Eton College from across the river Thames

Paul Sandby R.A.



REF: 3188

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Description

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Paul Sandby, R.A. (1731-1809)
Eton College from across the river Thames

Gouache over traces of pencil
54.6 by 76.2 cm., 21 ½ by 30 in.

Provenance:
Col. R.C. Allhusen;
Mrs. V. Bourke;
Anonymous sale, Christie's, London, 9th December 1949, lot 31, bt. Leggatt Bros for 720 gns.;
Private collection, U.K.

Literature:
Anne Lyles and Andrew Wilton, The Great Age of British Watercolours 1750 - 1880, exhibition catalogue, Royal Academy, London, 1993, p. 308, no. 256 (illus. pl. 51).

Exhibited:
Newcastle, Laing Art Gallery, on loan 1975 to 2014;
London, Royal Academy of Art, The Great Age of British Watercolours 1750 - 1880, 15th January to 11th April 1993, no. 256

Sandby is often called the `Father of British watercolour painting' as he was probably the first artists to realise the commercial possibilities of landscape views of country houses and antiquarian sites in watercolour. In 1747 Paul and his older brother Thomas were sent to Scotland by the British government to produce landscape watercolours for a Military Survey. On their return, Thomas moved to Windsor where he was employed to oversee landscape design in Windsor Great Park and in 1764 he was appointed Deputy Ranger. This was the start of a life-long connection with Windsor and Eton for both brothers. Paul first exhibited Windsor views in the 1760s and continued to produce them throughout his life with many now being in the Royal Collection (see Jane Roberts, Views of Windsor - Watercolours by Thomas and Paul Sandby from the Collection of her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, 1995). The foreground figure groupings are typical of Sandby's work as is the medium. Sandby is known to have owned gouaches by the Italian landscape artist Marco Ricci (1676-1730) who is an evident influence.

This is a view looking north-west across the river Thames from Windsor to Eton College. The large building is Eton College chapel which was commissioned by the school founder King Henry VI in 1440. To the right are the College buildings with the tallest being Lupton's Tower built 1514 to 1520.

Sandby drew the view looking the other direction, from Eton across the Thames to Windsor Castle, on a number of occasions. An example is the near pair to the present work, of the same size, signed and dated 1802, which was sold at Bonham's as part of the collection at Hooton Pagnell Hall on 1st December 2015, lot 84 for £218,500. Other versions of this view are in the Royal Collection. Another view of Eton from the Thames entitled `Eton - a view from Crown Corner' was sold at Lawrence's on 18th January 2013, lot 1509 for £120,000 - an aquatint of this view was published in 1776. A smaller view of Eton chapel from the south-west was sold at Sotheby's on 30th November 2000, lot 7 for £32,700.

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