



Feliks Topolski (1907–1989)

The Wedding Procession of the Duke and Duchess of York, 1986

Felt-tip pen, coloured pastels, grey and brown wash, and white bodycolour on buff paper

The Royal Collection © 2005, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

This sketch is one of four depicting the post-ceremony procession for the wedding of Sarah and Andrew in 1986. We can see the west front of Westminster Abbey and the tower of Big Ben in the background.

The frenzied expressionistic lines of this work impart a sense of the excitement and chaos of a Royal Wedding procession: it lets us imagine the distortion of craning our heads to catch a blurry glimpse of the newly weds amongst the hubbub.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

An artist and writer, Feliks Topolski was born in Poland. He studied at the Warsaw Academy of Art, then travelled to Italy and France in the late 1930s. He later settled in England and became a British citizen in 1947.

Topolski was the official Polish war artist during World War II. From 1953 to 1979, he produced a fortnightly chronicle, *Topolski's Chronicle*, in which he used his rapid and unerring line to capture and play on the people and occasions that caught his eye. He produced his chronicle without advertisements or subsidies, and since his death in 1989 *Topolski's Chronicle* has gained great respect as a pictorial and political record spanning nearly thirty years of world history.

He produced portraits of people such as Martin Luther King, Churchill, Graham Green, George Wells, and T S Elliot, and is touted as an artist who was concerned with public rather than private life.

STUDENT FOCUS QUESTIONS

- Topolski spent time working as a war artist – how does his form of expression suit that purpose?
- To what effect has Topolski used wash in this artwork?
- How successfully has Topolski created a sense of excitement?

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

<http://www.felikstopolski.com/>
<http://www.felikstopolski.com/career.htm>