



Etched print, trimmed to platemark.

THE TREE-HOUSE ON HAMPSTEAD HEATH

[Print of large tree with door]

Author

HOLLAR, W[enceslaus]

Publication date

1653

Publisher

Publication place

[London],

Physical description

Etched print, trimmed to platemark.

Dimensions

168 by 200mm. (6.5 by 7.75 inches).

Notes

One of Hollar's most intriguing London scene shows a large tree in Hampstead Heath, which has been hollowed out and provided with an octagonal platform on the top. In his view, five people are seen atop it, and it is said that at times the octagonal platform was sometimes used as 'a school for young gentlemen'. A couple are shown wandering from the door in the base of the trunk, and in the background there are cottages, fields and barns.

"A hollow elm stood formerly at Hampstead, but in what spot is uncertain. It was engraved by the celebrated Hollar, in 1653... It was hollow from the ground to the summit, from which the trunk appears to have been abruptly broken off; and in the hollow a wooden stair, or ladder, was formed which conducted to a turret on the top, containing seats on which six persons might sit... Hollar's engraving appears also to have been sold at the tree." (Loudon)

It has been hypothesised that the tree itself was located near to the site of the famous inn, Jack Straw's Castle, where Charles Dickens and William Makepeace Thackeray were known to have dined, and that it was later incorporated into the grounds of Tudor House, a residence that later became a Jewish hospital.

Pennington lists the second state as including five figures atop the viewing platform and numerous birds in the sky, as here, but also three columns of reference and notes, which are not present.

Bibliography

NHG Hollar 1319 I; cf. Pennington 979i; 1850,0223.257; Loudon, J. C., *Arboretum Et Fruticetum Britannicum*, 1838.

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 18302