

Francis Towne



View of the cataract of the Mothvaye, Merionethshire, North Wales

Reference: 11246

Dimensions:

Height: 31.80 cm / 12½ in
Width: 43.20 cm / 17 in

Signed and dated I.I.: No. 14/F. Towne delt/1777 and inscribed on the reverse of the original mount (attached to backboard): No. 14/A View of the Cataract of the Mothvaye/in Merionethshire North Wales/drawn on the spot by/Francis Towne/1777/London/Leicester Square/June 20th 1777, stamped with collector's mark, pen and black ink and watercolour heightened with touches of bodycolour and scratching out on five sheets of paper joined, with watermark: I VILLEDARY.

31.8 x 43.2 cm.; 12 x 17 inches

Provenance

Bequeathed by the artist to James White (1745-1825);

By bequest to John Herman Merivale, 1825, and by descent in the family to his granddaughter Emily Harriet

KAREN TAYLOR

FINE ART

Buckingham, 1915;

By descent to her sister Frances Ann Laura Solly, 1923;

With Thos. Agnew, London, from whom purchased by Wayland Wells Williams (188-1945);

By descent to Mrs Elizabeth Williams Garstin (1897-1979) by 1950;

By descent to Mrs Cynthia Garstin Blackwell by 1962, her sale,

Christie's London, 21 November 2007, lot 27, £31,700, to Andrew Wyld;

His sale Christie's 10 July 2012, lot 60;

With Guy Peppiatt Fine Art;

Private collection, U.K. until 2024

Exhibited

London, Old Water-Colour Society, no. 46 as 'Cataract of the Mothvay';

London, Agnew's, Exhibition of Selected Watercolour Drawings by Artists of the Early English School, February - March 1922, no.120, lent by Emily Buckingham;

Manchester, Agnew's, The 49th Exhibition of Selected Watercolour

Drawings by Artists of the Early English School In Aid of the Manchester Royal Infirmary, November to December 1922, no. 7;

Manchester, Agnew's, The Fiftieth Annual Exhibition of Selected Water Colour Drawings, November to December 1923, no. 22;

Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Special Loan Exhibition of Paintings, Prints and Drawings from New England Collections, not dated, no. 632;

Yale, Yale University Art Gallery, Prospects: An Exhibition of English Landscape Watercolors from English and American Private Collections, 1950, no. 60, lent from the Wayland Wells Williams Collection by Mrs Elizabeth Williams Garstin;

London, W/S Fine Art Andrew Wyld, 2008 and 2009 Summer exhibitions, no. 9

Literature

Adrian Bury, Lone Star of Watercolour Painting, London, 1962, p. 151;

Timothy Wilcox, Francis Towne, London, 1997, p. 43, fig. 14;

Richard Stephens, A Catalogue Raisonné of Francis Towne (1739-1816), FT079

This substantial, exceptionally well-preserved watercolour dates from Towne's first major sketching tour outside his native Devon to North Wales in June and July 1777 with his friend the lawyer James White. Wales was becoming a fashionable destination for tourists and the sublime landscape and medieval buildings provided many appealing subjects for artists.

Towne's numbered works from this tour start with Shropshire views (no. 1, a view of Bridgenorth dated 20th June) and end with views of Somerset (no. 54, a view of Glastonbury Abbey). Richard Stephens (op. cit.) has researched the itinerary and suggests that after Bridgenorth Towne travelled to Wenlock and then on to Shrewsbury via the Wrekin. By 27 June he was at Bala and then he headed south-west over the Cambrian Mountains to Machynlleth. The next week saw him sketching around Cadair Idris and Dolgelly and by 6 July he was near Tan y Bwlch. A few days later he headed towards Caernarvon, via Aberglaslyn and Llyn Cwellyn. From Caernarvon he took the coastal road to Conwy. He followed the River Clwyd south-east to Denbigh and then went on to Llangollen before starting to make his way home.

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Towne used sheets of differing sizes on this tour and this drawing is executed on one of the largest.