Emmett & White
ANTIQUES & INTERIORS

Rare James Richard Barfoot Maritime Lithographed Puzzle, Circa 1830

£725

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REF: 2517

Description

A very rare mid-19th-century lithographed card puzzle by James Richard Barfoot, dating to circa 1830 Signed by the maker and complete, this remarkable survival presents a finely detailed maritime scene, its large sailing vessel shown under full sail on choppy water, with distant coastal scenery and smaller craft beyond.

The lithograph is mounted on card and carefully dissected into individual rectangular pieces, creating a puzzle that is as visually engaging as it is historically fascinating. The scene captures the romance and drama of mid 19th-century seafaring, with intricate rigging, billowing sails, flags, and atmospheric shoreline details all rendered with great charm.

Objects of this kind were made for both instruction and amusement. Before the familiar modern jigsaw, dissected card puzzles offered children an enjoyable way to develop observation and problem-solving skills while engaging with subjects such as geography, history, natural history, and contemporary life. Their fragile construction and frequent use mean that complete examples are now exceptionally scarce.

The survival of this puzzle in complete condition is particularly significant, as individual pieces were easily lost and the card elements were highly vulnerable to wear. Its signed attribution to James Richard Barfoot adds further interest, connecting it to the history of British lithography, children's entertainment, and early educational games.

Beautifully displayed in a glazed frame, the puzzle can be appreciated as both a rare antique game and a decorative maritime print. It would make a superb addition to a collection of early puzzles, naval and maritime art, children's ephemera, or Regency decorative arts.

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