St Martin's Church and Mol's Coffee House, Cathedral Close, Exeter

John Gendall

Sold



REF: 797

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Description

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John Gendall (1790-1865)
St Martin's Church and Mol's Coffee House, Cathedral Close, Exeter

Watercolour and bodycolour over pencil
39.7 by 59.5cm., 15 ½ by 23 ¼ in.

Provenance:
With Frank T. Sabin, London

St Martin's Church sits on the north corner of the Cathedral Close in Exeter. A church on this site was originally consecrated in 1065 and the church has since been remodelled in the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries. It is one of the few churches in central Exeter undamaged by second world war bombs. Catherine Street is the road to the left with the Cathedral Close to the right. The elaborate building to the right was known as Mol's Coffee House and was the home of the artist John Gendall from circa 1834 until his death in March 1865. It was originally built to house priests in the early sixteenth century but by 1585 the lease was taken over by a John Dyer and the building was used as a customs house until 1660. From 1726 until 1837 it was Mol's Coffee House and the building is still known as Mol's today, until Gendall took over the lease in the 1830s. Since Gendall's death, the building has been used a bookshop, art gallery, jeweller's and stationer's.

Gendall was born in Exeter and started life as a servant to a barrister James White, the uncle of John White Abbott (????). Perhaps encouraged by White, Gendall was in London by 1811 working for Ackermann's in London where he produced drawings to be engraved. He was probably best known for his French views which were engraved for Picturesque Views of the River Seine published in 1821. He returned to Exeter in the late 1820s and moved into Mol's in 1833. He lived there with his wife Maria and worked as a drawing teacher, carriage painter, carver and gilder. By 1861 he was employing seven men and four boys and he remained there until his death.

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