

Isaac Johnson



An Oak, Winfarthing, Norfolk

£ 3,750.00

Reference: 10814

KAREN TAYLOR

FINE ART

Dimensions:

Height: 34 cm / 13³/₈ in
Width: 29 cm / 11³/₈ in

£3750

Signed, inscribed and dated below: Drawn 1785, by I. Johnson. Woodbridge.-/This OAK stands in Winfarthing, Norfolk, on the Estate of the Rt. Hon: Lord ALBERMARLE./Circumference at Base 51 Feet, at three Feet high 32 Feet, at six Feet, 30 Feet Circum. Height 60 Feet., watercolour and bodycolour over pencil with pen and black ink
Image size 34 x 29 cm.; 13 3/8 x 11 3/8 inches, sheet size 40 x 33 cm.; 15 3/4 x 13 inches

Provenance

Simon Carter, Woodbridge;
R. Geoffrey Smith, Berveriche Manor Farm, Middleton;
Martyn Gregory Gallery, London;
Hugh Burge (1972-2023)

Literature

Huon Mallalieu, Dictionary of British Watercolour Artists up to 1920, vol. III, 1990, p. 191, ill.;
John Blatchley, Isaac Johnson of Woodbridge: Georgian Surveyor and Artist, 2014, pp. 12-16

The artist was a surveyor and antiquarian as well as an artist who lived in Woodbridge, Suffolk for his adult life. Around 1785 he was considering a volume illustrating the most remarkable trees of Norfolk and Suffolk which never came to fruition, but for which the current drawing would have been a likely candidate.

White's History, Gazetteer, and Directory of Norfolk, 1883 describes the tree which stood on the estate of the Earl of Albermarle:

The celebrated 'Winfarthing Oak,' probably the largest in England except the one at Cowthorpe, in Yorkshire, stands near the Lodge farmhouse, and is a grand and picturesque old ruin. It measures 70 feet round at the roots, and 40 feet in the middle of the main stem, and must have been at one time a magnificent spreading tree, with enormous arms. It is traditionally said to have been called the 'Old Oak' in the time of the Conqueror, and is usually considered to be more than 1200 years old. It is now a mere shell, bleached snowy white, and capable of containing a large number of persons in its interior. It still retains vitality on its south side, and three years ago a rook's nest was built in its branches.