

Paper Trails - Laraine, Year 9, WA

Historic Homes of the Greater UK, issue 24, 11/06/2019

Ashbrooke Hall - Any Art Historian's Dream! – Natasha Ellis

This delightful historical manor tucked away in the hills of Oxford is a must-see for any historian, art connoisseur, or just someone with an interest in unusual tourist destinations. Ashbrooke houses an enormous collection of portraits by some of the most renowned regency masters, all of which are of the same subject, Earl Henri of Oxford, who may just be the most documented man of his age. At the center of this collection sits a painting of a young woman, origin unknown. This haunting gallery houses one of the only portraits painted by Franco Coppola, as well as many other rare pieces.

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit, and the audio guide is masterfully done, painting an almost austen-esque romance.

\$37 for a guided tour

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Ledger of the Miller & Sons Pawnshop

Date sold: 13/07/1816

Item: Portrait of a Young Woman in Pink, artist unknown

Price: 3 pounds

Seller: Bridget Miller

Buyer: Charles Hastings

Notes: In truth, I am awfully glad to be rid of that damned painting. It is unsettling, and her eyes seem to follow me around. I might have sold it a little low. I'm sure some fool would've bought it for far more, for it is very beautiful, but the sooner it is gone the better.

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Journal of Henri, Earl of Oxford 10/07/1816

It is good to be in my childhood home after all this time. My Grand Tour days are behind me, and I do rather think the good people of Oxford University would prefer to avoid my face. The whole place is rather empty, and what furniture there is seems to be terribly outdated. I have sent my man Charles out without a budget and instructed him not to return until he brings me something truly special. I wish to begin a collection of beautiful things, to make my home a haven for the arts. To surround myself with the extraordinary. The most wonderful pieces, and the finest of minds. They shall all gather at Ashbrooke Hall.

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A letter to Miss Elizabeth Cross, sent 25/09/1816

My dearest, beautiful Elizabeth

Sometimes I get worried that the master of the house is quite mad. Us servants rarely see him anymore, and he wishes his meals delivered to the ballroom, which is to be transformed into a gallery. It's nice-looking, but it's just not what's done in a respectable household! Besides, it's not much of a gallery with just one painting in it. It's just the one Hastings brought in, and nobody except him has seen it. When we enter the room, it is always covered in cloth, and as far as any of us are concerned, it must be too hideous to sell.

He is always cooped up inside, muttering away to himself. I'm certain he's a great man, but everyone gossips about him so. As far as I know, he employs me, and that's all that matters. I shall ask to visit around Christmas, and I hope we shan't be apart for much longer.

With much affection,
Your loving Catherine

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A note to Franco Coppola, from his assistant Edward Bell, 21/02/1817

A man dropped by the studio the other day. Asked for a portrait, and I told him you didn't do portraits unless you felt particularly inspired. He's an ordinary looking fellow, but he's Earl of Oxford, you know the type. He was very insistent, and he doesn't plan on giving up any time soon. Apparently wants to be told no by the master himself. He'll be back Thursday, so we'll see what you're thinking then.

-Edward

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An excerpt from the introduction of Doctor Anthony Carlyle's guide to the Mind

I have decided to dedicate my time to writing this book, since it is quite evident that a study of the mind and its madnnesses is quite required. It is due to a patient I had in my youth, the Earl of Oxford, who was quite the character. The poor fellow spent all his time talking to a painting of a beautiful woman. He was practically in love with it! Truly unfortunate.

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Remarkable pieces of the Regency Era with Luci Green, 2010, transcript
Young Lady in pink, 1795, artist unknown

Now, this breathtaking painting is truly a mystery. With the distinctive light work of Coppola, yet those vibrant colours from Collins, the subject is painted in the romantic light of a Jane Austen heroine. All I can say is, Kiera Knightley better watch out!

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Journal of Henri, Earl of Oxford

It is all of no use she speaks to me not she stays forever young as i age how long can i go on like this i care no longer for being a gentleman she is everything i know none of my paintings speak only death will part us for she will stay young forever how can i make this last

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Newspaper clipping from the Oxford Papers, 19/08/1818

WANTED

Doctor or mortician with experience in embalming, preservation and aging. Generous reward. For more details, write to Ashbrooke hall

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Dr Anne Vandertramp's diary, 24/08/1818

Is there any solution to my dilemma? There's no damn use in being a doctor if you have no patients! If only the Earl of Oxford wanted something more realistic. I can't make these false promises of immortality, he's just some man offering a very generous offer for a single attempt. I mean. Surely it's worth trying!

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An excerpt from the conclusion of Doctor Anthony Carlyle's guide to immortality,

And that's the end of it. Immortality is utterly impossible. Unless one has a supply of healthy, live organs, it is impossible for a human to live past eighty.

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Georgia Solves it!- episode 29, 14/04/25

Frankenstein meets Jane Austen, with an echo of Dorian Gray- the case of Dr Anne Vandertramp

How far would you go to spend forever with your lover? For most people, this answer seems simple enough. But for Henri, Earl of Oxford, he meant forever. And the cost? Seven lives, 24 self-portraits and his sanity. But the reason for all of this? A painting.