

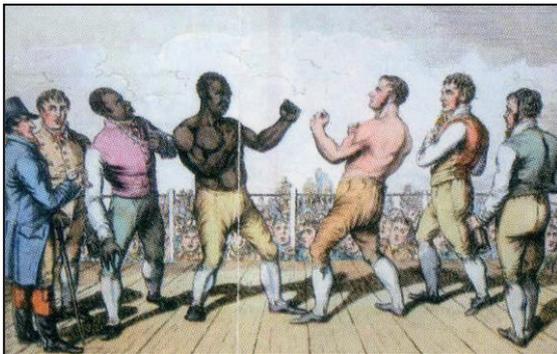
## EX-SLAVE FIGHTS IN BIRCHINGTON

Stuart Horner

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century bare knuckle prize fighting was a very popular but illegal past time and it would seem that Birchington was a convenient venue for such contests, as it was far enough away from the authorities, yet easily reached from London. A newspaper report of August 31<sup>st</sup> 1810 informs readers of a particularly note worthy bout between Tom Molyneux and Tom Tough, also known as Tom Blake, to take place at Epple Bay.



Tom Molyneux was the black American champion who had just arrived in Liverpool, having worked his passage as a deck hand. His owner had reportedly won \$100,000 by betting on Molyneux's fights and as a result granted him his freedom and gave him a gift of \$500. At Epple Bay in 1810 the crowd gathered was so large that it became difficult to form a ring for the fight to take place. Eventually order was imposed and at precisely midday the contest began.



The weather was recorded as boiling hot which quickly exhausted the fighters. After 8 rounds Molyneux knocked out Blake and was declared the winner. Molyneux's umpire was Lord George Sackville and Captain Prideaux acted for Tom Blake. The Referee was Mr Friend of Birchington.