



HORACE HONE (1754 - 1825)

Portrait miniature of The Hon. Sir Thomas Pakenham (1757-1836), facing to the right, in the uniform of a Rear-Admiral, wearing Post Captain's Naval Gold Medal, against a sky background

Circa: 1799

1799

Watercolour on ivory

Signed with monogram 'HH' and dated 1799

Ivory registration number NNXBJXS7

Gilt-metal mount

Oval, 2 7/8 in. (73 mm) high

The son of Nathaniel Hone (1718-1784), Horace Hone was an important and successful miniaturist working in the late 18th and early 19th centuries in both Britain and Ireland. He studied at the Royal Academy schools from 1770, and began exhibiting here in 1772, before setting up a practice in Dublin in 1782. The present miniature, with its light colouring, is reflective of his later style, after he had become Miniature painter to the Prince of Wales in 1795.

Pakenham was the son of the 1st Baron Longford (also Thomas Pakenham, 1713-1766) and his first wife, Elizabeth Cuffe (1719-1794). His ancestral home, still lived in by the Pakenham family, was Tullynally Castle, Westmeath. It is possible that Hone knew the family well and was commissioned for multiple portraits, including one of the sitter's sisters, Mary[1]. Hone's father had also painted a James Cuff circa 1770[2], however, there is no certainty that this sitter has a relation to the present sitter's mother. The artist painted portraits of many members of the Irish elite, as well as military officers.

Pakenham first joined a royal navy ship in 1771 (the Southampton). He had a varied career, on ships that went to North America, the Caribbean, and Gibraltar. In 1781, he was trialled by court martial following the loss of one of his ships, the Crescent, following an encounter with Dutch, and then French frigates. However, he was honourably acquitted, and appointed to a new frigate, Minerva. This portrait of Pakenham was likely commissioned to mark his promotion to Rear-Admiral in February 1799. He wears his Post Captain's Gold Medal, presented in 1797 for his 'courage and conduct'[3] in what became known as the memorable 'Glorious First of June 1794' (Sir Thomas had been Captain of the 74-gun H.M.S. Invincible)[4]

Aside from his military pursuits, Pakenham was known for being both flamboyant and popular as an officer, as well as being an Irish MP between 1783 and 1800. This flamboyance can certainly be seen within the present miniature, which depicts Pakenham in his heavily decorated uniform. As has been mentioned, the lighter colouring of the miniature fits the general look of some of Hone's later miniatures. This allows for his uniform and his heavily rouged cheeks, to be emphasised. Makeup, including rouge like this, was popular for both men and women of the Georgian period, and may have been important for Pakenham to fit in with other members of polite society.

[1] Christies, London, 14 October 1992, lot 56.

[2] Bonhams, London, 25 November 1998, lot 88.

[3] Pakenham's 'courage and conduct did not extend to his language, which was understandably explosive in the heat of battle. To an opponent he is meant to have shouted 'F... you! Have you surrendered?' and upon receiving a negative response he cried, 'Well why the f... don't you go on firing!' - Captain Pakenham to an opponent during the battle of the 'Glorious First of June', according to a contemporary (perhaps apocryphal) account.

[4] King George III initially presented Gold Chains to six of the seven Flag Officers, as well as to the Captain of the Fleet, Sir Roger Curtis, Kt. for Earl Howe's dramatic and overwhelming victory on 1 June 1794. It was then announced that His Majesty had signified his intention to institute a Naval Gold Medal to reward the admirals and captains who were 'conspicuous for courage and conduct' in that action. It was nearly two and a half years before they were ready.