

The Characters of Fairfax House

CHARLES FAIRFAX (c1700-1772)
9th Viscount of Emley

The ninth and last Viscount of Emley, who commissioned the re-modelling of Fairfax House, inherited his title and estates in 1738 upon the death of his father, William Fairfax, the eighth Viscount. The Viscount married twice, losing his first wife Elizabeth Constable (nee Clifford) within a year of their marriage in 1721. His second marriage to Mary Fairfax, a not so distant cousin, produced nine children – seven of whom died in infancy – with Mary surviving barely two years after the birth of their last child. Another daughter, Elizabeth, died aged 17, so that by 1753 the Viscount had only one remaining daughter, Ann.



ANN FAIRFAX (c1724-1793)
The Honourable Miss Ann Fairfax

The last remaining child of the 9th Viscount and the owner of Fairfax House. Engaged twice, but never married, Ann suffered from many bouts of ill health throughout her life - both mental and physical - but found great solace in her religion. Following the death of the Viscount in 1772, Ann sold Fairfax House and returned to the family estate at Gilling Castle, which she had inherited from her father. She lived out the remainder of her life between London and Gilling, despite many attempts by her cousins - the Piggots—to remove her of her rightful inheritance.



THOMAS BELASYSE, 1ST EARL FAUCONBERG
Carrier of the King's Pisspot

The Belasyse family resided at Newburgh Priory and, like the Fairfaxes, were Roman Catholic. Thomas Belasyse, a great friend to Charles Fairfax, however, publicly renounced his faith and converted to the Church of England. Soon after this conversion, he became Lord of the Bedchamber to George II, a role he held from 1738 - 1760, and was also made a member of the Privy Council.

LADY MARY BELASYSE
As warm as a Teapot

One of Earl Fauconberg's three daughters and Anne's closest friend and confidant. Mary would often spend months at Fairfax House caring for Ann, remaining by her friend's side when she was at her most vulnerable. Lady Belasyse, often noted as a gossip, wrote incessantly to her father during this period and her surviving letters have been crucial to forming the story of the Fairfax family.

FRANCIS BREDALL
Master of the Leeches

Viscount Fairfax's nephew - Francis' mother, Mary Charlotte, was Charles' younger sister. Fairfax paid for his nephew's education at Lamspring College in Germany, before setting him up as an apprentice to a York apothecary. Francis borrowed money ceaselessly from his Uncle and used his status as an apothecary to extract more in the form of payment for various remedies.

THOMAS GASCOIGNE
Sir Tall Thomas Faithless

Born into a devout Catholic gentry family based in Yorkshire, Gascoigne grew up on the continent, receiving a solid Catholic education. Despite this, Thomas later publicly renounced his faith so that he could become an MP, an office that barred Catholics at the time. Thomas' father, Sir Edward, was Lord Fairfax's brother-in-law.