



William Innes 'The Blackheath Golfer'

Lemuel Abbott

Sold



REF: 27252

Height: 60.5 cm (23.8")

Width: 43.5 cm (17.1")

Framed Height: 88.5 cm (34.8")

Framed Width: 65 cm (25.6")

Description

William Innes 'The Blackheath Golfer'.

A very rare, early, golf portrait of William Innes, the captain of the Society of Golfers at Blackheath, England in 1778. The uncoloured mezzotint is by Valentine Green and is the most widely recognised golf print ever published, the original impressions are incredibly rare as only fifty were produced from Lemuel Francis Abbott's original oil painting. The first golf print was published on November 22nd, 1790, and has since been copied many times in various sizes and techniques. The print was first reproduced in black and white, whilst most of the later reproductions were done in colour. The image shows Innes posing with a long-nosed golf club over his right shoulder whilst holding a glove and 'Feathery' golf ball in his left hand. The caddie behind has a hand full of golf clubs with a bottle of alcohol in his pocket. There is a windmill in the distance. In the bottom margin 'TO THE SOCIETY OF GOFFERS AT BLACKHEATH, This plate is with just respect, Dedicated by their most humble servant Lemuel Francis Abbott', published in England in 1778.

taken from www.royalblackheath.com

Golf at Blackheath through the centuries.

At the end of the 16th century, when it became obvious that Queen Elizabeth I of England would never marry, James VI of Scotland was recognised as being heir presumptive to the throne of England. Elizabeth died in 1603, and accordingly James VI of Scotland proceeded with his Scottish court to London, taking up residence at the Royal Palace in Greenwich (Elizabeth I's birthplace) as James I of England.

Since the sport had by then been played in Scotland for some 150 years, James's entourage would inevitably have contained a number of golfers and, by climbing to the higher ground at Blackheath above the palace, these courtiers were able to find the space they needed in which to pursue their sport. We have documentary evidence that they did indeed play, and of one royal player in particular - Henry Frederick, Prince of Wales and James I's son, who is known to have been golfing in 1606.

Although the crowns of England and Scotland were now held by James, the two countries were not to be fully united for another 100 years and the old hatred between them was still strong, which meant that the Scots tended to keep their own company in London. Their common interest in the sport of golf (few, if any, Englishmen at the time would ever have seen golf, let alone played it themselves) would have given them the ideal vehicle with which to do so!

These are the circumstances which first brought golf to Blackheath, and it was from these Scottish nobility and their followers that the golfers of Blackheath are descended. We are, by birth, a Scottish club!

Blackheath Golf Club is known wherever golf is played as having been instituted in 1608. Whilst we know that golf was being played on Blackheath prior to that time by individuals with a uniquely common bond to all intents and purposes a 'club' - no documentary evidence of this inception date has yet been unearthed (and no explanation offered for the selection of 1608 rather than 1603) since the Club's accounts prior to 1787, and the minutes prior to 1800, are missing.

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