The York Fly

Thomas Rowlandson

Sold

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Description

Thomas Rowlandson (1756-1827)
The York Fly

Inscribed on carriage door: YORK FLY
With figure drawings verso
Pen and brown ink and pencil on laid paper
15.1 by 12.8 cm., 5 3/4 by 5 in.

Provenance:
With P. & D. Colnaghi, London

The present lively drawing appears to capture the moment that the stage coach is setting off on its journey. The relaxed stances and happy expressions of the figures suggest an almost festive air and the lively execution and handling of the subject by the artist appears to reflect this atmosphere.

The first stagecoach linking London and York started up in 1706 and initially took four days, running between the Black Swan Inn, Holborn and the Black Swan Inn, Coney Street, York. Prior to 1725, large swaths of roads were in such poor condition that to combat these, vehicles had to be strongly built, heavy and pulled by large teams of horses. However, improvements in the roads allowed for innovations in coach construction, such as the introduction of steel springs, which brought the journey time down considerably to just 20 hours. The London to York route ran until the early 1840s when the growth of the railways rendered it unviable.

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