

THE DEARE FAMILY OF BATH



Painted by Thomas Barker of Bath around 1818 this delightful picture depicts the family of James Deare (b. 1765).

It is significant as it shows the family entering the front door of their newly built house in Cambridge Place on Widcombe Hill.

James Deare and his family were important in Bath as both James and his father, John, were carvers and gilders of great repute. They produced mirror frames, girandoles, candelabra and the finest of picture frames. They framed pictures for Thomas Gainsborough, William Hoare and Thomas Barker. The business was based in Kingsmead Square.

James, his wife Ann, their son James and little daughters Ann and Eliza are identified although the name of the other woman in the picture is not yet known. They are shown entering the substantial villa designed by John Pinch and clearly were very proud of having been so successful.

Ann died aged 71 and James aged 91. Eliza married the famous Bath geologist Charles Moore in 1854. His was the exceptional collection of geological specimens now with BRSLI. They later moved into the house and other geological specimens were dug up in the garden in the 1970s.

The picture escaped our attention when it came up for sale at Bonhams a few years ago. It is now in a private collection in America and the owner is unwilling to sell so that it could come back to the city.