THE LIMNER COMPANY

JEREMIAH MEYER R.A. (1735 - 1789)

Portrait enamel of Sir Richard Neave, 1st Baronet (1731-1814) wearing blue coat with black collar, white lace cravat and powdered wig, worn en queue and tied with black solitaire

Circa: circa 1765

circa 1765

Enamel on copper

Oval, 32 mm (1 $^{1}/_{4}$) high

(Likely original) gold pierced locket frame set with garnets

This rare, early enamel portrait by Meyer portrays Sir Richard Neave, best known for his long stint as director and then governor of the Bank of England. Around the time that this portrait was painted, Neave received a letter from George Read, who became a Founding Father of the United States. In his 1765 letter Read prophetically warned Neave that the British government's attempts to tax the colonies without giving them direct representation in Parliament would lead to independence.

Richard was the son of James Neave (1700-64) and Susanna Truman (1695-1766). His interests stretched beyond finance and in 1785 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society and in 1794 was appointed High Sheriff of Essex. On 13th May 1795 his efforts were rewarded when he was created the 1st Baronet of Dagnam Park, Essex, which he bought some twenty years earlier and extensively rebuilt.

Neave and his wife were also painted in a double-portrait by Thomas Gainsborough (1727-88) in the mid-1760s [Llysdulas, Anglesey], and it is highly probable that this work was painted around the same time. In 1761, the year that Richard married Frances Bristow, Meyer has also painted in enamel George III, a portrait which was set into a bracelet and worn by his new wife Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz. It

is possible that this inspired the commission of this portrait of Richard for his new wife. In 1764, Meyer was appointed miniature painter to Queen Charlotte and painter in enamel to King George III and many of his portrait enamels remain in the royal collection.

Literature:

Ed. E. Blattner and W. Ratzeburg, exhibition catalogue Meyers Minis – Big in London. A Tübingen painter at the English court, 2024.