Antique Lop Sided Tennis Racket, The Alexandra By Feltham

Feltham & Co.

Sold

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REF: 30297

Height: 66 cm (26")

Width: 21 cm (8.3")

Depth: 2 cm (0.8")

Description

Antique Lopsided Feltham Lawn Tennis Racket, 'The Alexandra'.
A very rare, early lopsided (tilt head or teardrop shape) lawn tennis racquet in good original condition by Feltham of London. The ash frame is in very good original condition and is stamped 'The Alexandra' on the top. The walnut convex wedge is stamped '11 oz ½' with the maker's name 'Feltham, London' and the Prince of Wales three feather plume logo, this signified that they were suppliers to the Prince of Wales. On the otherside is scratched 'MEA' (Miles Edward Aspinall), the racket was sold at a country house sale from Standen Hall, Clitheroe, home of the Aspinalls. The original period thick gut stringing is in fair condition, but this is very acceptable for a racket of this age. It has five rows of trebling to the top and four to the bottom. The handle with copper braided collar and a leather butt.

The maker of this wonderful racket is Feltham & Co. City Steam Works, Barbican, London. They produced some of the earliest lawn tennis rackets, beginning in the 1870's and were probably one of the premier makers of that time.

There are some images of a couple of labels that were attached to the racket stating it provenance and one image of Standen Hall, Clitheroe.

Provenance - Sold at country house sale from Standen Hall Clitheroe home of the Aspinalls. Squire Aspinall owned estate 1485 - 1509 and has been in the family for 500 years. Present Hall built in 1757. Research into who would have used racket - Colonel Ralph John Aspinall (1847 - 1913) inherited estate from 1874. Married Mabel Federica Frances Baynes (1853 - 1941) of Aberdunant in May 1876. When the racket was purchased in 1878 he would have been 31 and Mabel 25 so must have been used by them. Ralph was a Captain at that stage of his military career in The Duke of Lancaster's Own Militia. Ralph and Mabel had several children their second son being Miles Edward Aspinall born 18 December 1879 the year after the racket was made.

Miles Edward Aspinall - On close inspection of the racket, crudely etched in a juvenile way on the throat are the initials MEA. This can only be Miles who must have been given the racket to use, probably when he was quite young in the 1890's. Miles had a military career, was educated at Eton and went on to Royal Military College Sandhurst. In 1899 he is recorded as a second Lt in The Scots Guards. He served in the Second Boer War (1899 - 1902) and died on 16 January 1900 aged 20, unmarried. There is a marble plaque of The Scots Guards Boer War Memorial in St. Marys Church Penwortham South Ribble close to Standen Hall. The memorial reads "2nd Lt ME Aspinall died 16.1.1900 aged 20, Boer War 1899 - 1902 - Love is stronger than death" WMR 54971.

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