

PICTURES FROM HAMPSHIRE: NOTES ON THE NORTON COLLECTION AND ITS DISPERSAL

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ONE of the finest, and surely one of the least known of early Hampshire art collections, was that amassed by the Norton family at Southwick, in the course of the 17th century, but dispersed in a long series of dismal lawsuits and family quarrels following the death of the wealthy but eccentric Richard Norton on 10th December 1732.

Among the recent acquisitions of Portsmouth City Archives Office are a series of documents formerly belonging to Sir Thomas Phillipps, that relate to this matter.¹ Norton himself was a collector, scholar and author. Kip's engraving of old Southwick House, shows that he lived in an appropriately magnificent setting, a fact born out by the inventory of the house and its contents taken shortly after its owner's death.² According to Warner, Norton was the author of *The Tragedy of Pausanias*, besides being 'a great admirer of theatrical entertainments'. And, 'for his own and his neighbours' diversion, he used during the summer's vacation, to have the best actors from the theatres in London, which he entertained at his house, with a good band of music; and had an apartment fitted up with scenes and other decorations, on a handsome stage whereon he himself performed several parts, particularly that of the Spanish Friar, in which character he was great'.³ Such an interest in the stage was perhaps pardonable in a man who also found time to serve as an M.P. in the Parliaments of 1692, 1695 and 1698-1702⁴ and whose devotion to William III was carried to extravagant lengths.⁵ Richard Norton had succeeded to the family estates on the death of Colonel Norton, his grandfather, in 1692. His wife Elizabeth, daughter of Edward Noel, first Earl of Gainsborough, died 24th February 1704/5 without providing him with an heir. In any event Richard's own death would have resulted in legal complications. His nearest heir male by blood was Richard Whithed of Norman Court, the grandson of the marriage of Sarah Norton (Richard Norton's aunt) and Henry Whithed, in 1652. Norton's mother, Isabel, daughter of Admiral Sir John Lawson, had married again following her husband's death. By this second marriage, to Sir John Chicheley of Middlesex, she had two sons, Richard and William, and two daughters Elizabeth and

¹ Purchased by Portsmouth Corporation from Sotheby's 26th June 1967 (Lot 654) of 'Bibliotheca Phillippica' New Series Part III: the property of the Robinson Trust.

² This and subsequent documents quoted are from the above collection, Ref. 179 A/5/iii - 'Inventory of Richard Norton's goods (24th-31st Dec. 1733) by Christopher Cock and Richard Chillingworth Appraisers: since the deceased's death have come to the Hands possession or knowledge of Mark Frecker Nicholas Paxton and John Lawton Administrators.'

³ R. Warner, 'Collections for the History of Hamp-

shire and the Bishopric of Winchester', Rivington, 1795, Vol. 1, pp. 182-3.

⁴ Calendar of the Daly Mss, County Record Office, Winchester, Vol. II, p. 66. Ref. 5M50/333-1948.

⁵ See Copy of Richard Norton's will, 1714 179 A/5/i ff. 10-11 in which he commands that 'the true Hair of my dearly beloved Sovereign King William the third w[hi]ch is now in a japan box . . . may be kept & preserved . . . in Southwick House to the end of the World'. He had already caused a statue of the monarch to be erected in Portsmouth Dockyard at his own expense.

Sarah.⁶ These were the interested parties whose claims were to be largely ignored in Richard Norton's will.

Under the terms of this document (dated 24th June 1714), the finest of his art treasures were left to the Crown, and £6,000 a year in real estate in trust to the British Parliament for the use and benefit of 'the poor, hungry, and thirsty, naked and strangers, sick and wounded, and prisoners to the end of the world'.⁷ Needless to say, the will was energetically contested. In June 1733 Parliament passed 'An Act to enable certain Persons to propound the Papers importing to be the last Will, Codicils, and Testamentary Schedules of Richard Norton . . . in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, and to sue for Administration, with the same annexed'.⁸ The papers were to be examined and determined by the proper ecclesiastical courts. Lay officers of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, Mark Frecker, Nicholas Paxton and John Lawton were to proceed to prove and sue for letters of administration. If proved they were to grant administration of the personal estate of Richard Norton according to 'the rules of Law and Equity'. But it was not until 1739 that a judgment was given at Winchester Assizes that Norton was of unsound mind at the time of writing the will.⁹ The High Court of Delegates had already issued Frecker, Paxton and Lawton a commission on 26th December 1734, to proceed with implementing the terms of the will, but an interlocutory decree was placed on item number 13, which contained Norton's bequest to the Crown.¹⁰ Paxton's subordinates, Christopher Cock and Richard Chillingworth Appraisers, drew up an extensive inventory of Southwick House and its contents between 24th and 31st December 1733 but claimed 'that before they obtained Letters of Administration of the deceased's personal estate, Richard Chicheley Doctor of Laws and Edward Hughes Esq. and Elizabeth his wife possessed themselves of several of the deceased's goods as follows:

'Imprimis five bank notes amounting to the whole to £220

'In ready money the sum of £6,384 6 8

'Several odd pieces of foreign money £14 15 10½',

as well as various notes and receipts, together with those items left to Elizabeth in her half brother's will (her picture, £10 and the contents of the Green Damask bed-chamber). Some of these things had since been recovered; others were still in possession of the Hughes family.¹¹

The Whitheds had been equally active, obtaining possession of Southwick House and the Norton estates within a short time of Richard Norton's death and the reading of his will. Richard Whithed died in 1733 leaving the Norman Court and Southwick properties to his nephew Francis Thistlethwayte. During his minority the estates were managed by trustees for whom Thomas Puckeridge of Romsey was agent. An inventory

⁶ This genealogical information is gleaned from A. J. Everitt's Mss. 'Hampshire Pedigrees' (n.d.) deposited in Portsmouth Central Library; see vol. I, p. 661 *Norton of Southwick*, and p. 669 *Thistlethwayte*. Elizabeth married Edward Hughes, and Sarah a certain Plowden. William appears to have died an early death, nor does Richard's name feature in the later stages of the dispute. In 1754, the Plowden claimant

was Ann Chicheley, a minor, one Griffiths acting on her behalf.

⁷ See note 5 above, 179A/5/i f. 4.

⁸ 179A/5/ii.

⁹ See note 4 above p. 1.

¹⁰ ff. 27-29 in 179A/5/i.

¹¹ 179A/5/iii f. 81.

of Southwick House, in all probability drawn up after Whithed's death, shows how rapidly its art treasures had been dispersed.¹²

A later document among the Phillipps papers shows that for many years to come, the problem of Norton's personal estate remained unsettled. This 'Copy of a Bill in the Court of Chancery, Griffiths v Hughes' dated 1754, states that in spite of the decision of 1739 letters of administration concerning Norton's personal estate were not granted to Elizabeth Hughes until 23rd June 1750, entitling her to a quarter of Richard Norton's personal estate, the remainder to be administered in trust for the representatives of Norton's half brother and sisters. The Bill claims that Elizabeth is unfit to administer these assets. She will not give an account of them, though in turn claims that many of the items in the will have not been recovered from Frecker, Paxton and Lawton. She will not say whether pictures estimated to be worth £1,000 are in her hands, nor has she sued Norton's former steward Edward Wynn for failing to account for various monies. The Court is asked to appoint fresh administrators. A full record of the proceedings exists in the Public Record Office – only the verdict of the case appears to be missing.¹³

The question of what happened to the pictures is still unresolved. Some may have eventually returned to Southwick, for in 1803 there took place a sale 'of all the Household Furniture and other effects of the late Robert Thistlethwayte Esq. deceased', and a few years later the Norman Court property was disposed of also.¹⁴ The catalogue lists a few pictures, but the descriptions are so vague that it is impossible to correlate them with either Norton's will or the inventory drawn up on behalf of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury. Old Southwick House was pulled down about 1812, and its successor destroyed by fire and rebuilt c. 1841,¹⁵ so further art treasures could have been lost at this time. No evidence has so far emerged regarding the descent of the pictures via the Hughes family or other claimants.

Publication of select portions of the documents themselves would appear to offer the best chance of solving this question, beginning with those works of art Norton decided to bequeath to the Crown. This list is quoted in its entirety.

'My pictures at Southwick House which I have given and bequeathd to the Kings most Excellent Majesty His Heires and Successors as the first of my Legacy's 1728. I write this tho given and bequeathd before

In the Gallery

	£	s.	d.
Santa Margareta whole Length by Titian	120	1	
The Judgment of Solomon a large Peice by old Palma	52	10	
Lucretia a whole length by Guido Reni	50	10	
A Pilgrim's Head by Parmegiano	10	10	

¹² See note 4 above, introduction; the inventory is no. 982 in this Calendar.

¹³ 179A/5/viii especially ff. 4, 5 and 7; and 'Copy of the Plaintiff's Case', 179A/5/ix ff. 3-4. P.R.O. Ref. C.II/205/6.

¹⁴ 'A Catalogue of all the Household Furniture and

Other Effects of the Late Robert Thistlethwayte Esq deceased . . . Winchester, printed at the *Hampshire Chronicle* Office, 1803, Copy in Hampshire Record Office, Calendar of Borthwick Norton Mss, 4M3/108.

¹⁵ N. Pevsner and D. Lloyd, *The Buildings of England – Hampshire*, 1967, p. 607.

PROCEEDINGS FOR THE YEAR 1969

	£	s.	d.
An Ecce homo by Corregio	10	10	
A Head of our Saviour by Andrea del Sarto	2	2	
A Noli me tangere by Tintoret	10	10	
6 Triumphal Arches by Rubens	100	10	
The Dutchess of Chevreuse by Van Dyke half Length	12	12	
Two large Claude Lorraines	160		
A Sea Battle large when Opdam was beaten by Vandervelt	105		

In the Clossett Within

A Crucifix large in Chiaro Oscuro by Hanniball Carache	21		
A Sketch of a Saint giving the Sacrament to some in a plague by Do.	6	6	
Six Tiles in two frames of Cyrus History by Parmegiano	10	10	
An Evening harvest peice by Jacomo Bassan	5	5	
A Small Milking time by Do.	3	3	
A large Landskipp by Salvator Rosa	8	8	
An Original Picture of King Richard the third, bought at the late Duke of Norfolk's Sale	2	2	
A Sketch of Samson and Dalila by Vandyke	7	7	
A Sketch of Martyrdom by Do.	2	2	
A Sketch of Samson and the Lyon by Rubens	3	3	
A Madonna an Oval unknown by what good hand	7	7	
A Madonna teaching the Child Jesus to read, Copy by Mr Cook	3	3	
A Fine Copy made at Rome of Raphaels Transfiguration	5	5	
A Woman and Satyr by Rotten Hamer	2	2	
A Peach and a Bunch of Black grapes by Varelst	1	1	

In the great Dineing Room

A Cartoon very large of Carlisto by Titian	10	10	
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In my Dressing Room

Two Round Landskipps by Gasparo Paussin	31	10	
Two Landskipps by Orisouli (Orioli?)	8	8	
This is a Copy taken from the Original wrote w[i]th [by deleted] Mr Nortons own hands. ¹⁶			

Cock and Chillingworth's inventory of the house, taken between 24th-31st December 1733 lists the above and many other pictures. Owing to its complexity, references from this document are given merely as extracts from the whole.

¹⁶ 179A/5/vii. In his list of Legacies, included in the will, but added 5th December 1721, Norton elaborates on this list, even making certain additions to it (179A/5/i ff. 18-19), 'my Picture of our Lord upon the Cross with the Blessed Virgin and St. John on each side in Chiaro Oscuro, and also my Picture of our Lord on the Cross with Angels in Oyl colors together

with . . . my Father Mother and my own Pictures in half lengths, mine by Sir Godfrey Kneller the other Coppies by Mr. Tilson and a Head of my Father by S[i]r Peter Lilly with ye Pictures of King William & Q[ueen] Mary.' The amounts of money quoted are probate figures, transposed from the inventory of the House's contents. See note I above.

PICTURES FROM HAMPSHIRE: NOTES ON THE NORTON COLLECTION

In the Wardrobe

... the Ascension of the Virgin a half length Family Picture in
Garter Robes three $\frac{3}{4}$ Heads

£ s. d.

The right Wing 2 pairs of Stairs in the Bed Chamber

... a Lady 3 Quart[er]s an old Head

In the Organist's Room

... four old Pictures

In the little dining Room

... print of the Salutation Six Metzo Tintos of the Royal Family
glazed ... a prospect of Smyrna a Still Life ...

On the Stair Head next Mr Norton's Room

... 12 Indian Pictures ...

In the Library

... A Book of Drawings ...

In the Dressing Room

... the Descending of the holy Ghost in a Gold Frame by
S[ir] James Thornhill ...

The Passage into the green Damask Bed Chamber

A small Battle piece the Manner of Wilk
the Holy Family after an Italian Master
a Landskip over the Door a Sea Storm
Ruicellas 10 small Heads in black Frames

1

The Cloth Bedchamber

... A Landskip over the Door & a Still Life

Servants Room

... a picture over the Door & Prints

Passage to the White Cloth Room

A Landskip over the Door, 2 Heads in Creon and a picture
of a Bird 21 Prints in black Frames

10

The Passage to the Great Stairs

... 30 prints 2 Mappes a picture of the Holy Family over the Door

PROCEEDINGS FOR THE YEAR 1969

The Picture Gallery

	£	s	d
Four pieces of carved Ornaments over the Door by Gibson & 4 Festoons of gilt pedestals	46		
St Jerome by Epaniole & a half Length of the late Mr Norton in Polish Dress by S[i]r Godfrey Kneller	12	12	

Household Furniture of the picture Gallery & Closet

. . . the four Seasons in Marble by Nest
the Model of the late King William's Statue erected at
Portsmouth Dock by Mr Norton . . .

In the Kings Bedchamber

. . . 3 Landskips

The Antichamber

. . . Lady St George half Length after
S[i]r Peter Lely S[i]r John Chicheley
after S[i]r Peter Lely Mr. John Chicheley
a $\frac{3}{4}$. . .

In the dining Room

. . . 8 plaster Bustos over the Chimney 6 three Quarter Family
pictures ordinarily painted in Bluck lacquered Frames 3 ancient
Heads over the two Doors . . . the pictures of King William
& Queen Mary half Length

In the first Room Entring the King's Apartment

. . . an Alabaster Statue of a Duke of Tuscany on a wainscott
Pedestal supported a plaster Model of Prometheus on a Wooden
pedestal by Nest a Landskip by Lolton in a lacquered Frame
a philosopher 4 old Heads in black Frames a Landskip by
Edema Gold Frame . . .

In ye withdrawing Room below Stairs

. . . Mrs Hughes Picture taken away Mr Norton's picture a half Length
by S[i]r Godfrey Kneller Do Father & Mother half Lengths by Mr
Tilson after S[i]r Peter Lely Mr Plowdon's picture a half Length by
S[i]r Godfrey Kneller a small round Cartoon after Raphael by Cook
a $\frac{3}{4}$ Head by S[i]r Peter Lely a Head of a boy in a black Frame a
Head of a Lady after Vandyke $\frac{3}{4}$ piece a black Cabinet on a Frame
the Front ornamented with six Miniatures Glazed of the Loves of
Albanus as alikewise a Marble Baso Relievo & 3 plaster models on
the Top

In the parlour

	£	s	d
The carving over the Chimney . . . Mr Norton's Father a $\frac{3}{4}$ piece by			
Sir Peter Lely a half Length of S[i]r J[oh]n Norton to copy Mr			
Norton's Grandfather a Copy Do Grandmother the manner of			
Vandyke S[i]r Walter Earle Do Mr Whithed $\frac{3}{4}$ by S[i]r Peter Lely			
Admiral Lawson half length by Do a half Length of Do by Lady Norton			

In the Great Hall

. . . Jacobs meeting Esau Cusib & psycho a Flower pot by Vansom
Do by Roostart a Landskip a Banquett of the Gods & Godesses

Green House Gardens and park

. . . a leaden Figure & Sun Dial a Marble Figure of Promethecas on a
Portland Stone Pedestal by Mr Nost a leaden Figure of Mercury on a
Stone Pedestal . . . a leaden Statue on a Pedestal of Stone . . .
4 leaden Images on Portland Stone Pedestals . . . a Cupid in Lead
. . . from the House a Marble Statue of Mercury with Cupid putting
on his wings by Mr Nost ¹⁷

The same document contains an important list of pictures and drawings from Stony Dean, another property belonging to the Nortons in Hampshire.

At Stony Dean

A Catalogue of Pictures at Stony Dean

A Deidana by Philip Laura A Landskip with Mercury & Argus by S: Rosa A Landskip
by Tempest A Do by Mola A Do with Joseph & Mary flying into Egypt by Charing
A Landskip by Bull A Do with a View of a City by Vandeist a small Calm by Vander-
velt A Storm by Do a Fine piece by Do 2 Landskips by Henry A copy after Salvator
Rosa by Howard A Fruit piece after Michael Angelp Campdolia King Charles Dwarf
after Vandyke A copy after Gas [per] Poussin by Bull a woody Landskip with a Castle
by Gas [per] Pousin Landskip by Mola A Rock & Sea Castle with Gallies by Salvador
Rosa A Calm by Vandervelt A round Landskip after Pousin A Landskip by Salvator
Rosa & Pousin
valued at

67 19

A Catalogue of the Drawings at Stony Dean

The Holy Family in Bed by Raphael of Urbino The Birth of St John Baptist by Do
The Head of our Saviour by Titian Supper at Emaus by Paul Vernezes A Woman

¹⁷ 179A/5/iii; the only probate figures quoted here are those that merely include works of art, and not furnishings etc. Under the terms of Norton's will some of these pictures were left to various relatives and claimants, (i) 'my half length picture of Sir John Lawson with her grandmother St. George's picture to Mrs. Susan Meredith my God daughter & cousin'; (ii) To Elizabeth Hughes 'her own picture a half

length'; (iii) To Richard Whithead - all of Norton's pictures of the White family (the family who had owned Southwick from the Dissolution of the Monasteries onwards, till 1607 when it passed to the Nortons), together with a portrait of 'his grandmother Whithed' by Sir Peter Lely. (iv) To his cousin Thomas Norton went all the family pictures of the Norton and Fiennes branches of the family. See 179A/5/i ff. 19-20.

with a Standard Amore Interessato by Hannibal Carrache Virgin Mary supported by Tintoret A Bachanalin Oval by Perino del Vaga St Francis & the Child Jesus by Peter Cortin The Marriage of St Catherine by Tintoret A Family Piece with the Virgin by Corrigagio & St Agnes by Do a piece of Lucatores heightened with Gold by Do The Descent from the Cross by Nicholas Pousin The Discovery of Calista by Corregio A Landskip in water Colours by Bridget A print of St Cecilia after Raphael by M: Antonio 9 prints & drawings in ye Closet

	£	s	d
valued at	51	17	6

No doubt some of these pictures are incorrectly attributed, bad copies—or even fakes. But nevertheless the collection as a whole is a monument to the tastes and sensibilities of several generations of a notable Hampshire family. An examination of other inventories in private hands or public collections would certainly bring comparable information to light, and would serve as the essential basis for a study of early art collections and collectors within the county.¹⁸

A Note on the Text

All contemporary spelling and punctuation has been used in quotations from the Phillipps papers. Gratitude is expressed to the Town Clerk of Portsmouth, Mr. J. R. Haslegrave, O.B.E., T.D., for permission to reproduce extracts from these papers for publication.

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¹⁸ The major unpublished source for the study of early English art collections is that compiled by or for Sir William Musgrave in the second half of the 18th century, deposited in the British Museum. B.M. Add Mss 5726F (1) ff 52-4 give a brief list of pictures at

Appuldurcombe; Add Mss 6391 gives a more detailed list for the same property f. 235, dated 1797, 2nd September. No further information on the Norton collection, or similar collections appear in what is otherwise an invaluable collection of documents.