 'exasperatingly laconic' as Dr. Borenus truly says, and the 'Essex' lies hidden under the words 'a portrait'. The fact that the portrait does not appear in the 1766 catalogue in *The English Connoisseur*, confirms its being received after that date. Moreover, in Dr. Borenus' catalogue (1916) of the library pictures (no. 338) it is the only English picture of unknown provenance which has remained in the library since its acquisition. For the identity of the second picture, we must look again at p. 4 of the 1776 catalogue, where, two entries above the one just referred to, is 'A portrait of a woman, about half length'. This appears in the 1833 catalogue as 'portrait of a lady' (no. 236). Mrs. Poole, in cataloguing it as the 'Unknown Lady' of the School of van Dyck (Ch. Ch. 64) in the deanery, remarks that its provenance has not been traced, and thinks it came with Dr. Stratford's bequest (dated 1728). On the evidence of its appearance with the 'Essex'

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in the 1776 catalogue, and their juxtaposition therein, there is practically no doubt that it came with that picture from Stone in 1774.

STRONG, SAMPSON, whose work in Oxford from 1596-1611 as a painter of Founders' portraits was outlined by Mrs. Poole (*op. cit.*, II, xi-xiii), appears three times in the Christ Church accounts. In 1610-11 he painted the present hall portrait of Cardinal Wolsey (Ch. Ch. 11) as recorded by her; but she overlooked the evidence that his work in 1605 and 1608 was not confined to portrait-painting, but included the labours of a general craftsman. In 1605 he was paid 2s. 3d. for 'layinge a color uppon the new Auditt house door', and 13s. 4d. in 1607-8 'for goldinge of five organe pipes and his paynes'.

From these notes it is obvious that many unknown data concerning the Oxford portraits still lie hidden in the account books of the other colleges. To examine them all in a reasonable time would be a physical impossibility for one person, and Mrs. Poole did not attempt it; she says only that she was allowed 'free access' to them, 'whenever this has been required'.¹¹

The present writer picked up, accidentally, when searching for something else, in the Pembroke College accounts for 14 March, 1711-12, the payment of £11 12s. od. to NOAH ZEEMAN, for the Founders' pictures, Thomas Tesdale and Richard Wightwick (Pembroke 2 and 3). Noah is the lesser known brother of Enoch Zeeman, and these two pictures are—at the moment—the only known examples of his work in Oxford.

¹¹ *Op. cit.*, II, xxviii.