



Antique Fishing, Salmon Spear

£145



REF: 31899

Height: 19 cm (7.5")

Width: 8 cm (3.1")

Depth: 0.5 cm (0.2")

Description

Vintage Salmon Leister Head, Fishing Spear.

A striking example of traditional fishing equipment, this small hand-forged salmon spear head, known as a leister, reflects the ingenuity and craftsmanship of a bygone era. Forged from wrought iron and featuring three slender tines, its design is both elegant and highly functional. The central spike provided strength and accuracy, while the outer barbed prongs helped prevent a captured fish from slipping free. Originally mounted on a long wooden pole, the spear was a highly effective tool in the hands of a skilled fisherman. The forged construction, visible hammer marks, and rich weathered patina are testament to traditional blacksmithing techniques, giving the piece both character and authenticity.

Salmon spears, or leisters, consisted of long poles fitted with iron heads bearing multiple barbed tines, not unlike the trident associated with the mythical King Neptune. They varied considerably from region to region, with the size of the spear and number of tines determined by the species and size of fish found in local waters.

The use of leisters has been prohibited since the 16th century, making surviving examples increasingly desirable to collectors today. Typically crafted by local blacksmiths, these spears demanded considerable skill to use effectively. Success relied not only on strength and speed, but also on precise timing and accuracy. Fishermen had to compensate for the refraction of light through water and strike the fish through, or just behind, the head to avoid damaging the flesh.

Today, a leister such as this stands as both a fascinating relic of traditional fishing practices and a superb example of rural craftsmanship, rich in history and visual appeal.