



Early Lawn Tennis Racket, Unusual Stringing Pattern

£ POA



REF: 32012

Height: 68 cm (26.8")

Width: 24.5 cm (9.6")

Depth: 3 cm (1.2")

Description

Joseph Evans & Sons "Champion" Lawn Tennis Racket.

A rare and highly attractive late 19th-century lawn tennis racket by Joseph Evans & Sons of London, featuring the unusual knotted diagonal cross-stringing pattern associated with Lunn's "Isthmian" stringing system.

The racket has an ash frame with a convex walnut wedge and retains its original period gut stringing. The handle is formed from the ash frame, incorporating part of the walnut wedge, with applied cedar handle faces. The head is strung with thick gut and displays four rows of trebling at the top and six at the bottom, a characteristic feature of quality rackets of the period.

The frame is stamped "CHAMPION" at the crown, while the walnut wedge is marked "Best Quality, 14½ oz" and stamped "J. Evans & Sons, London" on one side. The reverse bears the retailer's stamp "J. Lovegrove, Wells", identified as John Way Lovegrove of 42 High Street, Wells, listed in Kelly's Directory of 1895 as a Draper and Fancy Bazaar proprietor.

Condition is consistent with age and use. Some stringing losses are present, particularly in the throat area adjacent to the wedge, but these do not detract from the racket's strong display appeal or historical interest.

A particularly noteworthy feature is the stringing arrangement. In addition to the conventional over-and-under gut stringing, the racket incorporates looped diagonal strings creating a distinctive knotted lattice pattern. This style is commonly associated with Lunn's "Isthmian" stringing, one of several experimental stringing systems developed during the formative years of lawn tennis. Such innovations were intended to improve durability, tension retention, and playing characteristics at a time when racket makers and stringers were actively refining equipment design. We have seen a similar racket strung in this way which was named The Zingari.

An increasingly scarce and historically significant example, illustrating both the craftsmanship and technical experimentation that characterised the early development of lawn tennis equipment.