

CIRENCESTER PEOPLE



Portraits over 200 years

THIS EXHIBITION SHOWS PORTRAITS OF LOCAL PEOPLE SPANNING 200 YEARS, FROM AN EARLY ENGRAVING OF EARL BATHURST TO A PORTRAIT OF LOCAL MAGISTRATE W I CROOME.

Even 100 years ago many people may have only owned one or two pictures of themselves. Before the invention of commercial photography in 1839 only the wealthy might have been able to afford a portrait and this would have been painted by an artist.



Mr T W Gough

The exhibition includes a rare collection of early photographs, mostly from the 1860s, of local people, from shopkeepers to businessmen and servants. These were probably mostly the work of Cirencester photographer Mr T W Gough described as 'the first photographer to start in that line'.

The photographs survive because they were collected by Thomas Cox (1814-1900). Cox was a solicitors managing clerk. He was very involved in Cirencester life and was one of the founders of the Mechanics' Institute. He played an active role in the creation of the Swimming Bath Company, and was interested in local history, tracing the Roman mosaics discovered in Dyer St. He collected the photographs in eight albums and these were given to the Library in 1923 by E C Sewell.

These photographs were probably created using the wet collodion process where the photographic material had to be coated, exposed and developed within 15 minutes and a negative created on a glass sheet.



A page from one of the albums



Thomas Cox and his wife, Anne, the mother of Daniel George Bingham (this was her second marriage in 1840).

