The Prince Regent accompanied by the Dukes of Wellington and York at the Opening of Waterloo Bridge, 18th June 1817

Sold

John Augustus Atkinson

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Description

John Augustus Atkinson (1775-1831)
The Prince Regent accompanied by the Dukes of Wellington and York at the Opening of Waterloo Bridge, 18th June 1817

Pen and ink and grey wash and watercolour
21 by 42.3 cm., 8 ¼ by 16 ½ in.

At the age of 9, Atkinson moved to Russia with his mother and stepfather, James Walker, who was employed as an engraver in the service of Catherine the Great. Atkinson himself gained early patronage of the Empress and her son Paul I. When the family returned to England in 1801, Atkinson and Walker worked together producing several publications of Russian and military subjects.

Waterloo bridge was built between 1811 and 1817 and was originally called Strand Bridge, its name being changed by an Act of Parliament in 1816 to commemorate Wellington's victory in the famous battle. The official opening, on 18th June 1817, was a cause for national excitement and was depicted by a number of artists, including Ramsay Richard Reinagle and perhaps most famously John Constable (Tate Gallery, London). The Times reported the following day: `The banks of the Thames, from Blackfriars-bridge to Whitehall, were immensely crowded by noon with all descriptions of persons of both sexes, from the curious of the lowest order up to the elegance of the highest fashion.' Just after 3 o'clock the Prince Regent arrived on the Royal Barge followed by the Lord Mayor's Barge. He disembarked at the south-east corner of the bridge and ascended the steps. He is depicted in the centre of the group of figures, in military uniform, and wearing the Garter Star and Sash. His brother, also in military uniform is on his right, whilst the Duke of Wellington, depicted in his Field Marshall's uniform with the Garter Star and Sash and wearing his various honours, is on the Prince's left.

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