

Charles Raymond Smith (1798 or 1802 – 1888)

Smith was the son of James Smith II and can perhaps be identified with a 'Chas Smith' who was born on 5 December 1798 and baptised on 31 March 1799, at St Marylebone parish church, London. The 1881 census however gives his age as 79, suggesting a birth date of about 1802.

He trained under William Tollemache and Josephus John Pinnix Kendrick and at the Royal Academy Schools from 1816 onwards. In 1817 the Society of Arts awarded him a medal for an original model. This was followed by another medal for a model in the RA life class and the Society of Arts gold Isis medal for a group of two figures. He won the Society of Arts large gold medal for a group of *The fight for the body of Patroclus* in 1822 .

He first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1820, showing two portrait busts and giving his address as 57 Norton Street, Fitzroy Square. In the later 1820s he worked from 37 George Street (now Bolsover Street) but by 1830 he had settled in Gloucester Place, New Road, where he remained until 1860 when he moved to premises at 246 Marylebone Road. J T Smith described him as 'a highly talented sculptor' and noted that he owned some models by his father's teacher Giovanni Battista Locatelli (Smith 1828, vol 2, 126).

Between 1838 and 1842 Smith carved a series of ten statues of Tudor kings, queens and other notables of the period in historical costume for Mamhead Park, Devon. They remained in the gallery of this magnificent Tudor-style mansion until 1985, when all but two of the figures were sold. Further commissions for sculpture for country house settings followed, including two life-sized statues of Michelangelo and Raphael commissioned by Henry, 3rd Marquess of Lansdowne for Bowood. Smith exhibited the statue of Raphael, together with a Falconer carved for Mr Bulteel of Flete, in Devon, at Westminster Hall in 1844. Both works were well received by the critics: the Literary Gazette considered the Falconer 'talented and full of pictorial character', while the Art Union thought that the Raphael had 'much merit'.

In the early 1850s Smith provided statues, a fountain and other ornaments for the formal gardens at Eaton Hall, Cheshire, laid out by William Andrews Nesfield for the 2nd Marquess of Westminster. He later worked with Nesfield at Holkham Hall, where he was responsible for the huge fountain featuring Saint George slaying the dragon. Smith received payments of £115 15s in January 1856, £300 on account in April 1856 and a further £936 2s 10d the following January, for the fountain, plus £542 for other, unspecified, sculptures for the terrace at Holkham.

Smith was also active as a sculptor of funerary monuments and examples of his work in that field include the life-sized semi-recumbent figures of Jacob Britton in Durham Cathedral and the Reverend Thomas Whitaker, at Whalley, Lancashire. His best known work is the effigy of Grace Darling, the lighthouse-keeper's daughter, famous for courageously rowing out into stormy seas with her father to rescue the survivors of the wreck of the paddle steamer Forfarshire. The figure was part of a 13th-century-styled canopied tomb which was erected in 1844 beside her grave in Bamburgh churchyard, Northumberland. The stonework of the monument deteriorated rapidly in this exposed situation and in 1885 the effigy was replaced with a new figure of the heroine carved from Smith's model, which he had preserved in his studio. The original effigy is now inside St Aidan's church.

Smith died on 15 April 1888 and was buried in Kensal Green cemetery, where his grave is marked by a ledger stone. He left property valued at £2,110 17s 5d and his executors included his son, Charles John Thomas Smith, who was described as a sculptor. Smith's work has attracted little scholarly attention and his posthumous reputation has been affected by the considerable confusion that surrounds his identity. In his Royal Academy Exhibitors and Exhibitors at the British Institution Algernon Graves lists works by 'Charles Smith', 'Charles Raymond Smith' and 'R. Smith' (Graves 1875, 500; Graves VII, 1905-6, 169-70, 172,

189). Gunnis later included biographies of 'Charles R' and 'Raymond Smith', who he suggested were probably father and son, in his Dictionary of British Sculptors. It seems very likely that these were all the same sculptor and that Smith used his middle name from the 1840s onwards, perhaps to distinguish himself more clearly from Charles Harriott Smith.

Grace Darling's effigy in Bamburgh Churchyard, 1844



St George Fountain, Holkam Hall, 1856