



Parian Tennis Figure, Renshaw

£2,450



REF: 29232

Height: 45 cm (17.7")

Diameter: 15 cm (5.9")

Description

Parian Ware Tennis Figure, James Ernest Renshaw.

An extremely rare, Parian Ware, Victorian tennis figurine by the sculptor Rowland James Morris. Signed and dated on the base 'R.J. Morris 1884'. The gentleman can be seen holding an early lopsided (tilt head or teardrop shape) lawn tennis racquet, at his feet lies a single lawn tennis ball, he bears a very strong resemblance to James Ernest Renshaw. This is an impressive piece of large proportions standing nearly 18" tall, extremely rare as there are seemingly only four known examples.

A coloured version of this can be viewed in the Wimbledon Tennis Museum.

The Renshaw's were twin brothers who dominated Wimbledon in the 1880s. William Charles and James Ernest, were born on 3 January 1861, in Holly Walk, Leamington in the central English county of Warwickshire. Ernest died in 1899 and his brother, William five years later. They are often credited with transforming tennis into a spectator sport.

William won the Wimbledon singles championship seven times (1881-86 and 1889), he defeated his brother in the finals three times. Ernest was victorious in 1888, and together they won the British doubles championship seven times. They introduced hard serves and volleys when they first appeared in Wimbledon in 1880.

'Parian' is the name now used for a form of porcelain developed in England in the early 1840's essentially designed to imitate carved marble. It is a high quality unglazed porcelain, a type of bisque porcelain, prepared in a liquid form and cast in a mould. This was at the time when large marble statues and busts were common in Stately Homes and this was an affordable way for people to bring into their homes smaller scale copy. Copeland called their Parian wares 'Statuary Porcelain', Minton used 'Parian' in reference to the fine white marble from the Greek Island of Paros and Wedgwood called their wares 'Carrara' after the fine Italian marble.

Born in Hanley, Staffordshire, Rowland James Morris was the son of Charles Henry Morris (born c.1809 in Hanley) an engraver. Rowland was a student at Hanley School of Art and then at the South Kensington Art School (c.1863-5). Rowland Morris was the sculptor of the panels and statue for the Wedgwood Institute, Burslem 1865 to 1873. He was a modeller and then chief designer modeller for Robinson & Leadbeater in Stoke. Between 1885 and 1890 he worked for Moore Bros of St Mary's Works (Bernard Moore), and for James Wilson of St Gregory's Works. Around 1890 Morris became a freelance ceramics modeller, working for Shelley and Wileman.

Taken from https://sculpture.gla.ac.uk/view/person.php?id=msib4_1219259572