

THE HOARES OF BATH

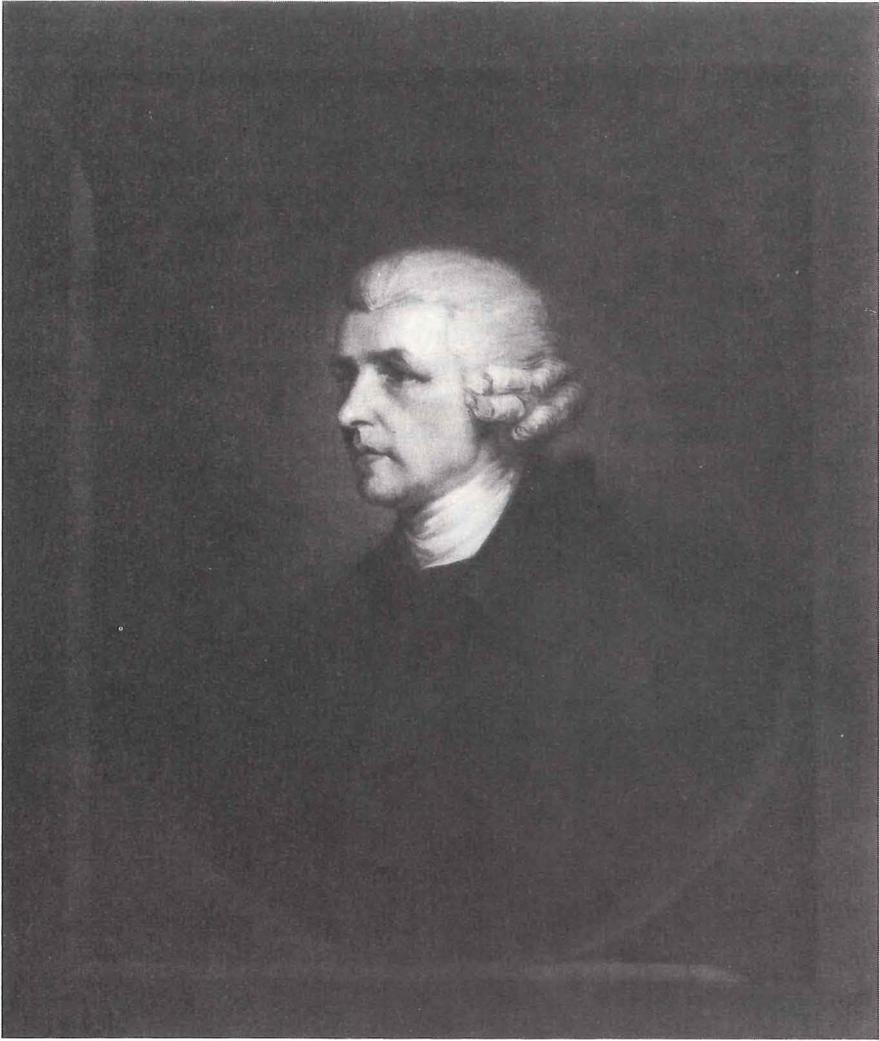
Evelyn Newby

In 1955, an advertisement under the title *The Hoare Family of Suffolk* appeared on two successive months in the *East Anglian Magazine*,¹ begging for any information on the early years of William Hoare of Bath. No answer seems to have been forthcoming and an exhaustive search of the Suffolk County Archives has revealed no further information. An early memorial (?) sheet,² illustrated with a small head of William Hoare taken from the engraving by S.W. Reynolds after the portrait by William's son Prince³ (Plate 1), states that William 'was born about 1707, at Eye, near Ipswich, where his father cultivated a farm of his own property of large extent.' Furthermore, William's memorial by Sir Francis Chantrey in Bath Abbey, erected by his son in 1828 states categorically, though with no specific mention of Eye, that William

NATUS EST A.D. MDCCVII E STIRPE IN AGRO
SUFFOLCIENSI.

Eye was then of some political importance, returning two Members of Parliament, and supporting thriving industries in bone-lace and spinning, though Daniel Defoe who had included it in his *Tour of England and Wales* was unenthusiastic.⁴

William is next recorded at school in Faringdon, Berkshire, a school 'which was then in high reputation'.⁶ A glowing account is given of his scholastic career and he must have received a gentleman's education, for, many years later, Richard Graves, the vicar of Claverton, described him as a considerable Latin scholar, and several drawings of personal friends made in later life bear Latin inscriptions written extempore. While still at school, he showed a marked talent for drawing and, in about 1720, once his formal education was over, his father allowed him to go to London to be trained as a painter by Grisoni.



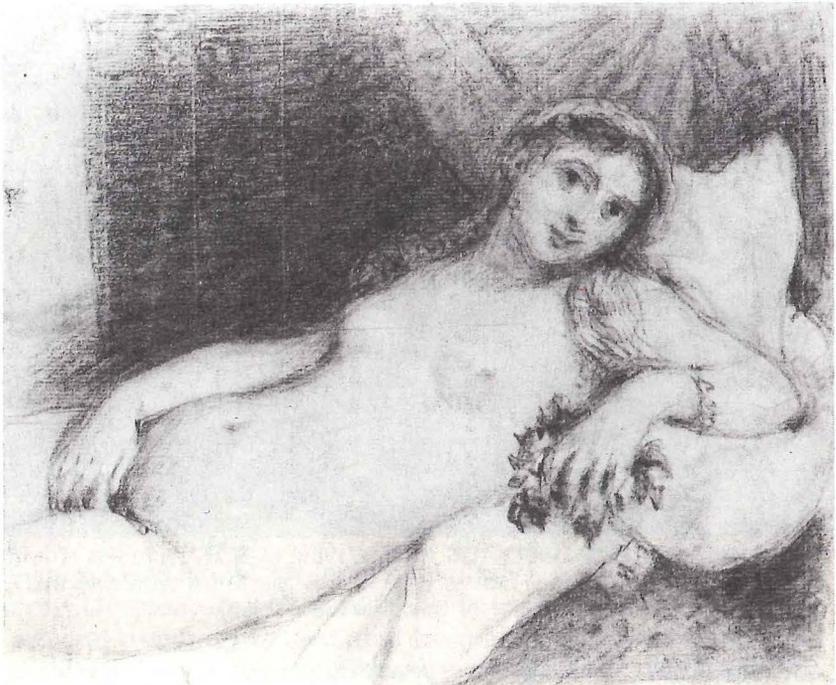
1 WILLIAM HOARE IN OLD AGE An engraving by S.W. Reynolds after the portrait of his son Prince Hoare, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1783 (By courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum)

A Florentine, working in the grandiloquent late baroque idiom, who had come to England at the instigation of John Talman the architect with whom he had travelled in Italy, Giuseppe Grisoni was described as 'A good painter of history . . . [who] paints

portraits very well and designs and invents very freely.⁷ He did not meet with the hoped for success and could not match the commissions secured by his fellow expatriates. His patron, Talman, died in 1726 and, in June 1728, Grisoni

made a sale of his pictures painted by himself designing to leave England not meeting with any encouragement . . . He took with him to Italy a young man who had studied drawing some time, a strong genius . . . a sober young man.⁸

In Grisoni's studio William probably met not only other Italians working in London, but also many English artists for Grisoni had joined Cheron's St. Martin's Lane Academy which had opened in 1720. There still exist some rather careful early drawings by William in black and red chalks, certainly drawn after engravings since the composition is shown in reverse (Plate 2a). He had



2a SKETCH AFTER TITIAN'S VENUS OF URBINO A sketch in red and black chalks probably from an engraving as the composition is shown in reverse (Private Collection)

therefore already been exposed to the Italian art tradition, but the prospect of continuing his training in Italy itself must have seemed very enticing.

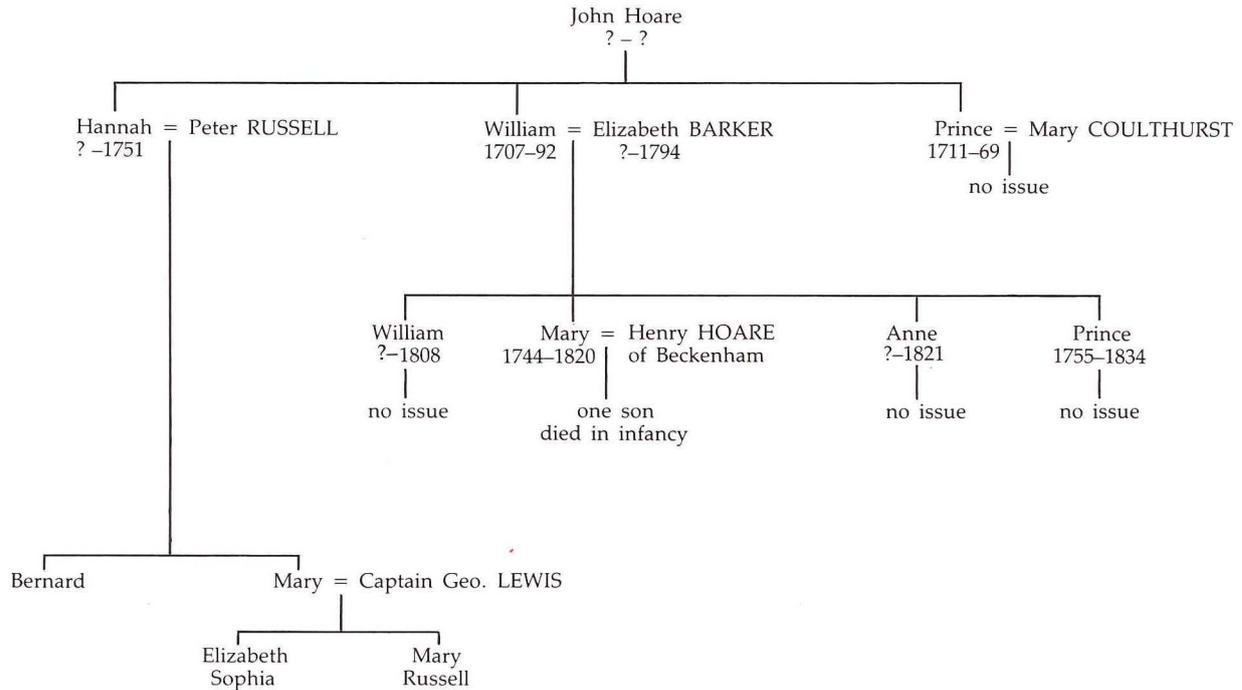
We do not know how William and his mentor travelled to Italy, nor how long the journey took. The usual route was overland through France down to Lyons, the important decision then being whether to continue the journey overland through an Alpine pass down to Turin and Milan, or whether to travel down the Rhône by barge to the coast and then take a sea-going vessel to Genoa or Livorno. Both choices had their perils. There is one letter of introduction from Sir Charles Hanbury-Williams to the then British Resident in Florence, Francis Coleman, dated from Genoa the 23rd November 1730:

The gentlemen that brings you this is the same I wrote to you about, being him that comes to study there; all favours you do him will be the same as done to myself, and I hope therefore that you will oblige him all you can.⁹

Francis Coleman obviously obliged, for a pastel portrait of him by William – a portrait still untraced – appeared in George Coleman's sale in 1795.¹⁰ British Residents abroad had manifold duties over and above the obvious political and commercial ones and much time and effort was spent in accommodating the wishes of travellers of consequence,¹¹ and providing introductions to local dignitaries. Coleman would certainly have facilitated William's entrée to the Grand Ducal collections at the Uffizi in Florence, where the gallery known as the Tribuna housed some of the most prestigious examples of antique and renaissance art before which no Grand Tourist could fail to come and pay his respects.

Unfortunately, documents on William's stay in Rome, a stay which lasted nine years until 1737, have proved very elusive. No diaries or journals have as yet come to light but by combining what is known of the contemporary Roman art scene with what is known of Allan Ramsay's well documented stay there a few years later it is possible to reconstruct William's sojourn in Rome with a certain degree of accuracy.

William lodged for a time with Peter Scheemakers and Laurent Delvaux, two Flemish sculptors who had been in London and left for Rome at much the same time as he. These lodgings were in the



THE HOARE FAMILY

Palazzo Zuccaro near Santa Trinità dei Monti on the Pincio, just north of the Piazza di Spagna and in the heart of that part of Rome most favoured by foreign artists. The palace had been the property of Federico Zuccaro, the first President of the Accademia di San Luca, who had hoped it would become a hostel¹² for foreign students studying at the Accademia. This body had not altogether lived up to expectations but its teaching aims had been carried on in the several private academies run by the leading Roman artists and in the life-classes organised by the French Academy in Palazzo Mancini to which non-French students could be recommended. William attached himself to the studio of Francesco Imperiali, and it was there that he met Pompeo Batoni who was to remain a lifelong friend, and there also that Allan Ramsay was to study during his own stay in Rome. Imperiali was a conscientious teacher who not only advised his students technically but took them to study at first hand the works of art Rome had to offer. Students generally progressed from copying drawings and engravings to copying sculpture, both from the original antique and from plaster casts, and it was as they became proficient in these two disciplines that they were allowed to progress to the live model. Finally they were set to copy the old masters such as Michelangelo and Raphael. There is no reason to suppose that William fared any differently beyond the fact that he arrived in Rome already partly trained. According to a letter William wrote much later to Henry Hoare of Stourhead, the Old Masters he most revered were Raphael 'for majesty and natural grace', Guido Reni for 'delicacy', and the Antique for 'the precision of beautiful forms'.¹³ The Venetian School attracted his attention and those later portraits of his which include a landscape background underline his debt to Titian. Apparently his allowance from his father stopped as the latter's means became straitened but William managed to keep himself adequately by copying Old Masters for sale to Grand Tourists unable to buy the originals yet desirous of recording their journey to Italy and their devotion to Italian art.

Returning to London from Rome 'with many designs', some Old Masters of his own, and the usual ambition to become a history painter, Hoare was faced with an unfavourable situation. Although fresh from Italy, he probably, in the eyes of sophisticated London patrons, had neither the panache nor the



2b SKETCH OF A GIRL DRAWING OR WRITING A sketch in red chalk, drawn by candlelight and typical of William's mature style (Private Collection)

cachet of the true Italians like Amigoni and Soldi, whose earlier successes had so infuriated Hogarth. Having been away about nine years, he had probably lost what contacts he had enjoyed in the London art world, and he may well have become discouraged by the bewildering labyrinth of clubs, cliques and coteries of which this world was made. Certainly no work can definitely be assigned to this transitional period.

It was probably at about this time that William's younger brother Prince also made the journey to Italy. As in the case of William, there are no early documents. He is always said to have been born in Eye in 1711 and there is a letter on antiquarian matters written by Dr. Richard Davies to Dr. John Ward which suggests that Prince had been educated in London where Dr. Ward had opened a school at Moorfields in 1710 and become Professor of Rhetoric at Gresham College in 1730.¹⁴ Probably at his brother's instigation, Prince had entered the studio of Peter Scheemakers who had returned to London from Rome 'in something less than two years . . . having been very assiduous in his studies',¹⁵ and from where he had returned with casts and copies from the antique. From such a teacher Prince would have received a very thorough training.

Vertue next mentions Prince as the latter returns from Rome 'where he had been to make his studyes about 7 or 8 years',¹⁶ but so far the only definite trace of him in Italy is in a letter from yet another British Resident in Florence, Sir Horace Mann. In this letter, dated 26 August 1749, Mann is writing to Horace Walpole and damns Prince with faint praise:

Hoare the sculptor I have had in my house is to accompany him [Mann's secretary, returning to England] . . . I rather wish he may fall into good business in England. He is very clever in copying but I have seen nothing original of his doing. Had he application equal to his skill, I believe he could make a figure at least in England, where sculpture is not at any great pitch.¹⁷

A bust of Plautilla¹⁸ (Plate 3) signed and dated P. HOARE F^t. FLOR:Æ MDCCIL and copied from an antique bust in the Uffizi illustrates the technical mastery he had achieved.

While William had been hoping for work in London, waiting for the large scale historical commissions and the important



3 MARBLE BUST OF PLAUTILLA Prince Hoare
(The Royal Crescent Hotel Bath)

portraits which still eluded him, he could not fail to become aware of a new and profitable trend, that of the pastel portrait, with which both Arthur Pond and George Knapton were finding success. This trend is emphasised by George Vertue:

Crayon painting has met with so much encouragement of late years here that several Painters, those that had been in Italy to study as Knapton, Pond, Hoard [sic] for the practice of paynting in Oyl, found at their return that they could not make any extraordinary matter of it, turnd to painting in Crayons and several made great advantage of it.¹⁹

Pastels were both cheap and quick to produce and therefore reasonably priced and well within the means of a newly affluent middle class. The artist prepared his own pigments, two or three sittings at most were all that was required and the accepted price was five guineas unglazed or eight guineas glazed, allowing for the high cost of plate glass. A great advantage emanating from the rapidity of execution was that payment was prompt; sometimes only a few days separated the first sitting from the final payment, and the artist profited from a quick financial return on his outlay and effort. With their fresh pure colour and sparkle, pastels lightened a dark interior, and as candlelight picked out the gilding of the frames and the glint of the glass they made pleasing decoration for the smaller intimate spaces of contemporary interiors.

It has been suggested that William settled in Bath as a result of his marriage to Elizabeth Barker (Plate 4a) who had connections there, but if he was at all aware of contemporary trends, he would already have realised that in Bath there was an almost untapped and ever growing market, and may have moved there in about 1738 prior to his marriage: one of Dean Swift's correspondents, Mrs. Barber, who claimed acquaintance with Mrs. Delany, wrote to him in 1736:

My son who is learning to paint [with Arthur Pond in London] goes on well, and if he is in the least approved of, in all probability he may do well at Bath; for I never saw a painter that came thither fail of getting more business than he could do, let him be ever so indifferent.²⁰

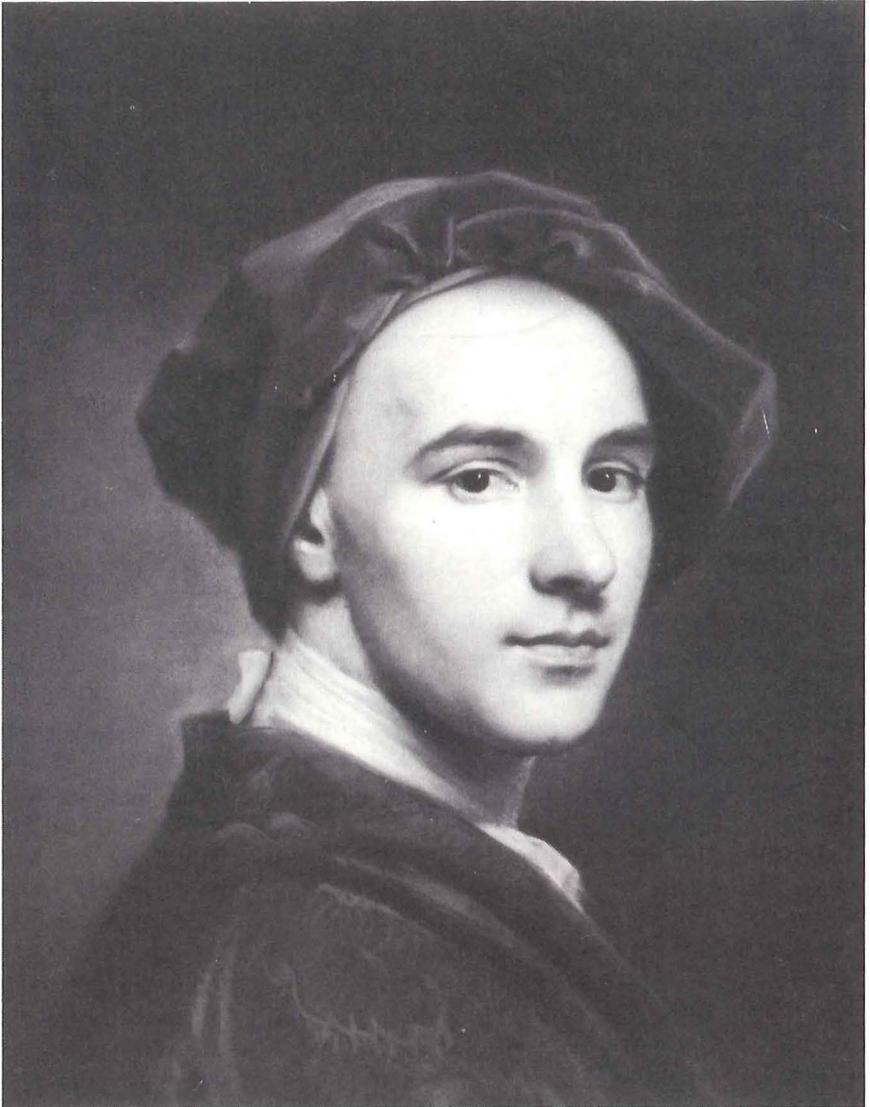
This stricture on Bath connoisseurship is easily explained. By the



4a ELIZABETH HOARE Drawing in black and red chalks by William Hoare (Private Collection)

mid 1770's, Bath was poised for its first period of major expansion beyond the old city walls. Polite life at the Spà was settling down into an agreeable if strict routine under the watchful eye of Beau Nash. Yet fashionable ennui raised its head: Lord Chesterfield was 'weary of sauntering along without knowing what to do',²¹ and Mrs Elizabeth Montague, the bluestocking, quipped that 'How d'ye do is all one hears in the morning and what's trumps in the afternoon',²² and on a particularly bad day, 'the only thing one can do in the morning that one did not do the day before is to die'.²³ Due allowance must be made for the writers' wish to entertain their correspondents with witticisms and well turned phrases but the need for novelty was strongly felt within a transitory population in search of distraction. How well timed was the arrival of a personable young man (Plate 4b) of considerable education and talent, pleasant manners and great charm. The ladies would enjoy his up-to-date-knowledge of foreign fashions and customs, and the gentlemen his first hand expertise in antique art and old masters. He could not fail, and success came quickly.

Mindful of the lesson previously learned in London, he began practising in pastel. He apparently sent for two examples of the work of Rosalba Carriera, a Venetian who had enjoyed a meteoric career both in Paris and her native Italy. Every Grand Tourist calling in Venice on his return north through the Tyrol and the German courts wished to have his likeness taken. Her sitters' books are full of English names, among them the Walpole brothers, but sometimes sitters are merely described as 'un inglese biondo' or 'un inglese bruno'. Her style has perhaps best been described by the de Goncourts as 'un souffle de ressemblance dans une fleur de couleur'.²⁴ William combining his solid Roman training and its emphasis on form with his own English reticence was not likely to imitate the Venetian's delicate style, but in every other way the technique is similar. Pastel sticks could be prepared in the studio;²⁵ the paper used was blue and fairly rough so that the dry pigment could adhere well. A light outline was drawn in black crayon and the first layer of tints lightly pencilled in. The back of the paper was then covered in glue and pasted on to a very fine canvas of regular weave, not unlike a strong linen. This gave strength to the paper so that it could be stretched and affixed to a wooden stretcher. The final



4b WILLIAM HOARE Self portrait in pastel
(Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases)

layers of colour were applied, and this required great lightness of touch, and the bloom of the finished article is due to the transparency of one layer under another. A fixative was then sprayed on and the pastel framed and glazed.

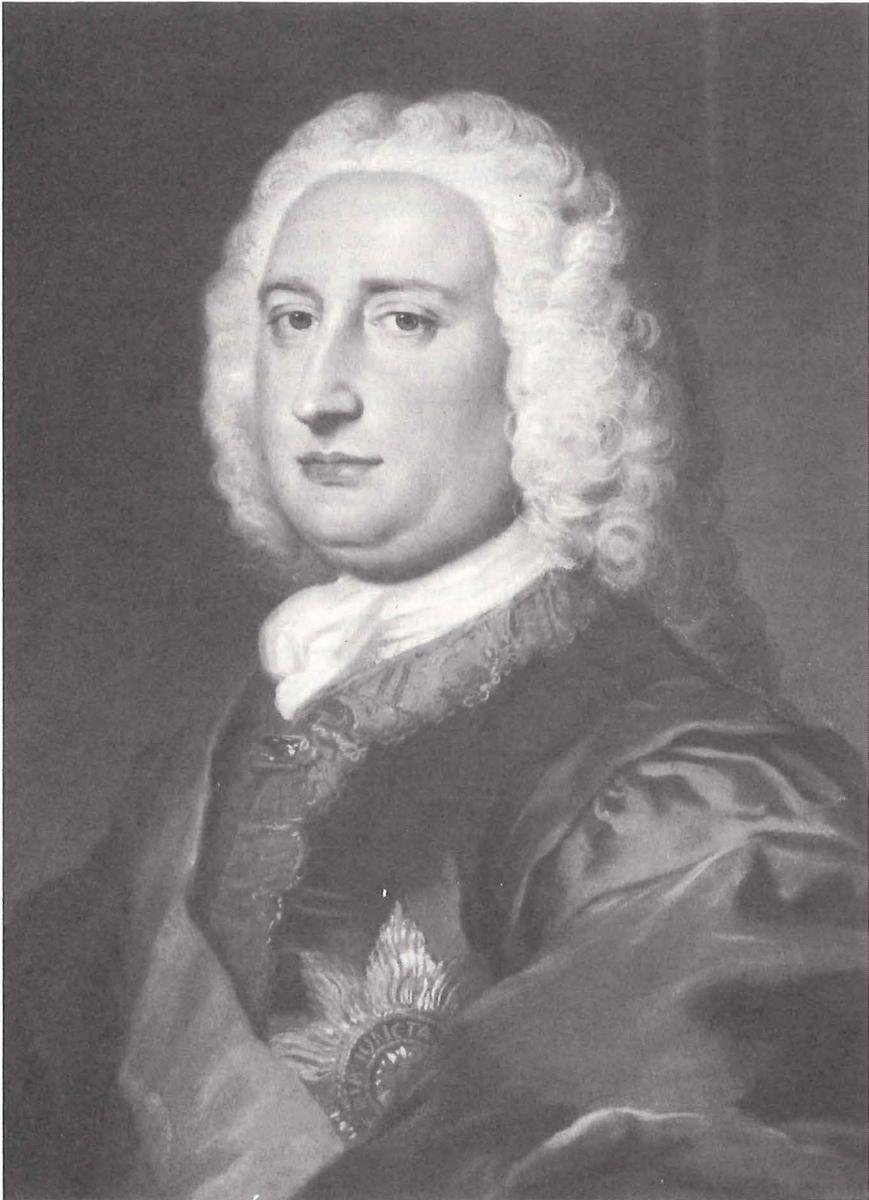
Visitors flocked to William's studio. Sitters came with their friends, and whole families wished to be portrayed individually (Plates 5a, 5b). It is quite impossible to assess how many of these pastels were done, for they became disseminated throughout Britain as cures ended and visitors returned home. Often, in later years, as pastel portraits fell out of fashion and were relegated to lesser rooms or corridors, sitters' identities were lost, and the pastels consigned to the saleroom. All that remains is the sale catalogue's description of the sitters' clothes, descriptions which underline the pastels' decorative quality. Ladies are described as wearing 'a black lace cloak with white bonnet', 'a brown bodice with white frills and ermine cloak', 'a white and blue dress with a carnation', 'a yellow dress with a festoon of flowers' and many more 'in white satin'. Gentlemen wore 'a slate coloured coat and vest embroidered with silver braid', 'a blue coat embroidered with gold braid', 'a pink dress [meaning a suit of clothes] with white vandyke lace collar'. This last description is obviously of a costume for a masquerade, the fashion for which reached its height in mid-century. Eastern costumes were always popular but there was a strong nostalgia for the elegance of the court of Charles I as typified by Van Dyck and many of the ladies in white satin thought of themselves as representing Henrietta Maria. Elizabeth Montague, writing to her sister in Bath describes a masquerade she attended at Ranelagh on May 1st 1749 in celebration of the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle:

I was some days preparing for the subscription masquerade where I was to appear in the character of the Queen Mother [i.e. Henrietta Maria], my dress white satin, fine new points for tucker, kerchief and ruffles, pearls and diamonds in my hair, and my hair curled after the VanDyke picture . . . Mr Montagu has made me lay by my dress to be painted in when I see Mr. Hoare again.²⁶

In the early 1740's, Bath was still a relatively small town where everyone was aware of everyone else, apprised of new arrivals if not by the bells then by the weekly list of names published in the



5a VISCOUNTESS FITZWILLIAM



5b VISCOUNT FITZWILLIAM Pastels of his father and mother bequeathed to the Fitzwilliam Museum by the 7th Viscount (Fitzwilliam Museum)

Bath newspapers. The routine of the daily round afforded many opportunities for meeting and gossiping, everything was closely discussed and written about : plays, concerts, the latest portrait. One of William's earliest patrons had been the Earl of Pembroke, a prominent Freemason, as were Sir Andrew Fountaine and Alexander Pope, all of whom sat to Hoare. Hoare's name may well have been mentioned in masonic circles, but the one factor which was most instrumental in introducing him to many future clients as well as enhancing his standing within the whole community was his wholesale support and close involvement in the Mineral Water Hospital.

The Royal Mineral Water Hospital in Bath, for which the first subscriptions were raised in 1723, finally received Royal Assent when Beau Nash carried Wood's revised plans to London. An Act of Incorporation followed in 1739 and the first meeting to be held in the new building, built with stone from Ralph Allen's quarry, took place on 1 January 1741, a scheme of annual subscriptions opening that November. The Minutes of the meeting on 1 May 1742²⁷ include a list of Assistants or Councillors and Mr. William Hoare's signature appears against no. 29. William's signature recurs below the transcript of the Minutes almost weekly and he was frequently nominated as House Visitor for the week. House Visitors were appointed in pairs and their appointment was no sinecure as their duties involved checking on patients, their treatment and progress, on the Hospital's amenities, staff and suppliers. Reading through the Minutes year by year, it becomes very noticeable that many of the names of the gentlemen involved read like a roll call of William's patrons, from the Presidents (Thomas Carew, Lord Chesterfield, Francis Colston, the Duke of Beaufort, Viscount Dupplin, William Pitt, Lord Clive, Sir Laurence Dundas) to the officials (Benjamin Bathurst, John Carew, Robert Dingley, Charles Danvers) and the medical staff (Dr. Oliver, Dr. Hartley, Dr. Rice Charlton, Mr. Pierce and Mr. Wright).

Prince Hoare's name does not appear in the Hospital Minutes until May 1758, when he was elected one of the Governors. The previous year, his bust of Ralph Allen had been presented by Dr. Warburton, Allen's nephew-in-law, the gift being recorded in the Minutes for 27 April 1757. Soon after returning from Italy and settling in Bath, Prince had married well. The *Gentleman's*

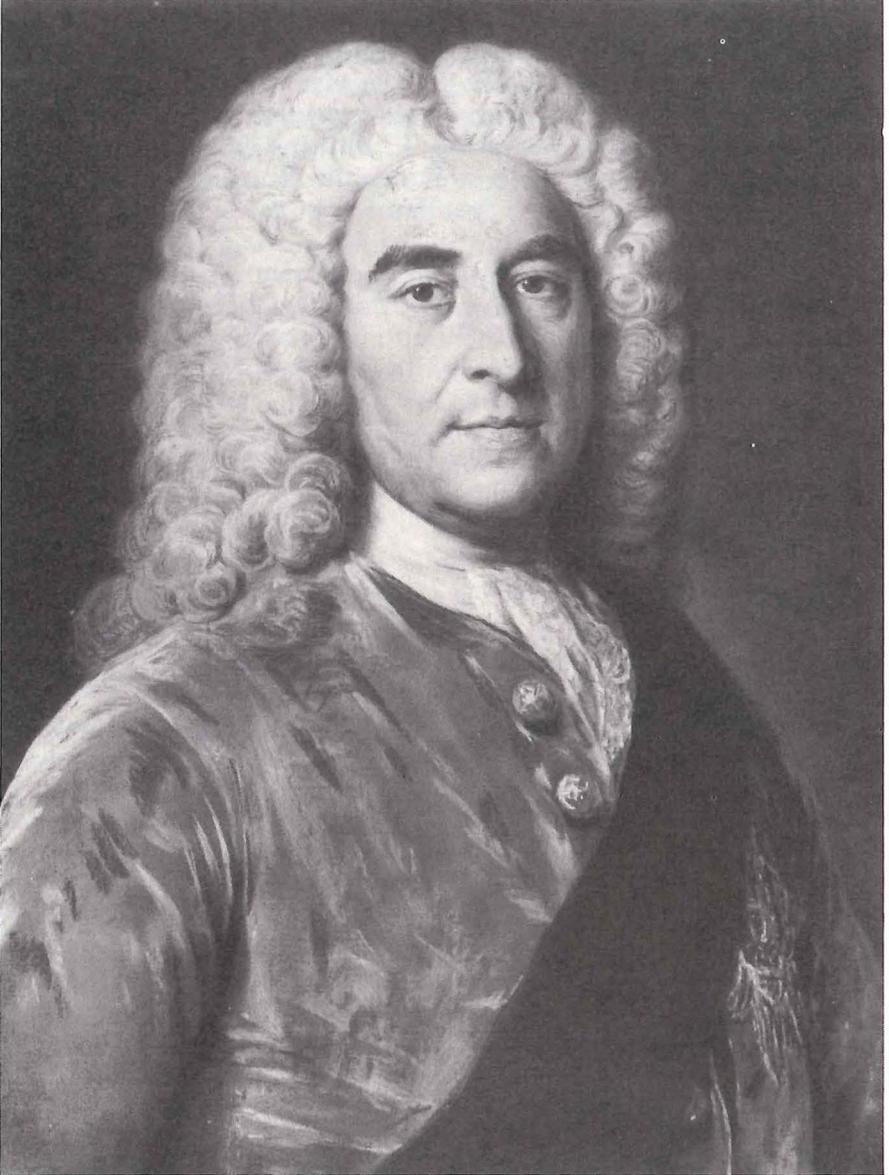
*Magazine*²⁸ in the list of marriages for 1751 included 'Mr Prince Hoar [sic] a celebrated statuary at Bath – to Miss Coulthurst of Melksham, Wilts, £6,000'. *The Bath Journal*²⁹ further endorses his happy choice, 'the beginning of last week was married Mr. Hoare an eminent statuary, to Miss Coulthurst of Melksham an agreeable young lady with a handsome fortune', and Prince firmly describes himself as 'gentleman' in the marriage register for 26 May 1751.

On what did Prince's fame and eminence rest? The 'very curious statue in white marble of Richard Nash Esq'³⁰ was not to be presented to the Guildhall until the following year. Lord Chesterfield had been pleased with his 'busto'³¹ and Lady Luxborough found Prince obliging:

Nash's Apelles is Howard (sic), his Praxiteles is Howard's brother, who, although a statuary, deigns to execute his art in sculpture on humble paper ceilings which are very handsome.³²

Vertue described him as 'a tall handsome and agreeable person somewhat skilled in music',³³ a skill which was to be exploited when on several occasions Prince was nominated organiser and steward of the musical performances held for the benefit of the Royal Hospital. Vertue thought that 'he bids fair to be a great man'³⁴ but somehow he never quite fulfilled that early promise. The lack of application hinted at in Mann's letter to Walpole is corroborated in passages from letters written by William Pitt to Richard Grenville. Prince had been commissioned to design and carve a monument to the memory of Captain Thomas Grenville, brother to Richard, who had been killed in action at sea in 1747. The first letter, dated 26 November 1752 from Bath, mentions that work is proceeding apace on the clay model for the statue, the figure promising 'to be a very good one'. The second letter, also from Bath but dated 29 January 1754, complains of repeated delays:

you have already received a petition from Mr. Hoare praying further time: indeed it is a very necessary request however unjustifiable the cause of the necessity may be . . . your patience is like to be thoroughly tried, for a twelvemonth or more will be the least time necessary to allow the sculptor.³⁵



6a DUKE OF NEWCASTLE Pastel by William Hoare (National Portrait Gallery)



6b DUKE OF NEWCASTLE Engraving by J. McAndell after the portrait by William Hoare of which there are several versions.
(By courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum)

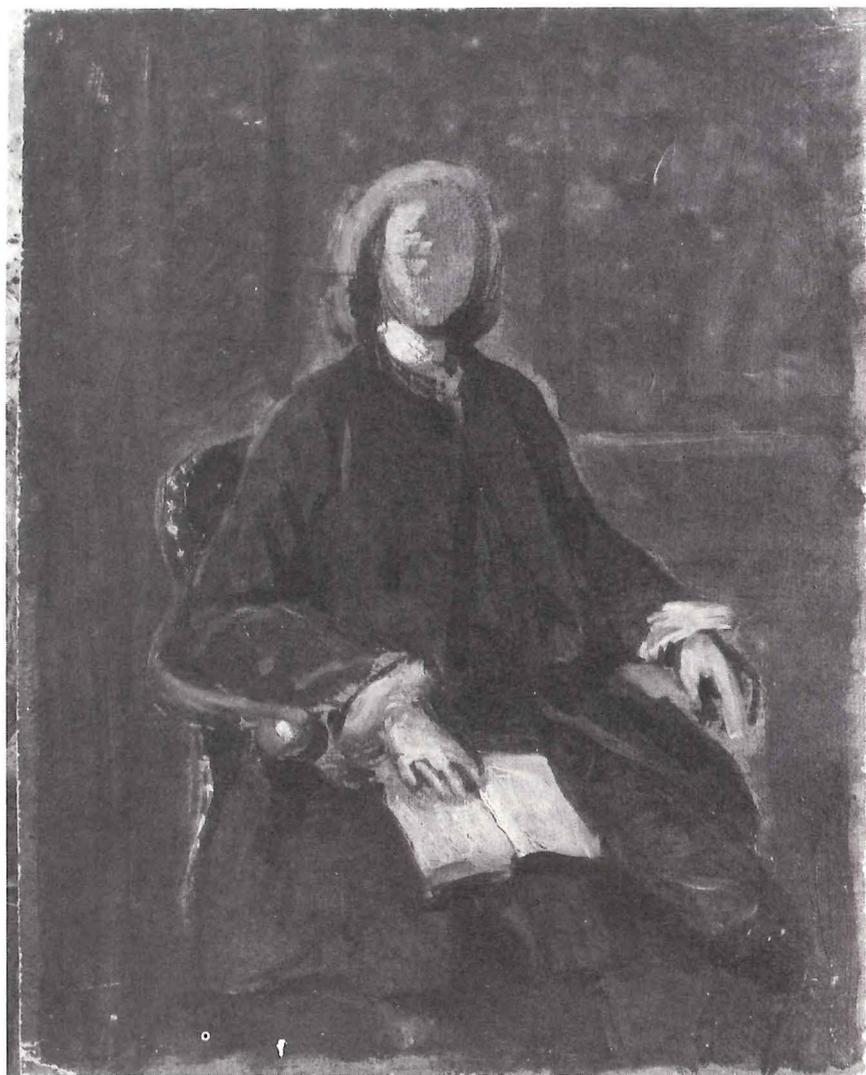
There is further mention that William, obviously embarrassed at his brother's dilatoriness was coming to the rescue with a new design for the figure. It is worth noting at this stage that many of William's patrons – the Methuens at Corsham, the Pembrokes at Wilton, the Hoares at Stourhead – also employed Prince either on such architectural details as chimneypieces or on portrait sculpture and garden statuary – there is the definite impression that William was nursing Prince's career; but Prince, probably more indolent than his brother by nature, and without the financial need to work too seriously to establish himself, was already living in some style in the south wing of Ralph Allen's town house, now 2 North Parade Passage, moving to Abbey Green in 1766.

By the late 1740's, William too was living 'in a handsome, genteel manner' and was described as having had 'great employment at Bath by most or many people of distinction for many years'.³⁶ Possibly through his connection with the Mineral Water Hospital, he had come into contact with Ralph Allen and become an habitu  of the circle of literary men who gathered at Prior Park, such as Pope and Fielding, both of whom he painted. Beau Nash not only sat to him, resplendent in white beaver and flowered damask waistcoat, but commissioned a series of beauties of the day, probably in pastel, with which to adorn his house in St. John's Court. Neither was Lord Chesterfield the only statesman to come to Bath and sit to Hoare, others followed: Pitt, Newcastle, Dupplin, Yorke, Hardwicke, Pelham, Camden. These important sitters required quite another and altogether grander approach, more in keeping with the trappings of high office. Some of these prestige portraits exist in several versions, not all of them fully autograph which presupposes the use of assistants in a studio, the quality of the replicas varying with the extent of the master's involvement. No precise details are known though apprentices were trained and it is possible to surmise what the procedure was. For nearly every state portrait there exists a fine pastel of the sitter's head and shoulders where the character is strongly expressed (Plates 6a, 6b). For quite a few, there are some roughly outlined oil sketches very small in size, where the paint laid on unprimed canvas has a chalky quality. These make no attempt at catching a likeness but suggest pose and composition (Plates 7a, 7b). In many cases engravings were made from

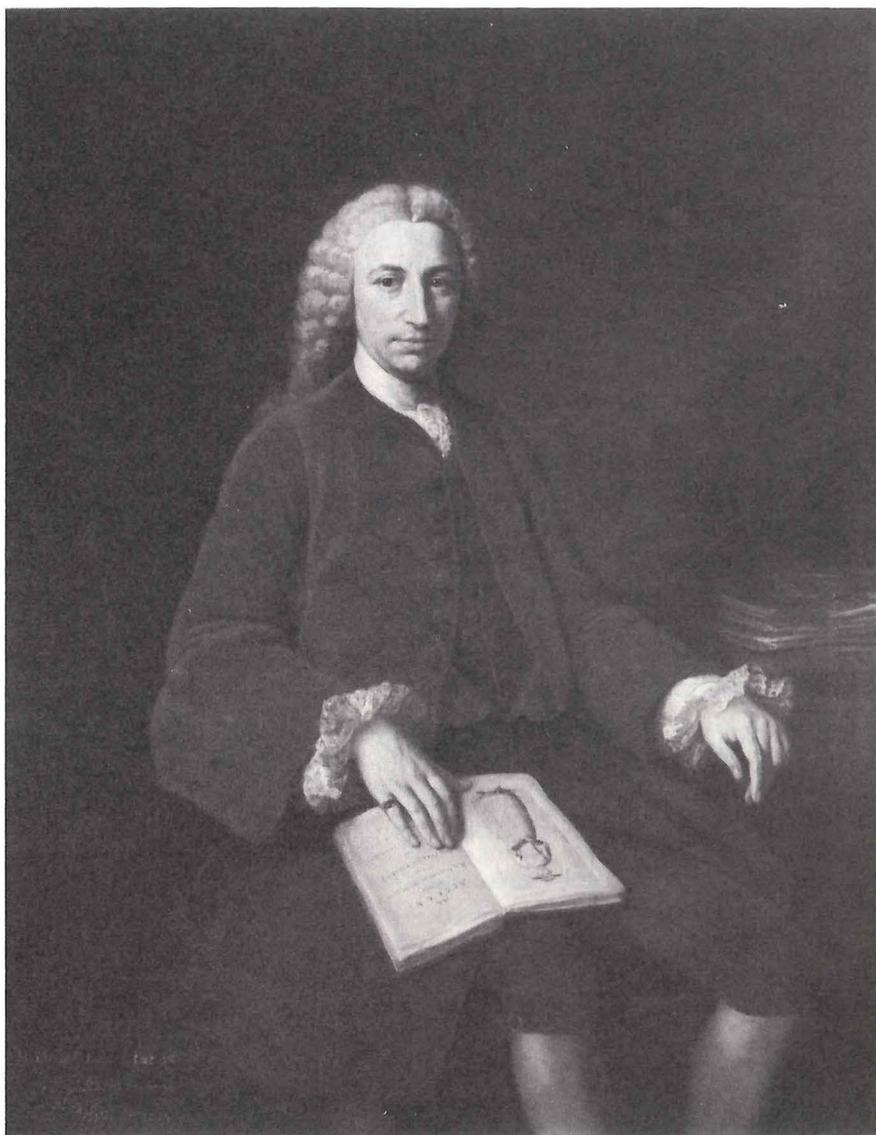
the finished painting and their sale helped to publicise both the sitter and the artist. What these large portraits lack in panache, they make up in sober characterisation, for the sitters are never romanticised and the portraits are always praised by contemporaries for their likeness. If there is a weakness in draughtsmanship, it lies in the hands with their long tapering and almost jointless fingers with flattened ends.

Yet it was just during those years of maximum output and success that William showed signs of restlessness. In 1749, he began a tour of France and the Netherlands, a tour ultimately cut short by the death of his sister Hannah Russell. He had frequented French artists while in Rome and had probably kept abreast of the new trends in France. He must have known of the huge success of pastels in the Salons where the French Academicians exhibited their works. Both Perronneau and La Tour were attracting critical attention, and pastels described as '*une espèce de peinture excessivement à la mode*'³⁷ set out to rival oil painting both in size and numbers so that in 1749 the Académie tried to stem the tide by refusing to elect any more pastellists to its ranks for a while. As in the case of the Roman journey no documents survive but we may again proceed by analogy. Joseph Highmore's diary of a trip to France made in 1734 still exists and his aim had been to study Rubens, also an interest of William's who at one time had a series of his drawings after Rubens hung in one of the rooms at Stourhead. The Louvre would not open its doors as a royal museum for a few years yet, but there were the major churches, the Palais du Luxembourg with its Rubens cycle, the major private collections and of course Versailles and its many treasures.

Soon after his return from the Continent William made another serious attempt at establishing himself in London. His name is totally missing from the Mineral Water Hospital Minutes from September 1751 to the Spring of 1752. Vertue mentions a stay in London in the Spring of 1752, but we do not know how long he actually stayed nor whether his growing family accompanied him. Although he came secure in the knowledge that he had some important commissions, (Henry Pelham, Lord and Lady Lincoln) and although he had some good friends in London such as Robert Dingley, the visit was badly timed. Ramsay and Hudson were firmly entrenched as the leading portraitists, Ramsay having as



7a ROBERT DINGLEY Oil sketch by William Hoare (Private Collection)



7b ROBERT DINGLEY Oil painting by William Hoare (Private Collection)

he said himself put the Italian opposition to flight, and Cotes was a skilled and elegant pastellist. William accepted the position and wisely returned to Bath, where his success and popularity remained unabated.

Much has been made of Warburton's remark that William was allowing Gainsborough to run away with all his business, a remark which may have been made at the time of a prolonged absence from Bath one summer when William spent a couple of months at Clumber Park painting the children of the Earl of Lincoln, later 2nd Duke of Newcastle. Gainsborough had come to Bath still relatively unknown at a period when the city was undergoing its second major period of expansion and there was a corresponding increase in the numbers of visitors, and therefore sitters, and there would have been ample business for both men. Several journals and diaries of the period mention visits to both artists' studios, often the same morning or afternoon, for by then William lived in Gay Street and Gainsborough up the hill in the Circus, and it seems that the two men, if not very close as their temperaments differed so greatly, were at least on a friendly footing. In a letter to William, containing an acid reference to Reynolds' Vth Discourse the text of which William had sent him, Gainsborough remarks:

As Mr. G. hates of all things the least tendency to play the sour critic hopes to talk over the affair some evening over a glass, as there is no other friendly or sensible way of settling these matters except upon canvas.³⁸

Reynolds' presidential Discourses were delivered periodically at the Royal Academy of which William had been a founder Member, his name and Zoffany's being added at the King's request to the list originally presented for his approval. William had in fact been interested in the foundation of such a body long before 1768, and had been involved in an earlier attempt in 1755. He had also exhibited at the Free Society and the Society of Artists (notably in 1762 'a picture intended to be given to the Royal Hospital – the group of Dr. Oliver and Mr. Pierce') until the Academy's inception. Living in Bath, he was not able to play a very important role in the Academy's affairs and always voted by post, and his votes are duly recorded in the Academy Minutes.³⁹ His peripheral role is perhaps subtly underlined by his placing on

the outer right edge of Zoffany's *Group Portrait of Royal Academicians* exhibited in 1772.

He also became a Member of the Society of Arts, possibly with the encouragement of both Henry Hoare and Robert Dingley who were Members, though the Society's Minutes⁴⁰ record that he was proposed by Sir Henry Cheere the sculptor, an erstwhile fellow student with his brother Prince. He paid his subscription from 1760 to 1764 after which his membership seems to have lapsed. Also through Robert Dingley he was connected with two London Charities, the Magdalen Hospital for fallen women and the Marine Society for the training of seamen.

These London links were to remain tenuous and honorary, and from the 1760's William's life centered round Bath and Stourhead. In 1766, he painted a very large altarpiece, *The Pool of Bethesda*, for the Octagon Chapel, a subject already used in London by Hogarth for the staircase of Barts' Hospital. For this he received in return not only the considerable fee of £100 but the leasehold at 4gns per annum of a pew for four people in the best part of the chapel. This is his only historical painting on the grand Italian scale, the colour is strong and there are fine areas of painting notably the golden tints round the angel flying upwards, but the composition lacks tension although the theme of healing waters is apposite (Plate 8). From being an important patron, Henry Hoare of Stourhead, who commissioned some £1400 worth of work from William, became a lifelong friend,⁴¹ and their relationship is very close to the one that existed between Turner and Lord Egremont. Long visits were made, calls were exchanged, Henry sent presents of venison, William sent a pastel, his daughter Mary was allowed to sketch from the Old Masters, William procured a young carver to work on the decorations for Alfred's Tower. Mary eventually married into the family and a happy atmosphere pervaded the house as Henry writes to a relation:

Brides and Bridegrooms arrive here daily and grow up like mushrooms . . . and I begin to be afraid of opening a door for fear of interrupting their billing and cooing.⁴²

William began to paint and exhibit more intermittently, and lived the life of a gentleman, secure in his social position and in his family and friends. Always mentioned with respect and affection,



8 THE POOL OF BETHESDA Altarpiece for the Octagon Chapel, Bath
(Trustees of the Masonic Hall, Bath)

he was, after Gainsborough's departure, the leading artistic figure in Bath. Alexander Cozens approached him for help in publishing ventures, Wright of Derby who had had a brief stay in Bath in 1774 secured his votes in a Royal Academy election, the young Ozias Humphry and the boy Lawrence both met with encouragement. William's talent had never been innovative, his technique formed on the Italian mode was sound but his style evolved gently through his life more through outside influence than any inner development, and at various times his work contains echoes of Gainsborough, Dance and Pine.

When he died in 1792 he had been living for quite some years at 4 Edgar Buildings and when the property was sold in 1794 after his widow's death the house was described as 'lot 1 the constant residence of the proprietor'; lot 2 was one share in the New Assembly Rooms and lot 3 'One pew of four commodious sittings in the best part of the body of the Octagon Chapel'.⁴³ He and his wife are remembered in a graceful and restrained wall monument

in white and grey marble situated between two of the left hand gallery windows of St. Swithins, Walcot. The more grandiose monument by Chantrey in Bath Abbey was not erected until very much later in 1828. The last lines of the little obituary leaflet read:

The money which he acquired by his successful professional pursuits, he expended on the education of his children; and at his death, in 1792, left them scarcely any other possessions than the remembrance of his virtues and his useful labours.⁴⁴

Of William's eldest son, another William, little is known as yet, and the similarity of name has given rise to some confusion. He first appears, indirectly, in a letter of 24 December 1768, written by Henry Hoare Junior (i.e. Henry Hoare of Beckenham, husband of Mary Hoare) to Lady Bruce, Henry Hoare of Stourhead's beloved daughter, asking her to settle her debt to his father-in-law:

I am desired by Mr. Hoare to present his best Compts to your Ladyship and to acquaint you, that as he is now collecting his Bills, in order to pay his sons Prentice fee, he begs the favour of your Ladyship to remit to me his little Bill.⁴⁵

This 'little Bill' was for £63.00 in payment of four fancy pictures, and as young William went into business, one assumes that his father was buying him into a firm; he obviously became very successful as Prince once said of him that he was as rich as a grocer.

Very much later, in the early 1780's, the two brothers took a trip from London to Bath in young William's new high-perch phaeton at record speed. The episode is described in a letter to their common friend, James Northcote, and after complaints that the splendour of their equipage caused them to be overcharged by greedy innkeepers, the letter ends with a delightful vignette of their father being finally persuaded to take a turn in this new acquisition:

We have persuaded Father for once to mount the phaeton which he is of the opinion is not too high as he can clearly discern objects from it on earth without a telescope which he carried with him for that purpose.⁴⁶

According to his will, proven in London on 3 March 1808,⁴⁷

the younger William, who had been living in New Bridge Street, seems to have died unmarried. The bulk of his fortune, £25,000 passed to his younger brother Prince, and each of his two sisters received £5,000. When all the bequests are added up, we reach the total of £37,000 which since Greig's edition of the *Farington Diary* in 1923–8 was thought to have been left by William Senior.⁴⁸

No portrait of William has yet been identified but we know that he was very like his brother, Mrs. Inchbald being of the opinion that William always put her in mind of Prince.⁴⁹ The letter to Northcote gives a few more clues: he had attained a certain proficiency in music and in drawing, and many light pencil sketches of landscapes, particularly Welsh, are his, as it was certainly he who accompanied Richard Colt Hoare on his early tours in Wales, not William Senior who would have been far too old a gentleman to face up to the rigours of an eighteenth century sketching trip.

Mary Hoare's baptismal certificate states that she was christened at St. Swithin's, Walcot on 4 September 1744. She showed an early talent for drawing, but of course there could be no question of her taking up painting as a profession. She was encouraged at home by her father who set her a careful programme:

It is my endeavour and desire to make the subjects she is employed in a lesson to herself as well as an exercise of her ingenuity.⁵⁰

and she was set to illustrate such elevating subjects as *Vertue and Peace, Health and Temperance*. She was also allowed to copy suitable Old Masters such as the Poussin *Hercules between Vice and Vertue* at Stourhead. (Plate 10a). She reached a high degree of proficiency and in 1760 won the Royal Society of Arts gold medal for Class 66, an honour duly noted in the *Bath Advertiser*.⁵¹ The medal was awarded on April 9th, and a letter sent her on April 16th but sadly she was not allowed to come and claim it herself for the Society's Minutes for 30 April read

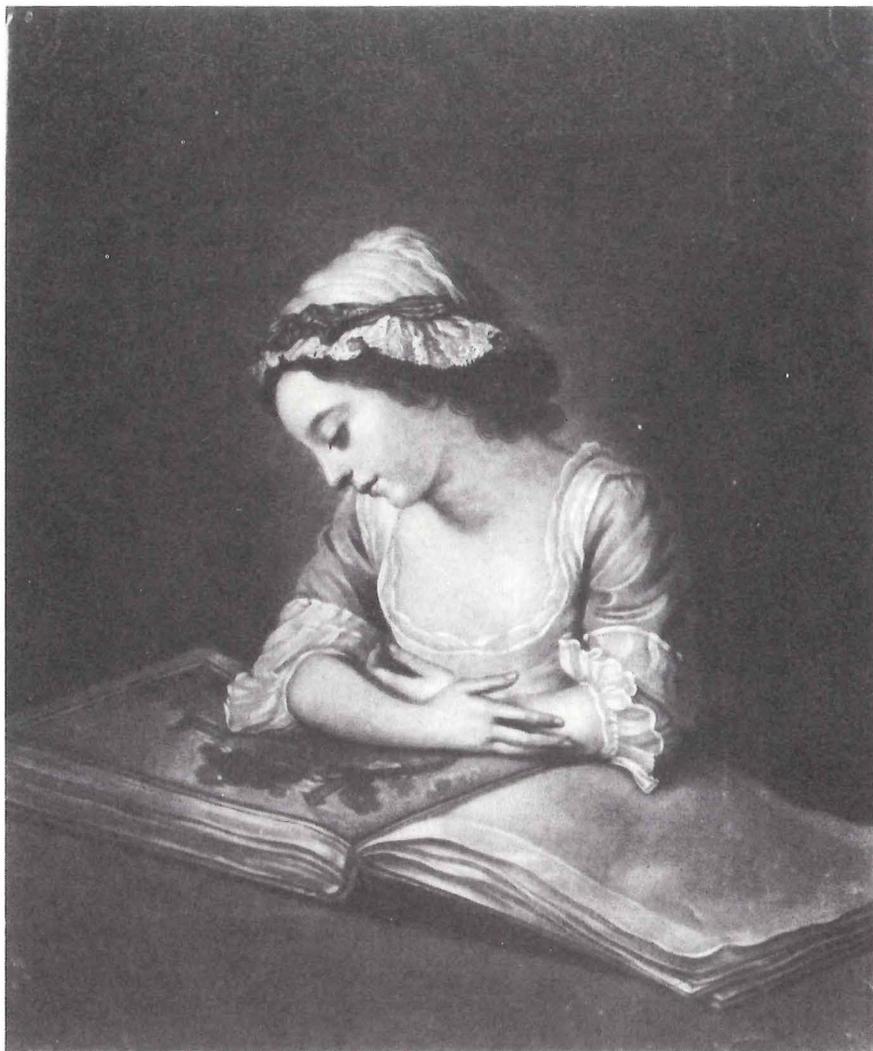
Ordered that the Gold Medal adjudged to Miss Hoare be delivered to Mr. Robert Dingley, a member of the Society to be transmitted to Miss Hoare at Bath.⁵²

Even her thanks were sent by proxy, for a letter from Robert



9 R.H.A. BENNETT OF BECKENHAM, KENT Drawing in red and black chalks (Private Collection)

Dingley dated 14 June was recorded in the Minutes desiring that the Society would accept of her drawing, which has since been lost. She was allowed to exhibit publicly however and classical or biblical subjects appear in the catalogues of the Society of Artists



10a MISS HOARE An engraving by John Faber after William Hoare, showing Mary poring over a book of engravings.
(By courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum)



10b ANNE HOARE Drawing in red and black chalks
(Courtauld Institute Galleries, Witt Collection)

and the Free Society, the last time in 1766 the year after her marriage.

It was probably at Stourhead that Mary met her husband, Henry Hoare of Beckenham, junior partner in the family bank, a young man of amiable disposition, distinguished from the other Henrys in the family by the nickname 'Fat' or 'Jovial'. Mary went to live in Beckenham but her only son died very young and her husband died early. She still drew, but merely as a hobby, and there are a few little chalk portraits of personal friends living in and around Beckenham which have paraded under her father's name and which for all their charm lack real solidity (Plate 9).

Mary's younger sister Anne, of whom one knows much less and who died unmarried was still living in Bath at the time of her brother William's death in 1808, but she may have ended her days with her sister at Beckenham as they share a handsome altar tomb erected in the churchyard at Chislehurst, at the expense of their younger brother Prince who 'in their affection found his happiness'. The sisters 'united during life' were 'now tenants of one grave awaiting the voice of their redeemer'.

There is a very simple drawing of her as a little girl by her father (Plate 10b) in red and black chinks, showing her primly seated with her hands demurely folded onto her lap, neat as a pin, her muslin pinafore over her dress and a broad muslin ribbon holding her cap in place. She is not known to have practised drawing but may have been the archivist of the family as Prince mentions several books of press cuttings compiled by her. She outlived Mary by only one year, dying in 1821.

Prince was obviously destined to follow in his father's footsteps. Born in 1755, he was encouraged to draw from the first and some of his earliest efforts are immortalised in a pastel portrait of him by his father (Plate 11a). The little boy still in long curls and with the very dark eyes which are a family trait, proudly holds up a sheet of paper covered with red chalk scribbles. In his right hand he holds a porte-crayon with red chalk at one end and black chalk at the other, his father's standard drawing tool. He was educated at the grammar school in Bath under a Mr. Hele, and like his sister Mary won a prize – in his case a silver palette – from the Royal Society of Arts for a drawing of outlines. In 1773, he was admitted as a painting student at the Royal Academy schools.



11a PRINCE HOARE AS A CHILD Pastel by William Hoare
(By courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum)

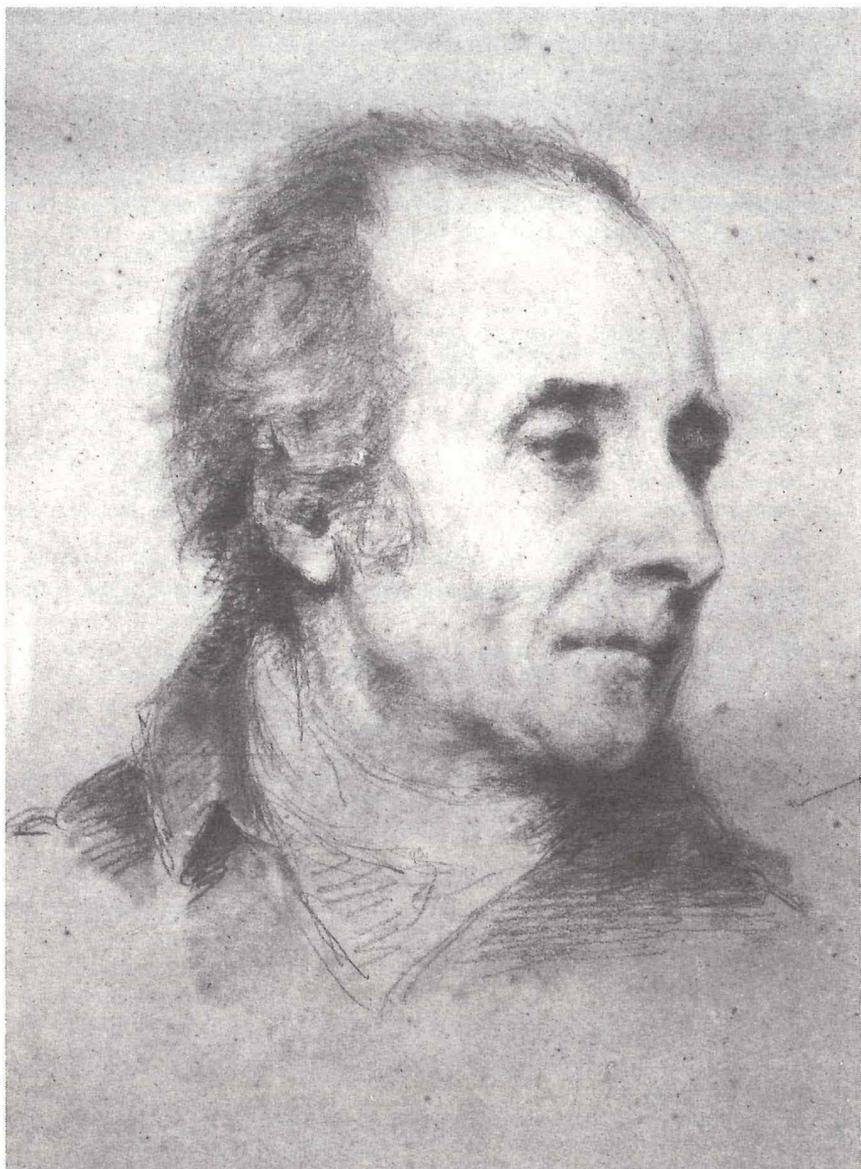
By 1776, he had left for France and Italy, like his father before him, and studied under Mengs and Batoni his father's old friend. Known as a young gentleman of means most doors were opened to him and he was elected a member of the Etruscan Society in Cortona and the Imperial Academy in Florence, and was asked to add his self portrait to the Grand Duke's Gallery. While in Rome he had become friends with such as Fuseli and Northcote and was much better placed than his father to succeed in the historical genre on his return. Indeed, Macklin asked him to contribute several paintings to his Poet's Gallery but any real success he might have known as a painter was soon cut short by ill-health as his funerary inscription at Chislehurst explains:

he manifested an early excellence but from delicacy of health relinquished that pursuit and devoted himself to literature.⁵³

He found it advisable to live part of the time at least by the sea and owned property in Brighton as well as in London, and in 1787 made a short stay in Portugal where the climate was thought to be favourable, but his health remained delicate for the rest of his life though he still drew privately with considerable skill as is shown in the searching drawing of his close friend James Northcote (Plate 11b).

He began occupying some of his leisure time with writing what were loosely called operas but are more properly described as plays with music. A few of these, although too mannered and slight for today, knew a certain success and their libretti ran to several editions. *No song, no supper*, an opera in two acts was performed at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, intermittently from 1789 to 1793, and *The Prize*, a farce in two acts and first performed in 1792 was repeated until 1800; both pieces had music composed by Storace. It may be that acquaintance with Sheridan through the Linleys of Bath was of some help, and Prince continued to write similar pieces into the 1800s.

More seriously, he became deeply involved in the history of English art and was busily collecting material which in the event was never fully published. He was well enough thought of by such antiquaries as Francis Douce and Samuel Lysons to merit their support when in 1815 he requested and obtained membership to the Society of Antiquaries. Together with Joseph Farington, he discussed the propriety of publishing regular



11b JAMES NORTHCOTE Pencil drawing tinted with crayon by Prince Hoare
(Victoria Art Gallery, Bath)

extracts from the proceedings of the Royal Academy and he did publish several books on artistic matters.

Always affectionate towards his family and friends he remained unmarried, although he seems to have formed an attachment while in Rome to Maria Hadfield who was to marry Richard Cosway, and died at an advanced age from the delayed consequences of a carriage accident in Brighton in 1834. He is buried at Chislehurst not far from his sisters' tomb.

Notes

- 1 *East Anglian Magazine*, 1955, Vol. XIV.
- 2 Royal Academy Library, grangerised copy of A. Graves, *The Free Society and the Society of Artists*, 1907.
- 3 Portrait of an Artist, cat. no. 86, Royal Academy Exhibition, 1783.
- 4 Daniel Defoe, *Tour in England and Wales*, 1738: 'Eye is situate in a Bottom between two Rivers, [it] is meanly built and the streets dirty'.
- 5 Harold Wright, ms. notes in the Victoria Art Gallery. These mention that the whole family moved to Faringdon, but although a search of the Berkshire Records Office has revealed many Hoares, including a William Hoare born in 1707 to a William and Hannah Hoare, no trace of the Suffolk branch has been found.
- 6 See note 2.
- 7 The notebooks of George Vertue, *The Walpole Society*, 1947, Vol. XXII.
- 8 See note 7, *op. cit.*.
- 9 R.B. Peake, *The Coleman Family*, 2 vols, 1841.
- 10 Christie's sale, 3 and 4 August, 1795.
- 11 R.B. Peake, *op. cit.*, Mr. Pulteney, later Marquis of Bath, referring to a request for Italian furnishing silk in a letter of 1727 writes: 'in short Mrs. Pulteney leaves the whole to you, desiring to have the damask very rich and the pattern very large'.
- 12 M. Missirini, *Memorie . . . (della) Romana Academia di San Luca*, 1823.
- 13 Letter to Henry Hoare, 5 June 1760. Stourhead papers on deposit to the Wiltshire Records Office by the National Trust.
- 14 British Museum Add. Ms. 6181.
- 15 See note 7, *op. cit.*.
- 16 See note 7, *op. cit.*.
- 17 W.S. Lewis ed., *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, Vol. 20.
- 18 This bust has just come through a sale at Christie's (5 July 1985, lot 252).
- 19 See note 7, *op. cit.*.
- 20 F. Elvington Ball (ed.), *Correspondence of Jonathan Swift, D.D.*, 1913.
- 21 *Letters to and from Henrietta, Countess of Suffolk*, 2 vols., 1824.
- 22 Emily J. Climenson, *Elizabeth Montague, the Queen of the Bluestockings, her Correspondence from 1720 to 1761*, 2 vols., 1906.
- 23 See note 22, *op. cit.*.
- 24 Edmond et Jules de Goncourt, *L'Art du XVIIIème siècle*, 1881-2, 'a breath of

- likeness caught in a dusting of colour'.
- 25 William Salmon, M.D., gives a standard recipe for these pastel sticks in his *Polygraphice* (1702 reprint): he advises that the pure pigment should be ground either with plaster of Paris, calcined alabaster or tobacco-pipe clay, tempered with a little gum-water and then rolled into sticks which are dried and sharpened.
 - 26 Emily J. Climensen, *op. cit.*, letter to Sarah Robinson, 8 May 1749.
 - 27 Ms. Minute Books of the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases, Bath.
 - 28 *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 1751.
 - 29 *The Bath Journal*, 3 June 1751.
 - 30 *Covent Garden Journal*, no. 61, 29 August 1752.
 - 31 Bonamy Dobrée, *Letters of Philip Dormer Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield*, 1932, letter to the Bishop of Waterford, 22 May 1752: '[Lady Chesterfield] has sent you from Bristol a busto of your humble servant, cast from a marble one done by Mr. Hoare, at Bath, for Mr. Adderley: it is generally thought very like'.
 - 32 Marjorie Williams, *Lady Luxborough goes to Bath*, 1946.
 - 33 See note 7, *op. cit.*.
 - 34 See note 33.
 - 35 W.J. Smith, (ed.), *The Grenville Papers*, 4 vols., 1852.
 - 36 See note 7, *op. cit.*.
 - 37 Lafont de Saint-Yenne, *Réflexions sur quelques causes de l'état présent de la peinture en France*, 1747.
 - 38 Mary Woodall, (ed.), *The Letters of Thomas Gainsborough*, 1963, where the recipient of the letter is wrongly assumed to be Prince Hoare.
 - 39 Royal Academy Library.
 - 40 Royal Society of Arts Archives.
 - 41 Kenneth Woodbridge, *Landscape and Antiquity*, 1970.
 - 42 Letter to Lord Bruce, 6 July 1765. Stourhead papers, see note 13.
 - 43 *The Bath Chronicle*, Thursday 9 January 1794, (repeated 16 January) the advance notice of the sale to be conducted on the premises by Mr. Plura.
 - 44 See note 2.
 - 45 Stourhead papers, see note 13.
 - 46 Royal Academy Library, grangerised copy of A. Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts* where the letter is thought to be by William Senior; the writing however is not his and the contents prove that it is by William Junior.
 - 47 Public Record Office.
 - 48 James Greig, (ed.), *The Farington Diary by Joseph Farington R.A.*, Vol. 5, 1925. Through Greig's habit of adding (RA) to the text every time the name William Hoare is mentioned, the whole of this passage has been misconstrued.
 - 49 K. Garlick & A. Macintyre (eds.), *The Diary of Joseph Farington*, Vol. IV, 1979, entry for 13 December 1799.
 - 50 See note 13, *op. cit.*.
 - 51 *The Bath Advertiser*, 10 May 1760.
 - 52 See note 40.
 - 53 Tablet to his memory inside the church at Chislehurst.