

THE LIMNER COMPANY



RICHARD COSWAY (1742 - 1821)

A young lady called Lady Wellesley, facing left in white dress with frilled collar and scarlet bow at bodice, decorated with loops of beads with matching necklace

Circa: 1788

1788

Watercolour on ivory (licence 3EJ58ZNW)

Signed and dated on the backing card 'Rdus Cosway / R.A. / Primarius Pictor/ Serenissimi Walliae / Principis / Pinxt: / 1788'

Oval, 67 mm. (2 $\frac{5}{8}$ in.) high

Set into gold fausse-montre frame with plaited hair reverse centred with gold initial 'W'

The lady in the current portrait miniature has traditionally been referred to as Lady Anne Wellesley. There is no reason to doubt the identification of the sitter as Wellesley, later Lady Fitzroy, and later still Lady Culling Smith (1768-1844). Several portraits of her executed by artists like John Downman, John Hoppner, and Charles Hayter appear identical to the woman called Lady Wellesley here.

Born the daughter of Garret Wesley, 1st Earl of Mornington, Lady Anne married Henry Fitzroy with whom she had two daughters, Anne Caroline Fitzroy (1790/1 - 1835) and Georgiana Frederica Fitzroy, later Duchess of Beaufort (1791/2-1821). Following her husband's death, she married Charles Culling Smith (c.1775-1853), and the couple had two children of their own, Emily Frances (1800-1889) and Frederick William Culling (d.1828), godson of Frederick, Duke of York and Albany.

There is extant written correspondence between Lady Anne and Princess Charlotte of Wales (1796-1817) in the Royal Archives, suggesting the two may have maintained a personal relationship. This is likely a result of the close friendship between the princess and Lady Anne's daughter Georgiana. In a letter, also in the Royal Archives, the Duchess of Leeds writes to George, Prince Regent addressing

Charlotte's desire to see her friend Georgiana Fitzroy. Prior to his becoming Regent in 1811, George, Prince of Wales appointed Richard Cosway (1742-1821) as his official miniature painter in c. 1786.

Cosway is known to have painted at least three portrait miniatures of Princess Charlotte at various ages. Cosway's connections to the princess and her family may have facilitated his introduction to Lady Anne which resulted in this portrait miniature and perhaps, indirectly, in Cosway's portrait of Lady Anne's sister-in-law Emily Fitzroy (1770-1800).