

## Lornette Pemberton

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**From:** Jacob Simon  
**Sent:** 20 April 2017 15:03  
**To:** Lucy Peltz  
**Cc:** Neil Evans  
**Subject:** FW: Mrs Smith-Barwell

For information. Probably best to read her e-mail before my response.

Jacob

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**From:** Jacob Simon  
**Sent:** 20 April 2017 15:00  
**To:** anjana ahuja  
**Subject:** RE: Mrs Smith-Barwell

Dear Anjana

Good to hear from you and good to hear of the positive response from readers.

A complaint from the Rice family!! I have no sense whatsoever that the position of the NPG has been misrepresented but if there was something specific I would investigate.

As to Mrs. Smith-Barwell, I wrote to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art on 3 April. I have pasted in the text at the end of this message.

Do feel free to come back to me on any point concerning this.

With very best wishes

Jacob

Message to LACMA, 3 April

Dear curator

### **Feedback on a portrait at LACMA**

Portrait of Mrs. Smith Barwell, née Unwin  
Thomas James Northcote (England, London, 1746-1831)  
England, 1803  
Oil on canvas, 38 1/4 x 27 in. (97.16 x 68.58 cm)  
Adele S. Browning Memorial Collection, donated by Mildred Browning Green and Judge Lucius Peyton Green (51.30)

Here are some comments on the above portrait in your collection.

**THE SITTER:** When the picture was sold at Christie's 8 June 1928, lot 100, it was described as Mrs. Shaw Barwell. It is not clear why the dealers, Arthur Tooth and Son, then changed the identification. Evidence is required to support the identification.

**THE ARTIST:** The picture was sold in 1928 as by James Northcote. Attributions at that time of portraits of this kind were notoriously unreliable. In my opinion, as author of "The Account Book of James Northcote", *Walpole Society*, vol. 58, 1996, this portrait is not by Northcote. It is not signed. It does not appear in the account book. The old claim that it is Gwynn no. 387, that is my no. 407, is untenable, since the portrait in

the account book was a head canvas, for which Northcote normally employed a canvas size 30 x 25 ins, rather smaller than your picture.

THE DATE OF THE PORTRAIT: I believe that the date allocated to your portrait of 1803 derives from the 1803 date in the account book of Gwynn no.387. To my eye the costume in the portrait seems rather earlier, perhaps about 1790, although I have not looked at this in detail.

Jacob Simon

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**From:** anjana ahuja [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 20 April 2017 14:48  
**To:** Jacob Simon  
**Subject:** Mrs Smith-Barwell

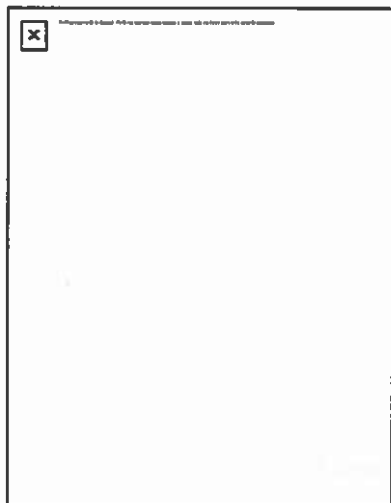
Dear Jacob,

I hope you are well. I had an astonishingly positive response from readers to the article.

The FT has received a complaint from the Rice family, which is currently being dealt with. One suggestion is that I have misrepresented the position of the NPG. I am pretty sure I have not, but wanted to check that this was the case?

The letter also contains one interesting piece of information, which Tom and I had come across independently, namely the existence of a painting entitled Mrs Smith-Barwell in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, also attributed to J Northcote in 1803.

<http://collections.lacma.org/node/229926>



## Portrait of Mrs. Smith Barwell, née Unwin | LACMA Collections

[collections.lacma.org](http://collections.lacma.org)

Portrait of Mrs. Smith Barwell, née Unwin, Thomas James Northcote (England, London, 1746-1831), England, 1803, Paintings, Oil on canvas.

Can you offer any opinion as to whether it, rather than our painting, is the Mrs Smith noted in Northcote's account book? The signature on our Mrs Smith looks the same on our other signed Northcote (we also have one of the Admiral Brooking portraits from 1803). Also, I note that Northcote's entry for Mrs Smith records "a head in Black drapery", which I think describes our painting better than the LA one. Any assistance on this point would be much appreciated.

Best wishes,  
Anjana



Sent from Outlook

