

**Warwick-Leicester's Hospital, the Master's House, PH0474/7/17 and  
Warwick- West Gate, and Leicester's Hospital, PH0474/7/23.**

May's Document of the Month features not one document, but two. To mark the anniversary of the death of Francis Bedford in May 1894, these documents have a photographic theme.

The first document is titled 'Warwick-Leicester's [Leycester's] Hospital, the Master's House' and is dated late 1860s.<sup>1</sup> It presents us with a view of two men conversing in the Hospital's courtyard. Written faintly on the left hand side of the stereo card is the name of the publisher H.T.Cooke & Son Publishers Warwick. Our second document is titled 'Warwick- West Gate, and Leicester's [Leycester's] Hospital', also late 1860s.<sup>2</sup> It shows another view of the Hospital, this time taken from the High Street, with a horse and carriage waiting outside.

Both photographs are stereoscopic images, a photographic process originally designed by Sir Charles Wheatstone in 1838 but later improved upon by Sir David Brewster. A stereoscopic photograph is created by taking two almost identical images, one at a slightly different angle, but when they are both placed in a special viewer known as a stereoscope, the two images are combined to create a 3D view. This experience of early 3D imaging was popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and was capitalised on by photographers who would travel across the world to take photographs of popular locations, which would be purchased as tourism mementos or as a way of travelling without leaving the home during a time in which a train or boat was the only way to reach a far away destination.

An example of one of these travelling photographers is Francis Bedford, the photographer behind both of our documents of the month.

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<sup>1</sup> Warwickshire County Record Office, Stereoscopic photograph of Warwick, Leicester's [Leycester's] Hospital, the master's house. Document Reference: PH0474/7/17.

<sup>2</sup> Warwickshire County Record Office, Stereoscopic photograph of Warwick, West Gate and Leicester's [Leycester's] Hospital. Document Reference: PH0474/7/23.



Figure 1: PH0474/7/17.



Figure 2: PH0474/7/23.

## Francis Bedford

Francis Bedford was born sometime in 1815 to Francis Octavius Bedford and Sophia Curtis. Although we do not know his exact birth date, we do know he was christened on 11<sup>th</sup> September 1815 at St. Giles, Camberwell, South London. On 1<sup>st</sup> of November 1843, he married Mary Graham at St. Andrews in Holborn, Middlesex. He began his career as a draughtsman, then a lithographer, before pursuing photography in 1853. In a matter of years, Francis Bedford would become a well-known commercial photographer of landscape and architectural views.<sup>3</sup> His success as a lithographer and photographer brought him to the attention of the Royal family. In 1862, Bedford was the first photographer to accompany a royal tour when he travelled alongside the Prince of Wales across a tour of the East, during which Bedford photographed views of Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Turkey, and Greece.<sup>4</sup>

However, Bedford is also known for his photographs taken closer to home as he travelled across the United Kingdom in the 1860s, photographing areas including Wales and the Midlands.

Bedford died on 15<sup>th</sup> May 1894, leaving behind a wealth of photographs, some of which can be found in our collections at the Record Office.

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<sup>3</sup> The Royal Collections Trust, *Exhibitions: Cairo to Constantinople, The Queen's Gallery, Francis Bedford*-<https://www.rct.uk/collection/themes/exhibitions/cairo-to-constantinople/the-queens-gallery-palace-of-holyroodhouse/francis-bedford-photographer-to-the-prince-of-wales> [Accessed 09/04/2021].

<sup>4</sup> The Royal Collections Trust, *Exhibitions: Cairo to Constantinople, The Queen's Gallery, Egypt: 1 March – 27 March 1862*- <https://www.rct.uk/collection/themes/exhibitions/cairo-to-constantinople/the-queens-gallery-palace-of-holyroodhouse/egypt-1-march-27-march-1862> [Accessed 09/04/2021].