

Portrait of Thomas and Florence Smyth of Ashton Court, about 1627.



Image: object 16TFA photograph of an oil painting, private collection, ©The Weiss Gallery.

This painting of Thomas and Florence is in a private collection and a photograph of it is in the M Shed, Bristol.

It is probably a marriage portrait of Thomas and Florence Smyth. They are holding hands and she is wearing a dress embroidered with hearts. The portrait was probably painted for her parents, who lived at Hinton St. George in south Somerset. It is therefore unlikely to have ever been at Ashton Court.

Who were Thomas and Florence?

Thomas (1609-1642) was the son of Sir Hugh Smyth and his wife the former Elizabeth Gorges. Florence was the daughter of John, 1st Lord Poulet, and his wife Elizabeth Kenn. Thomas and Florence were married in 1627. Florence was just 16 and it is thought that the marriage took place hastily because Thomas's father, Hugh, was ill and dying. Thomas took part in the English Civil War but died shortly after of small pox. Florence remarried, her 2nd husband was Thomas Pigott. Thomas bought nearby Brockley Court so that Florence could stay close to her son, Hugh, who had inherited Ashton Court after his father's death