THE LIMNER COMPANY



GEORGE ENGLEHEART (1750 - 1829)

Portrait miniature of Mrs Anne Topham, née Sinclair (d. circa 1824), wearing a white dress with a vandyck collar, her waist tied with white sash and neck tied with white fichu, her hair worn powdered and up with a white bandeau

Circa: 1795

1795

Watercolour on ivory (licence KAVG6V5D)

Oval, 75 mm (3 in) high

Glazed reverse with a hand written label regarding the sitter

Much of the information about the identity of this sitter derives from a handwritten label on the reverse of the miniature, presumably added by a descendant whilst the miniature was still in the family's collection. According to this label, the miniature depicts Anne Topham, the wife of Henry Topham, Esq. (d.1790). The couple were married in 1766 and had one child, also named Anne. Her daughter (the sitter's granddaughter) married Sir John Fox Burgoyne.

Anne was involved in a court case in 1824, the year of her death. She had been accused of not declaring a servant and hence avoiding the tax associated with this, but was acquitted. It was instead claimed that 'she had a four-wheel carriage, but no horses; that she kept no servant; the carriage was occasionally cleaned, when required, by a man that she employed occasionally to work in her garden' (*The Law Journal for the Year 1827*, London, 1827, vol.5, p.24). Despite this, in her will she did leave an annuity to Rebeka Avis, a 'faithful servant'. Whether or not Anne was guilty, or simply used this as an exaggerated term, is not known.

When the present work was painted, Anne was a widow, and despite this, she sat for George Engleheart alongside his sister, Miss Topham. The miniature must have been given to a family member, as it remained within their collection until it was sold, alongside the portrait of Miss Topham, in 2013.