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A VIEW FROM THE OLD SOUTH SEA HOUSE

Original Regency print, 1824

A hand-coloured etching by the Regency satirist Richard Dighton showing the brewer James Curtis. Richard Dighton was the son and apprentice of another noted caricaturist Robert Dighton and brother of the battle-scene painter Denis Dighton. The works of Robert and Richard Dighton are regarded as predecessors of the Vanity Fair style of the late nineteenth century. The series of portraits of City and West End characters to which this etching belongs was started in 1817 and Dighton would go on to publish a number of etchings during the next decade before retiring early to Cheltenham. This edition, of 1824, was printed by Thomas McLean Printseller & Publisher at 26 Haymarket, on the eastern side just north of Panton Street. The subject of the print, James Curtis, was a prominent and prosperous London brewer of the early 19th Century and his portrait, painted by Thomas Lawrence, now hangs in the Manchester Art Gallery. The Old South Sea House mentioned was located on the Threadneedle Street corner of Bishopsgate. The back of it apparently burned down in 1826 and was subsequently rebuilt. The building was the headquarters of the South Sea Company. Incorporated in 1711, the company was assigned a monopoly on British trade with Spanish America but, when that failed, it embarked upon a speculative scheme that ended in the economic collapse known as the 'South Sea Bubble' which saw many investors ruined. The building was partly remodeled in the 1850s and was eventually demolished at the end of the 19th century

DIMENSIONS: 40.64cm (16") Wide, 50.8cm (20") Long

PRICE: £370

STOCK CODE: A094

