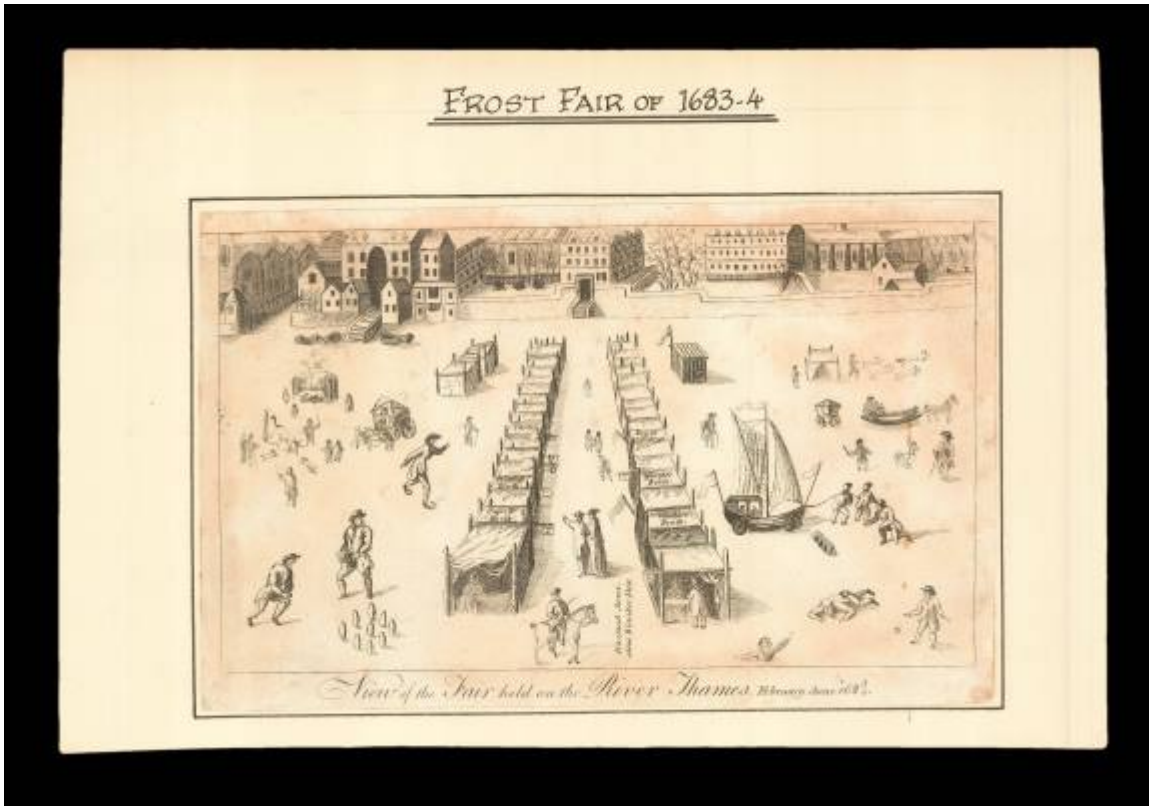


Engraved print.

THE BLANKET FAIR OF 1683-84

View of the Fair held on the River Thames.

Author
[ANONYMOUS]

Publication date
1684

Publisher

Publication place
London,

Physical description
Engraved print.

Dimensions
127 by 204mm (5 by 8 inches).

Notes
This print, depicting the Frost Fair on the frozen River Thames of 1683-84, shows a carriage being driven across the ice to the left, while on the right a horse pulls a small rowing boat behind it. Two columns of tented booths run north to south across the river, including a “tavern” and the “royal coffeehouse”. In the foreground some men play skittles, while a less fortunate attendee appears to have fallen through the ice into the freezing water belong. That winter’s fair is recorded in several contemporary documents as the “Blanket Fair”, as here along the lower edge of the image.

The River Thames has been known to freeze over on several occasions, especially during the “Little Ice Age” of the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, upon which the inhabitants of London took to the solid ice for business and pleasure. The most important of these “Frost Fairs” occurred in 695, 1608, 1683-4, 1716, 1739–40, 1789, and 1814. In 1684, during the Great Freeze of 1683-4, which was the longest in London’s history and during which the ice reached depths of around 28cm, the diarist John Evelyn recorded the attractions of the Frost Fair:

“Streetes of Boothes were set upon the Thames… all sorts of Trades and shops furnished, & full of Commodities… Coaches plied from Westminster to the Temple, and from several other stairs too and fro, as in the streets, sleds, sliding with skates, bull-baiting, horse and coach races, puppet plays and interludes, cooks, tippling and other lewd places, so that it seemed to be a bacchanalian triumph, or a carnival on water”.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 18171

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