

## Franks Forage No 9A. The Boddelwyddan Miniatures.

The charts that accompany the panel of miniatures in the Ebony Bedroom show asterisks beside the Williams paintings indicating that the artist is unknown. Yes, and no! Some of these miniatures appear on various websites where it is also stated that the artist is unknown. Well, draw your own conclusions from the following 'forage'.

On page 56 of *'Mistress of Charlecote'* Mary Elizabeth writes the following tribute to the family nurse at Boddelwyddan when she died:-

*"Beloved and respected by us all, she had lived in our family for 45 years. I had a charming miniature by Hargreaves done of her when I married and I always look at it with the most affectionate pleasure. I almost fancy I can hear her speak; it is such an admirable likeness. Hargreaves did miniatures at the same time of me, dearest Papa, Mama and my four sisters for which I paid him 10 guineas each."*<sup>1</sup>



Ah! So we do know. Thomas Hargreaves (1774-1847) was a well known Miniature and portrait painter. He was born in Castle Street, Liverpool; son of a woollen draper. In 1790 he entered the Royal Academy School and served an apprenticeship under Sir Thomas Lawrence, returning to Liverpool in 1795. He went to London again in 1797 and exhibited at the Royal Academy intermittently between 1798 and 1843 and at the Society of British Artists, of which he was a founder member. By 1803 he had established a practice in Liverpool and he built up a large clientele in Cheshire, Lancashire and North Wales. In 1810 he was elected a founder member of the Liverpool Academy, exhibiting there until 1835. Hargreaves worked primarily in miniatures and among his clients were well known personalities of the time. Some of his miniatures were engraved; others worked in water colours and gouache.<sup>2</sup> The Charlecote paintings are water colours. The Athenaeum Library and the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool both have important collections of his work.

Why above did I say yes and no? Well, Thomas had seven children and at least two of his sons, George (1797-1870) and Francis (1804-77) became miniature painters and assisted in the family miniature painting business, Hargreaves & Co., based in Bold Street, Liverpool from about 1834.<sup>3</sup> Thomas died in January 1847. Did Thomas or one of his sons paint the Ebony Bedroom miniatures? Mary Elizabeth says that she had them painted when she got married, i.e. in 1823. Thomas would have been 49 and well established, George 26 and Francis 19. As a well known and established artist, I would suggest that Thomas was the artist in question although I cannot be 100% sure. As Mary Elizabeth only mentioned the surname, the sons may not have yet been well known at that time.

The Hargreaves's usually signed the reverse of their miniatures. Now, there's a thought!

Two questions: Where is the one of Mary Elizabeth herself and why were her three brothers not painted?

*Frank Storr*

### Notes

1. *'Mistress of Charlecote'* Edit Alice Fairfax-Lucy. Victor Gollancz Ltd. p56
2. Website from which this information was extracted is no longer available. Some of this can be found on [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Hargreaves,\\_Thomas\\_\(DNB00\)](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Hargreaves,_Thomas_(DNB00))