

# The Courtauld

Painting Pairs: Art Historical and Technical Study

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Portrait of Sir Henry Strachey and his daughter Charlotte  
by Daniel Gardner

## A study of Portrait of Sir Henry Strachey and his daughter Charlotte by Daniel Gardner



Figure 1 - Daniel Gardner, *Portrait of Sir Henry Strachey and his daughter Charlotte*, Late 18th century, Oil paint on paper lined on canvas, 640 × 870 mm, Private collection, Before treatment, Recto



Figure 2 - Daniel Gardner, *Portrait of Sir Henry Strachey and his daughter Charlotte*, Private collection, Before treatment, Verso

### OVERVIEW

Our research focuses on a portrait of Sir Henry Strachey (1736-1810) and his daughter Charlotte Margaret (1771-1801) painted by English artist Daniel Gardner (c. 1750-1805) and originally estimated to date to the late eighteenth century (figs. 1-2). The painting arrived at The Courtauld's Conservation Department from a private collection in March 2020 for research and treatment. This essay summarises technical and historical research on the *Portrait of Sir Henry Strachey and his daughter Charlotte* undertaken by the authors as part of the Courtauld Research Forum's annual Painting Pairs project, organised by the Courtauld Research Forum in collaboration with the Courtauld Gallery and the Department of Conservation.

Little is known about Gardner's life, his oeuvre, and the materials and techniques he used for painting, which provided the focus for the investigation of this double portrait.

### THE PORTRAIT

Henry Strachey and Charlotte Strachey are portrayed in a dim but warmly lit interior. The father and daughter are affectionately posed in a manner that highlights the richness of their attire. The sitters are placed before billowing burgundy drapery. To the right a countryside landscape is discreetly visible through a window but partially obscured by a large urn. Henry is depicted seated, reclining against a secretaire. Beneath his elbow is a sealed letter, and in his opposite hand he holds an opened book. Charlotte leans over her

father, with one elbow resting on the back of his chair and her hand cupping her chin pensively. While Henry gazes somewhat more vaguely to the right, Charlotte looks directly and more piercingly towards the viewer. Gardner has painted the pair at ease and with an air of informality that is in line with fashionable portraiture and befitting of broader cultural trends of the late eighteenth century.

The painting was first thought to be an oil on canvas but was later found to be oil on paper that was subsequently lined onto canvas. The work measures 640 mm by 870 mm. It has remained in the Strachey family since its commissioning.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Using a combination of historical and technical evidence, we aimed to investigate a range of questions. We sought to look into the relationship between the painter and the sitters in the portrait, as well as to how Daniel Gardner and Sir Henry Strachey fit into the cultural context of England at the time of the work's creation. We also endeavoured to propose a more precise year of creation. Lines of inquiry focused on the following additional questions: What can we learn about Gardner's painting materials and techniques? Was it typical for Gardner's practice to line his works on paper supports onto canvas? Can any

comparisons of his materials, methods and styles be made to paintings by his contemporaries?

## THE ARTIST: DANIEL GARDNER



*Figure 3 - Daniel Gardner, Self-portrait, c. 1770, Oil on canvas, Collection of the National Portrait Gallery*

### *A note on existing scholarship and sources*

There are few art historical accounts of Daniel Gardner's work, though his portraits are held in some prominent collections including The National Portrait Gallery, The Victoria and Albert Museum, The American National Gallery of Art, and the Yale Center for British Art. Many of the works in museums are larger scale portraits in oil or gouache media. Gardner's practice was oriented around small pastels on paper, and many of these works appear to remain in private hands, as is supported by their

appearance in contemporary auction sales.<sup>1</sup> A monograph on Gardner by George Charles Williamson was written before the outbreak of World War I and published in 1921.<sup>2</sup> Williamson's monograph is the most significant text on the artist, and later scholarship has relied heavily on this work. Helen Kapp's 1962 catalogue published alongside an exhibition of Gardner works at the Abbot Hall Art Gallery in Kendal is one such example that draws upon Williamson but also provides additional research and insights.<sup>3</sup> Records from Gardner's lifetime were located at the Cumbria County Council Archives and the London Metropolitan Archives that mostly pertain to matters of real estate and insurance.

### *Biography*

Daniel Gardner was born in 1750 in Kendal, England, a town in the Lake District in the northwest region of the country. At this time, Kendal was a prosperous town known for its wool manufacturing. The Gardner family was close to the local Romney family, as the two

had ties in business.<sup>4</sup> A young George Romney (1734-1802), who would go on to achieve significant success as a portrait painter, had his early talent recognized by Daniel Gardner's mother. She encouraged Romney to pursue the profession instead of joining in his family's business and was even called "the foster-mother of his art" in an 1830 Romney monograph.<sup>5</sup>



Figure 4 - George Romney, *Portrait of Captain Robert Banks*, 1760, Oil on canvas, Lakeland Arts Trust, Kendal

Romney is said to have given early instruction to Gardner, 16 years his junior, though Romney only stayed in the Kendal area until 1772, at which point Gardner was about 12 years old. Gardner himself moved

<sup>1</sup> Sotheby's records indicate 24 lots of Gardner works came to auction between 2001 and 2020. Christie's lists 14 lots between 2008 and 2021.

<sup>2</sup> George Charles Williamson, *Daniel Gardner: A painter in pastel a gouache: A brief account of his life and works* (London: John Lane, 1921).

<sup>3</sup> Helen Kapp, "Daniel Gardner, 1750-1805," *4 Exhibitions to Celebrate the Opening of Abbot Hall Art Gallery* (1962), 8-11.

<sup>4</sup> Daniel Gardner's father, Caleb Gardner, was a cordwainer, and his uncle Christopher Redman, was an upholsterer. Romney's family was in the

cabinetry business. Neil Jeffares, "Gardner - Iconographical Genealogies," *Dictionary of Pastellists Before 1800*, <http://www.pastellists.com/Genealogies/Gardner.pdf#search=%22daniel%20gardner%22>.

<sup>5</sup> Rev. John Romney, *Memoirs of the Life and Works of George Romney* (London: Baldwin and Craddock, 1830), 12.

to London in his late teens, and it is unclear if he received instruction in painting upon first arriving to London. His timing was fortuitous, however, as the Royal Academy was newly established in 1768 and he proceeded to enrol in the school. It is reputed by Williamson that Gardner worked in the studio of Thomas Gainsborough, though this was unable to be independently confirmed by primary sources.<sup>6</sup> There is evidence that Gardner worked in the studio of the first RA president Joshua Reynolds.<sup>7</sup> He is also said to have received instruction by other Academicians including Johan Zoffany, Benjamin West, Nathaniel Dance-Holland, Giovanni Battista Cipriani, and Francesco Bartolozzi.<sup>8</sup>



Figure 5 – Sir Joshua Reynolds, *The Snake in the Grass*, exhibited 1784, Oil on canvas, Tate



Figure 6 – Daniel Gardner, *The Snake in the Grass* (after Joshua Reynolds), Pastel and Gouache on paper, Private collection

Despite these early-career affiliations, Gardner only exhibited work at the Royal

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<sup>6</sup> Williamson repeats this claim several times in his monograph. It seems his main evidence for this is an inscription written on a scrap of paper affixed to the back of one of Gardner's works "in which he declares that this particular work was painted in Gainsborough's studio." Though this suggests that Gardner and Gainsborough were acquainted with one another, it does not definitively prove that Gardner was employed by or apprenticed in Gainsborough's studio.

Williamson, *Daniel Gardner*, 7.

<sup>7</sup> In the catalogue essay accompanying the 1962 Gardner exhibition at the Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Helen Kapp claims that a disparaging remark made by Gainsborough about Reynolds was the reason Gardner left his studio. Kapp also cites

contemporary accounts which support that Gardner was a student of Reynolds, which has been doubted by historian of pastellists Neil Jeffares. Kapp quotes from the 16 April 1781 diary entry of Charlotte Burney, in which she recounts meeting Gardner. Burney describes Gardner as "a young painter and disciple of Sir Joshua Reynolds" who is "an odd fish that I can make nothing of" and "a sad half-witted disagreeable man." For further, see Helen Kapp, "Daniel Gardner, 1750-1805," *4 Exhibitions to Celebrate the Opening of Abbot Hall Art Gallery* (1962) and Neil Jeffares, "Daniel Gardner," *Dictionary of Pastellists Before 1800*, <http://www.pastellists.com/Articles/Gardner.pdf#se arch=%22daniel%20gardner%22>.

<sup>8</sup> Helen Kapp, *Daniel Gardner, 1750-1805*, (London: The Greater London Council, 1972).

Academy once, in 1771. This was the only year Gardner submitted work for exhibition at the RA, and given Gardner's personal relationship with Reynolds, this suggests his absence from exhibitions was a matter of choice. Gardner appears to have found commercial success as a portrait painter from a young age and he proceeded to focus his career on this commissioned work. Some of this work has subsequently entered museum collections. While he had close affiliations to more prominent painters like Romney, Reynolds, and Gainsborough, and later to a younger John Constable, Gardner never attained the skill or reputation on par with any of these masters. It is unknowable whether Gardner's focus on commissioned portraiture was the cause or result of this. It is also reputed that he prematurely quit the studios of Reynolds and Gainsborough due to disagreements. He was noted to have had an eccentric personality and some unusual working habits, such as using a locking easel that prevented his sitters from viewing their unfinished portraits.<sup>9</sup>

Gardner adopted neither the exhibition practices of his Royal Academy contemporaries nor their preferred subject matter, history painting. Moreover, unlike

the Academicians who largely painted in oil media, Gardner established a reputation as a pastellist. While Gardner worked in a variety of media including pastel, oil, and watercolour, for much of his career his preferred technique was to mix pastel and gouache, and thus his association with pastel persists. It wasn't until 1779 that Gardner's correspondence notes he completed his first oil painting, which was perhaps pressured by contemporary tastes that were shifting away from pastels.<sup>10</sup>

Gardner's limitations as a draughtsman were noted during his lifetime, though this does not seem to have detracted from his popularity. A 1776 letter written by the Irish artist John Warren described the up-and-coming Gardner, then only in his mid-twenties, as outpacing London competition:

I hear [the artist Hugh Douglas] Hamilton is gone to Ireland, pray how does he go on? I dare say he will meet with much encouragement. Strange that a man with so little comparative Merit as Gardiner shd beat him out of the field which nevertheless is as I am told literally the case [*sic*].<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Helen Kapp, *Daniel Gardner, 1750-1805*, (London: The Greater London Council, 1972).

<sup>10</sup> For further on the popularity and decline of pastel, see Katherine Baetjer and Matjorie Shelley, *Pastel Portraits: Images of Eighteenth-Century*

*Europe* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011).

<sup>11</sup> Letter from John Warren to Andrew Caldwell, 23 Nov. 1776. Philip McEvansoneya, 'An Irish Artist goes to Bath: letters from John Warren to Andrew

Gardner maintained a fashionable studio, first on New Bond Street and later in Golden Square, and achieved an admirable reputation as a portrait painter for the British aristocracy.<sup>12</sup> A 2020 Sotheby's auction catalogue for the sale of Gardner's *Portraits of the Hon. Mary Shuttleworth and her sister, Anna Maria, Suo Jure 9th Baroness Forrester*, describes his "formula" of "reproducing in pastel on a reduced-scale the fashionable poses and conceits of full-sized works by Sir Joshua Reynolds and George Romney" as highly successful.<sup>13</sup> Gardner retired from painting in 1800 and died in 1805 with considerable financial means: 7600 pounds and a home in Kendal.<sup>14</sup> Any works that remained in Gardner's possession at the time of his death were later passed down to his granddaughter, Anne Eliza Dixon. This collection was sold to Lord Carlingford and later to Lady Jane Maria Strachey, a

coincidence that further ties Gardner to the Strachey family.<sup>15</sup>

### THE SITTER: SIR HENRY STRACHEY



Figure 7 - James Northcote, *Portrait of Sir Henry Strachey, 1785, Oil on canvas, Private collection*

Henry Strachey was born at Sutton Court in Somerset in 1736. He served as private secretary to Lord Robert Clive, who was a major figure in the East India Company and pivotal in the British colonization of India. Strachey lived in India for several years before returning to England in 1768 where

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Caldwell, 1776-1784', *Irish Architectural and Decorative Studies: The Journal of the Irish Georgian Society*, 2 (1999), 166 in Ruth Kenny, "The Craze for Pastel," *Tate*,

<https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/display/bp-spotlight-craze-pastel/essay>.

<sup>12</sup> Insurance records from 17 December 1788 note Gardner's address on New Bond Street in London as well as his properties West Side Strickland Gate, Kendal, and Westmoreland, New Street, Kendal.

<sup>13</sup> "Portraits of the Hon. Mary Shuttleworth (d. 1777); and her sister, Anna Maria, *Suo Jure* 9th Baroness Forrester," *Sotheby's catalogue essay for "The Dealer's Eye"* auction held in London, 25 June 2020,

<https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2020/the-dealers-eye-london/daniel-gardner-portraits-of-the-hon-mary>.

<sup>14</sup> "Obituary, with Anecdotes, of remarkable Persons," *The Gentleman's Magazine* 75, no. 1 (1805): 686; "An account of the personal estate of Daniel Gardner deceased. Exhibited by George Gardner Esq.," in Williamson, *Daniel Gardner*, 156-158.

<sup>15</sup> This provenance is listed for numerous Gardner works that later reappeared at auction. Lady Strachey sold the majority of her Gardner collection at Christie's on 17 July 1911. Before this sale, 70 Gardner works loaned by Lady Strachey were exhibited in the 1910 annual exhibition at the Royal Amateur Society, London, suggesting her collection was extensive. "The Royal Amateur Society's Exhibition," *Graphic*, 5 March 1910, 328.

he soon after married Jane Kelsall Laytham. Charlotte, born in 1771, was the couple's eldest child.

Strachey was an absentee planter who was the first to cultivate indigo in the United States. He also maintained business in India and the Caribbean positioning him as an active British colonialist. In London, he participated in parliament and held positions in government. Notably, he helped negotiate the Treaty of Paris, which ended the American Revolutionary War. He served as Master of the King's Household from 1794 to 1810 and in 1801 was made a Baron.

Strachey's papers are principally housed at the Somerset Heritage Center and the University of Michigan. These archives have catalogued his business records and correspondence, but materials related to personal matters are unindexed. Correspondence, inventories, or receipts accounting for the commissioning of this portrait were unable to be discovered given current conditions, though in-person consultation with these archives may reveal pertinent records.

Unfortunately, little is recorded of Charlotte's life, who, as the painting's verso states, died unmarried in 1801.



*Figure 8 - Sutton Court, Somerset*

### **THE PAINTING'S CONDITION**

The painting arrived in the studio in a relatively unstable condition, which owes to both Gardner's technique and previous interventions. The double portrait is painted on paper which has been subsequently lined onto coarsely woven cotton canvas.<sup>16</sup>

Paper stamps on the painting's frame state: "Send it to Brooks' and For LAUNDRY, DYING and DRY CLEANING." An advertisement for this company dated 1941 displays a highly similar font to that found on the frame (fig. 9).<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Fiber analysis using microscope has identified the typical twist characteristics of cotton fiber.

<sup>17</sup> The former Brooks Laundry in Bristol dates back to the 19th century, and around 1870 new dry

cleaning and laundry facilities were installed. In 2007, the company went into liquidation.





Figure 9 - Detail of the stamps



Figure 10 - Brooks Dye Works advertisement, August 1941

The canvas, stretcher, and framing paper appear to date from a later intervention, which occurred after the 1940s.

The painting arrived with several aesthetic and structural problems. Structural problems included a warped stretcher and an embrittled primary support consisting of two sheets of laid paper that have sustained two wide tears. The overall stiffness of the composite of paper and lining indicates a high glue content. Upon arrival at the Department, the paint layer was flaking and unstable in some areas. The surface was obscured by discoloured varnish,

discoloured retouchings and deterioration in some areas of the paint surface.

The treatment included consolidation of areas of flaking paint and removal of yellowed varnish coatings and aged retouchings. Technical study carried out as part of the recent conservation campaign provided an opportunity to examine Gardner's painting materials and techniques.



Figure 11 - Daniel Gardner, *Portrait of Sir Henry Strachey and his daughter Charlotte Margaret*, After cleaning

## USE OF PAPER

As Claude Henri Watelet explained in his *L'art de peindre (Compositions in Pastel)*, pastels were regarded as a form of painting. Pastellists aimed to replicate painting both in the appearance and physical format of their art.<sup>18</sup> The customary support for works

<sup>18</sup> Claude Henri Watelet, *L'art de peindre: Poème, avec des réflexions sur les différentes parties de la peinture* (Paris, 1760), chap. 19, "La peinture en pastel," p. 52. The idea of pastel as painting had been articulated by Roger de Piles, *Cours de*

*peinture par principes* (1708; Paris, 1989), p. 153, and by P. R. de Chaperon, *Traité de la peinture au pastel, du secret d'en composer les crayons, & des moyens de le fixer* (Paris, 1788).

in pastel was a wooden strainer, comparable to the rigid frame with fixed corners that was then used for oil paintings. Onto this, lightweight linen was stretched and tacked. Paper was pasted to the fabric, and the margins of the paper were wrapped around its edges and glued to the back of the structure. Much like a canvas prepared for painting, this assembly provided a resilient surface that enabled artists to work at an easel.



Figure 12 - Daniel Gardner, *Detail of Portrait of Mrs. Elliot Reigate, or Mrs. Elliot of Reigate, ca. 1780, Pastel, gouache, red chalk and graphite on moderately thick, slightly textured, laid paper mounted to linen, 356 × 279 mm, Yale Center for British Art*

There are additional examples of Gardner works on paper laid on canvas. *Portrait of Mrs. Elliot Reigate*, in the collection of the Yale Center for British Art, consists of a mixed gouache and pastel drawing that has been lined onto canvas supported by a wooden stretcher is one such case. This structure is thought to have been carried out by Gardner himself, as the object is believed to be in its original condition, aside from some paint retouching. The wet and dry media slightly spill over the edge of

the paper, which appears to be a natural result of applying media onto a pre-mounted paper. The paper support has sustained a large loss at the top left corner, and the area was previously restored by retouching the exposed canvas directly with pastel (fig. 14). While the repair is aesthetically unpleasing, it provides useful visual evidence of how Gardner constructed his work.

Comparison with *Portrait of Mrs. Elliot Reigate* indicates that the structure of *Portrait of Sir Henry Strachey and his daughter Charlotte*, is typical of Gardner's practice rather than an anomaly in his oeuvre. This likely influenced the decision to glue the paper support to the canvas during its previous treatment.

Evidence from X-radiography suggests that the painting was made by assembling two pieces of paper. The tear along the top border of the composition marks the point at which the two papers were originally joined. In an X-radiograph detail it is evident that the upper paper addition has vertical chain lines, while the main paper support appears with horizontal chain lines. The visibility of the chain lines through

even thickly painted areas further proves the paper is highly textured.<sup>19</sup>

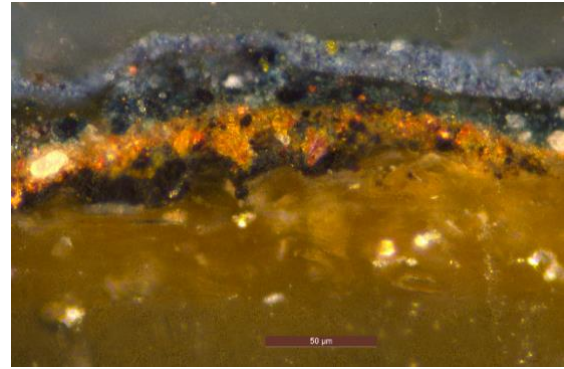


*Figure 13 - X-ray detail*

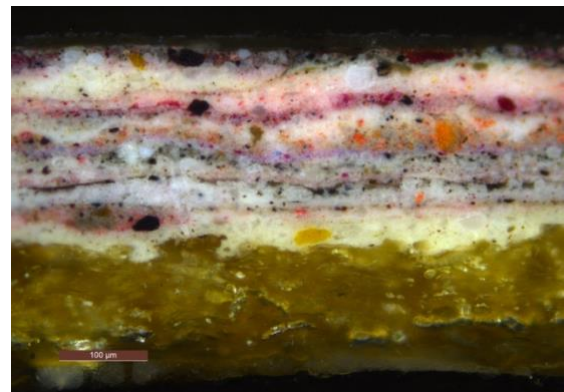
It is difficult to discern which paper Gardner may have used. Artists would buy sheets to either use whole or cut down to sizes that better suited their needs. Unfortunately, the analysis methods used in this study gave us no indications of paper provenance, as the likelihood of a watermark being visible through paint, glue, and canvas layers when using X-radiography or reflectography is low.

### **GARDNER'S PAINTING TECHNIQUE**

Small paint samples were taken from selected areas of the painting and prepared as cross-sections to examine the paint layer structure and pigments.



*Figure 14 - Dark blue cross section from Henry Strachey's blazer*



*Figure 15 - Dark purple cross section from Charlotte Strachey's dress*

The results suggested that the paint was applied directly to the paper support without an intermediate ground layer. However, it is possible that the artist prepared the paper by sizing it with animal glue. It is more likely, however, that the glue visible on the sample dates to the previous restoration campaign, as the paper seems to have been completely impregnated by the glue. From cross-sections it is evident that there are several layers of paint applied directly on

<sup>19</sup> In a faintly humorous footnote, Ellis Waterhouse describes Gardner's work as "[always retaining] something of the effect of having been painted on a rough towel."

Ellis Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain, 1530-1790* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 336.

the paper fibres, which illuminates the complex layer structure of the painting. Looking at a cross section from Reynold's *The Age of Innocence*, we can see how Gardner adopted Reynold's painting technique of building up colour on the support by applying paint in multiple layers, either both dry or wet-on-wet.



Figure 17 - Cross-section from the sky of *The Age of Innocence* by Sir Joshua Reynolds, 1788, oil paint on canvas, 765 × 638 mm, Tate, taken by Alexandra Gent Ph.D. *Repetition and Replication in Joshua Reynolds's Subject Pictures*, 2019

Given Gardner's reputation as experimental in his material choices, tests were conducted that confirmed that this work's principal media is oil.<sup>20</sup> Gardner appears to have completed this painting in a traditional manner by using only oil as paint media.

No underdrawings are visible in ordinary light or with reflectography in the sensitivity ranges of the detectors used in this study. There is no visual evidence that he prepared the composition with

underdrawings. It is possible that he based his composition on sketches, perhaps copied by eye, or that there is a non-carbon underdrawing undetectable with IR reflectography. X-radiography of the painting did, however, reveal that it was originally intended as a double portrait. There was some doubt of this given the centred location of the painting's tear and the addition of a strip of paper along its top edge, which suggested that Henry may have been the sole sitter at an initial stage of the work. The X-radiograph shows that Gardner reserved an area for Charlotte's head at the outset, while her body appears to have been worked up later. Changes during the painting stage are also evident. The position of Charlotte's right elbow was originally placed under her father's shoulder, and her hand on top of her father's arms.



Figure 17 - X-ray of *Portrait of Sir Henry Strachey and his daughter Charlotte Margaret*

<sup>20</sup> Staining tests using dyes were carried out on a cross section displaying several paint layers and the paper support. The Rhodamine B confirms that the

main media is oil and the Amido Black establish that the glue present in the paper fibres is from animal glue.

The X-radiograph also reveals pentimenti in Henry's jacket and shows that the book he is holding was not originally planned, as drapery from Charlotte's dress is visible beneath it. It seems that Gardner made several changes in the dress. Firstly, he applied a layer of lead white under a glaze to establish the colour. In infrared light, the modelling of the dress appears as a strong dark shape, which suggests black had been applied to develop the drapery's shadows and it was then glazed with red lake pigments.

The window overlooking the countryside on the right of the composition also contains revisions in paint, which explains its relative thickness compared to the left portion of the painting.

### **GARDNER'S PALETTE**

Gardner was widely considered an eccentric and was known to have used a custom locking easel preventing sitters from viewing unfinished work. It correlates that Gardner kept his unusual techniques secret, and it is consequently difficult to understand the process of his painting.

Williamson claims that Gardner made use of various media, such as honey diluted with gin and a caramel made of sugar and water, egg white, isinglass, and gum arabic.<sup>21</sup> The present study has revealed consistency in Gardner's oeuvre, suggesting that he stuck to his select media preferences. However, we have not had the means to identify these materials, so it remains possible that they have been used. Williamson also states Gardner bought his pigments from Messrs. Roberson and Miller of Long Acre, citing allusions to prices in his notebooks. These notebooks did not resurface during our research, so this information is unable to be confirmed. A recipe for copal varnish is the only media-related document in Gardner's records.<sup>22</sup>

We have conducted technical analysis and close observation to glean further insights into Gardner's working techniques. In what follows, we will draw attention to how these technical observations and analyses can divulge information not only about our specific artist but also about an entire era.

As mentioned above, most of Gardner's paintings remain in private collections, and no technical examination of his work has

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<sup>21</sup> Williamson, *Daniel Gardner*, 51.

<sup>22</sup> A recipe for copal varnish can be found in Gardner's records at the Cumbria Archive. The recipe calls for spirits of turpentine to be mixed with spirits of sal ammonia, which are then added

to camphor dissolved in alcohol. Williamson lists additional recipes from Gardner's sketchbook for amber varnish, white amber varnish, and "a hard varnish that will bear the muffle." In any case, these recipes are not atypical.

been published. While this provides little material for comparison, it presents an exciting opportunity to widen the research and understanding of Gardner's painting technique and uncover the pigments he used in his palette.

Charlotte's pink dress fluoresces under UV light, indicating that Gardner may have used a natural madder lake pigment. Lake pigments are known to fade over time, suggesting the dress may have originally contained more reddish tones than pink.

Through visual analysis it has been determined that it is highly likely Henry's blue jacket was created with Prussian blue pigments. Prussian blue was widely used by artists in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Gardner may have used a different blue pigment for the bow on Charlotte's dress, possibly ultramarine, as it appears transparent in the infrared image.

Further elemental analysis of these cross-sections will provide reliable identification. Using handheld XRF, we were able to pinpoint several areas across the paint surface that demanded further elemental analysis.<sup>23</sup>

Through our findings, we can assume that Gardner used a palette of lead white,

Prussian blue, orpiment, vermilion, bone black, and various iron earth pigments in shades of brown, red, and yellow. It is assumed that Gardner did not exclusively use these pigments, however, as some chemical elements are undetectable using XRF.

***PORTRAIT OF SIR HENRY  
STRACHEY AND HIS DAUGHTER  
CHARLOTTE IN CONTEXT***

*The characteristic styles and practices of  
Daniel Gardner*

As was Gardner's custom, this portrait is unsigned by the artist. Little doubt exists regarding its attribution, however, as it possesses similar compositional characteristics to other works by Gardner and its provenance is exclusively by descent of the Strachey family. While unable to examine the technical methods or materials of Gardner's other works, photographs of his paintings from public collections and auction sales provide useful stylistic comparisons.

His taste for classical accents is represented in this work by its antique urn, an element also found in *Portrait of Adelaide Augusta Wilhelmina Dutton* in the Cannon Hall Museum (fig. 14). Moreover, this portrait's burgundy drapery is not unlike

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<sup>23</sup> XRF (X-Ray Fluorescence) is a non-invasive method of analysis that can provide elemental

information for inorganic materials based on characteristic absorption spectra.

that depicted in the *Lord Halifax and His Secretaries* (fig. 15). In addition, the positioning of Charlotte with a hand touching her face is common to the pose seen in Gardner's portrait *Sarah Jodrell, Lady Ducie, formerly Mrs Robert Child, and her Daughter Sarah Anne Child, Countess of Westmoreland* (fig. 16).



Figure 18 – Daniel Gardner, *Portrait of Adelaide Augusta Wilhelmina Dutton, 1781, Oil and gouache on paper, Private collection on loan to Cannon Hall Museum*



Figure 19 – Daniel Gardner (attributed), *Lord Halifax and his secretaries, c.1765-1767, National Portrait Gallery, London*



Figure 20 – Daniel Gardner, *Sarah Jodrell, Lady Ducie, formerly Mrs Robert Child, and her Daughter Sarah Anne Child, Countess of Westmoreland, c. 1771-1793, Osterly Park and House*

It is common in Gardner's work to see imperfect bodies and proportions, as was implied in the previously mentioned correspondence of John Warren, and this is evident in Charlotte's bowed arms and awkward right hand. Gardner has been commended, however, for bringing a delicate touch to his sitters' faces. In a statement applicable to this portrait, Helen Kapp has praised Gardner's artistic treatment of women, describing his repeated achievement of "an endearing, tender quality that has little to do with the sitter herself, but much with [Gardner's] own spirit as an artist."<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Helen Kapp, *Daniel Gardner, 1750-1805*, (London: The Greater London Council, 1972).

This portrait of Strachey and his daughter Charlotte is a good example of Gardner's reputation as adept at painting children and families. He was noted for his bright and lively style that often included prominent blues and pinks.<sup>25</sup> The portrait of Sir Henry Strachey and Charlotte is more muted than Gardner's typical pastels and tonally consistent with his later work in oil.<sup>26</sup> Like his pastels, however, blue and pink, via the sitters' clothing, are prominent in this portrait.

#### *Fashion trends and the country home*

Displayed at the Strachey's Somerset home, Sutton Court, until the 1980s, this portrait belongs to a tradition of commissioning and housing ancestral portraits in country homes. Kate Retford, Gill Perry, and Jordan Vibert describes country houses as "expressive of permanence, status, and inheritance," linked tightly to the expression of lineage and succession via the commission and display of portraiture.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, the country home was associated with idealized

beliefs of a peaceful pastoral, removed from contemporary military and political conflicts.<sup>28</sup> As Sir Strachey was involved in diplomacy in the United States and India, maintained business ventures in both of these countries and in the West Indies, and served in parliament in London, it is likely that Sutton Court would have connoted these qualities for the Strachey family.

Though this portrait contains relatively little in the way of objects and iconography, some general ideas can be drawn from the props it does contain. The inclusion of a book, which technical analysis has revealed to be a later addition, indicates Strachey is a learned man, and the letter, sealed with a traditional red stamp, suggests formal or business correspondence. It is subtly implied that Strachey can manage involvements in London and across the globe from the comfort of his country estate.

Sutton Court was inherited by the Strachey family in 1674, and Henry came into its ownership 1765. In the eighteenth century,

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25 Bright blues and pinks can also be found in *Portrait of Mary Sturt of Crichel and Her Three Eldest Children*, created circa 1777 and now in a private collection, and *The Wife and Children of John Moore, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1783-1805*, painted in 1780 and now in the collection of the Tate.

26 Works in oil with comparable color palettes include his 1779 portrait, *Mrs Gwynne and Mrs Bunbury as the Merry Wives of Windsor*, an oil on wood painting in the collection of Nottingham City

Museums and Galleries, and his 1781 painting *Adelaide Augusta Wilhelmina Dutton, Wife of Sir Henry Hunloke*, an oil and gouache on paper in the collection of the Fraser family on loan to Cannon Hall Museum.

<sup>27</sup> Gill Perry, Kate Retford, and Jordan Vibert, ed. *Placing Faces: The portrait and the English country house in the long eighteenth century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 3.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 18-23.



Britain witnessed a marked increase in the construction and improvement of country estates, spurred substantially by the influx of wealth from British colonial exploits, and Henry Strachey fits within this trend. His estate had been heavily mortgaged, and the house was in poor condition. Lord Clive of India, for whom Strachey had served as secretary, and who had purchased and improved his own home, Claremont, lent him the money to pay off the mortgage for Sutton Court.

While major improvements to Sutton Court were made later in the nineteenth century, Henry is known to have commissioned several portraits. Beyond this there is relatively little known regarding his patronage. Gardner's Strachey portrait is one of the artist's largest works, measuring 64 x 87 centimetres. An account book from 1792 indicates Gardner's prices ranged from 5 to 23 guineas, so it can be presumed this portrait of Sir Henry and Charlotte commanded a price at the high end of this range.

The posturing of rural simplicity also fits within fashion trends of the period, which largely reacted against the *ancien régime* in France. Henry and Charlotte are both portrayed in fashionable contemporary

attire, which Aileen Ribeiro has associated with these ideological shifts. English 'country attire' represented a "democratic informality" that supplanted more formal styles, and its influence spread throughout Britain and the continent.<sup>29</sup> Crucially, these fashions, in concert with Charlotte's apparent age of around 15-19, also allow us to date this portrait to between 1785-1790.



Figure 21 – Detail, Daniel Gardner, *Portrait of Sir Henry Strachey and his daughter Charlotte*



Figure 22 – Detail, Daniel Gardner, *Portrait of Sir Henry Strachey and his daughter Charlotte*

<sup>29</sup> Aileen Ribeiro, *Dress in Eighteenth-Century Europe 1715-1789* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 207.

*Finding meaning in the colour blue*

While Sir Strachey's coat was *painted* with Prussian blue, it is likely that his clothing derived its blue colour from indigo dye. While dark blue was generally fashionable for men's overcoats at the time, Sir Henry's indigo coat is additionally a subtle nod towards his involvements in indigo production.

In 1771 Henry Strachey acquired approximately 4000 acres across several tracts of land along the St. Johns River, near present-day Jacksonville, in the colony of East Florida. Strachey substantially invested in the development of indigo cultivation and was the first to cultivate indigo in what is now the United States. At its height, his venture was considered greatly successful, even earning him a gold medal from the Society of Arts and Commerce in 1774 "in testimony of superior quality" of his indigo.<sup>30</sup> The only other existing portrait of Sir Strachey, created around the same time as this Gardner painting, appears to show Strachey in the same attire (fig. 7).

Studying this portrait from 2021, it is crucial to acknowledge its entanglements with colonialism and slavery. The wealth that allowed, in part, for the commissioning of this portrait and for the improving status of the Stracheys at this time, stems from these systems. Innovations and shifting styles in textile industry, the increased availability of dyes and pigments, and even some of the pigments used in this painting reflect increased globalization in the 18th century, as well, unfortunately, as its exploitative labour practices.<sup>31</sup>

Though this point does not directly connect the materials worn by the sitters to the materials used by Gardner in their representation, exploring the materials and histories of these dyes and pigments helps enlighten broader cultural entanglements of the late eighteenth century. Indigo cultivation became more widespread and commodified through colonial plantation systems. Synthesized Prussian blue became more widespread amongst artists through the middle of the eighteenth century. In their own ways, Sir Henry Strachey and Daniel Gardner are each emblematic of these cultural changes, set amidst the

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30 Conflicts between Britain and Spain and the nascent United States later disrupted plantation activities. Though Strachey claimed losses when he abandoned his property upon the cessation of the colony to Spain, he was one of the British negotiators at the 1783 Paris Peace conference that returned East Florida to Spain. Through this, he

continued to take great pride in his involvements with indigo cultivation and trade.

<sup>31</sup> For further, see Zorina Lotut, "Blue in Eighteenth-Century England: Pigments and Usages," *Revue de la Société d'études anglo-américaines des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* 75 (2018).

globalization and experimentation of the era.

## CONCLUSIONS

Through this research we have sought to broaden the art historical scholarship on Gardner. Our findings have enabled us to contextualize *Portrait of Sir Henry Strachey and his daughter Charlotte* within Gardner's career and to deduce its date of completion. Through technical analysis we have determined Gardner's painting methods and techniques, including his choice of support, the pigments he used, and their manner of application.

We suggest that the status of Gardner's customary genre and material, portraiture and pastel, and the tendency for portraits to

remain in private hands rather than in public collections has contributed to the lack of awareness and appreciation of his work. This paper hopes to rejuvenate interest in Gardner by providing insight into the artist and the material conditions of his late-career practice.

Our research has sparked further questions and elucidated arenas for additional investigation related to Gardner and Henry Strachey, though these were unable to be fully explored due to constraints of time and this year's travel restrictions.<sup>32</sup> Further examination of Daniel Gardner's works and painting methods may benefit future historical and technical understandings of this important eighteenth-century portraitist.

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<sup>32</sup> Due to limitations imposed by the Coronavirus pandemic our in-situ research and technical analyses were cut short. We were unable to travel to Kendal, where we hoped to gain insights and

establish visual comparisons between *Portrait of the Artist's Wife* and other works by Daniel Gardner.

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

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- Figure 2. Daniel Gardner, Portrait of Sir Henry Strachey and his daughter Charlotte, Private collection, Before treatment, Verso
- Figure 3. Daniel Gardner, Self-portrait, c. 1770, Oil on canvas, Collection of the National Portrait Gallery
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