A Carriage at Ascot Racecourse

John Nixon

Sold



REF: 2558

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Description

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John Nixon (1755-1818)
A Carriage at Ascot Racecourse

Signed with initials lower right, inscribed lower left: Ascot Heath Races/28 June 1791 and numbered 3 on the mount
Pen and grey ink and watercolour over pencil
13.3 by 21.3 cm., 5 1/4 by 8 1/4 in.

Provenance:
French Hospital of La Providence, Rochester

This is a rare early view taken on the racecourse at Ascot in 1791. Racing first took place at Ascot (then called `East Cote') on 11th August 1711 after Queen Anne while out riding near Windsor Castle came across an area of open heath that looked ideal for "horses to gallop at full stretch." The first race was called Her Majesty's Plate over four miles and worth 100 guineas to the winner. Seven horses took part each carrying twelve stone. The first four day meeting took place in 1768 and the first permanent stand was not erected until 1794, three years after the present watercolour was executed, and held 1,650 people. It was called the Royal Stand and was used until 1838.

Nixon was an amateur caricaturist who worked as a merchant in business with his brother in London. His work shows the influence of the best known caricaturist of the period Thomas Rowlandson (see nos. 11 and 12), with whom he sometimes travelled on sketching tours, and like the present drawing are often lively in execution. A related drawing by Nixon of Ascot racecourse, also drawn on 28th June 1791, was with Guy Peppiatt Fine Art in 2006 (see Guy Peppiatt Fine Art, 18th and 19th Century Drawings and Watercolours, exhibition catalogue, 2006, no.9, ill. p.10). A view by Nixon entitled `Ascot Heath Race Ground' dated 1814 was sold at Christie's on 5th March 1974, lot 39.

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