

**Lot 957. Portrait of Florence Smyth, fourth daughter of Sir John Smyth, second Baronet, married Sir Jarrit Smyth, 1767. 49 in. x 40 in. in carved and gilt frame.**

This particular portrait has not been traced but there is a smaller portrait of Florence Smyth owned by North Somerset Council which enables us to see what she looked like.

This smaller portrait was painted by Thomas Hill and thought to date from 1731 which was the year of her marriage to Jarrit Smith. Her first marriage had been to John Piggot and this portrait was donated to the North Somerset Council by members of the Smyth-Pigott family in 1947.



Image: courtesy of North Somerset Council WESTM: 1976.30

**Who was Florence Smyth, how was she connected to Ashton Court and why is she important?**

Florence Smyth was born in 1701 and was the daughter of Sir John Smyth, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baronet, and his wife the former Elizabeth Astry. Florence had four elder sisters, an elder brother John Smyth, 2 younger brothers, and a younger sister.

When her father died in 1726 the baronetcy passed to her brother John. She was clearly fond of him as she wrote to him after visiting him in Oxford:

*\*‘You were so kind to desire you might hear how we got home, which I take the first opportunity to let you know that we go very well to Ashton. The place I must needs tell you seems very dismal after being in so much good company. The remainder of our journey after we left you we [sic] was very melancholy’.*

Although her brother was married twice both marriages were childless. By the time of John’s death in 1741 he had been pre-deceased by his 2 younger brothers and four elder sisters. As a result Ashton Court passed to Florence and her second husband, John’s friend and solicitor, Jarrit Smith. Additionally Jarrit, in settlement of his claim for John’s debts of between £20000 and £30,000 obtained the entire mansion and park of Ashton Court.

Such was Florence’s regard for her brother that in 1742 it is possible she commissioned the impressive silver salver complete with engraved coat of arms in his recognition and honour.

\*Abstract of Toland, L. (2017). Late-Adolescent English Gentry Siblings and Leave-Taking in the Early Eighteenth Century. In: Bailey, M., Barclay, K. (eds) *Emotion, Ritual and Power in Europe, 1200–1920*. Palgrave Studies in the History of Emotions. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-44185-6\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-44185-6_4) (Abstract accessed 2022)

\* <https://www.familysearch.org/>