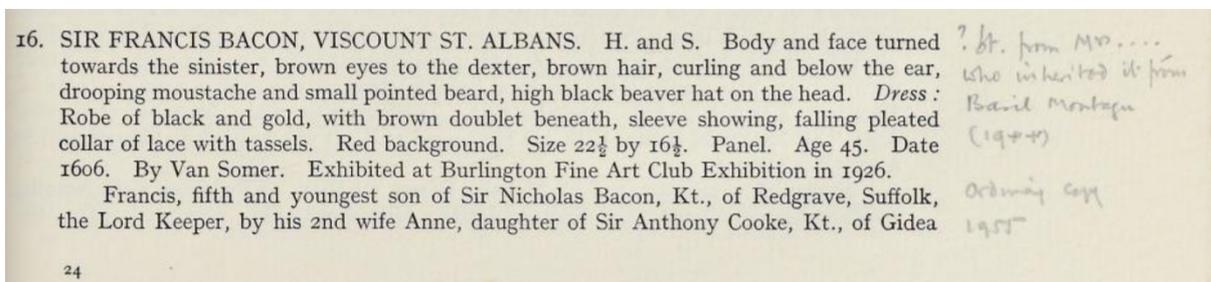


Hi Kate

I'm still reflecting on your recent message regarding the picture Miss Horsey (unfortunate name) supposedly discovered via "communication with the disincarnate". There is a lot to unpack in what you wrote – a challenge no less – but I feel I should attempt an initial reply anyway. When I first read the article some months ago I was, like you, sceptical about the spirit guide back story. The reproduction in Baconiana was so bad and there was so much work to do on the verified portraits of Lord Bacon that I dismissed it at the time. Now, with the launch of the gallery complete and the fine company of minds I've found in this beehive, yourself included, I'm looking at Ella's 1947 article with fresh eyes. However suggestible she may have been, I believe that she was sincere and that her purchase of the portrait was a high point in her life.

If we disregard her belief in spiritualism what are the facts we are left with? (1) The Assistant Keeper at the NPG matched a photograph of the portrait with a reproduction in "Portraits in Norfolk Houses", Prince Frederick Duleep Singh (1868-1926), published 1928. [https://archive.org/details/gri\\_33125000513065/page/n235/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/gri_33125000513065/page/n235/mode/2up) Here is an extract:



There was indeed an auction of all the contents of Spixworth Park manor in March 1912. A weird connection is that the then owner of Spixworth estate was one Francis Bacon Longe. No relation as far as I can tell.

(2) The picture was purchased in 1912 by William M Safford, an antiquarian and former Secretary of the Francis Bacon Society in the early 1900s. Miss Horsey, also a member of the Society, does not seem to have recognised this strange coincidence. She even misread his name as "Soffard".

(3) The photographic studio mentioned in the article where the portrait was purchased from by Ella Horsey also checks out. It was owned at the time by Harry Isaac Jarmon, but was established by Willaim Spanton in 1864 as The Repository of Arts and West Suffolk Photographic Establishment at 16 Abbeygate Street, Bury St Edmunds. Today, the Spanton Jarmon collection of photographic glass negatives is of national importance.

(4) Clearly, the frame is not original, as is pointed out in the Editorial Note at the end of the article. The question is when was it painted. This is not too difficult due to the fact that Francis is depicted in his Chancellor's gown. So it must date from 1618 to 1621.