Real Tennis Print, Ed Barre by W. Bromley

Sold

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REF: 28437

Height: 61 cm (24")

Width: 44.5 cm (17.5")

Description

Rare Real Tennis, Royal Tennis, Jeu de Paume, Court Tennis Picture, J. Edmond Barre By W. Bromley. An exceptionally rare mid 19th century artists proof mixed method engraving after William Bromley of the French tennis player, J. Edmond Barre. The engraving showing Barre engaged in the Grand Match played in the Tennis Court at Lords Cricket Ground, July 3rd 1849. It is in mint condition and very large at 28" x 21" plate size, with full margins and has the subjects name in pencil and "Proof" engraved bottom right. In over 40 years in this business we have never seen a copy of this engraving for sale. The engraving is in a new white mount, 35" high by 27 ½" wide.

J. Edmond Barre, is considered to be the greatest nineteenth-century player of the game of tennis. The son of a professional tennis player, he first came to notice in the late 1820's, when the restored French royal court revived the game. He was so talented that he was the World Champion from 1829 to 1862, when aged 60 he finally succumbed to the Englishman Edmund Tompkins, aged 36. In 1855, Barre famously re-opened the Versailles court after he became royal paumier (tennis professional) to the Emperor Napoleon III.

William Bromley is the original artist of this fine picture, the engraver we are unsure about. William Bromley is the grandson to another engraver, also called William Bromley. This Bromley flourished between 1835 - 1888 and exhibited at Royal Academy between 1844 and 1870 and frequently at the Society of British Artists.

'Real Tennis' is the original and oldest of all the racket sports and dates back many hundreds of years, and is sometimes called "the sport of Kings" or Royal Tennis. In England, Edward III certainly played some form of it, Henry VII frequently played at a court built at Windsor Castle and his son, Henry VIII, built the tennis court at Hampton Court Palace which still exists today. The game has evolved from its early years and by the early part of the 19th Century its popularity was at its height, but by the end of the 19th century with the introduction of 'Lawn Tennis' its popularity waned and many of the courts fell into disuse. The real tennis racket is designed with a lop-sided head to help strike the ball when it is close to the corners of the court or the floor. The handles are longer in 'Real Tennis' than in 'Lawn Tennis' and have very tight strings to cope with the heavy cloth balls. The 'Real Tennis' court is asymmetrical with high walls and a ceiling. It is enclosed by walls on all four sides, three of which have sloping roofs, known as 'penthouses', various openings in the walls 'galleries' (from which spectators may view the game) and a main wall which has a kink in it (tambour).

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