

SA477298

Eighteenth Century Waywiser, Odometer or Surveyor's Wheel

Price

Sold**Item Reference: SA477298****Date of manufacture: 1800**

Dimensions

Height = 80 cm (31.5")

Width = 80 cm (31.5")

Depth = 120 cm (47.2")

Description

An eighteenth or early nineteenth century waywiser or odometer. This extremely rare blacksmith made artefact is made from ebonised wood with an iron bound wheel and turned spokes. To the centre is a box containing the mechanism comprised of a threaded axle which turns three wooden gears which are engineered to accurately measure miles, furlongs and yards. These are measured by means of a superb eighteenth century handwritten paper dial and three decorative iron pointers. The odometer (also variously known as a sureyor's wheel, a waywiser and perambulator) was used prolifically by surveyors and mapmakers during the period. One was certainly used by Major James Rennell (Surveyor General to the Honorable East India Company) during his surveying of Bengal. He is noted in "The Cyclopaedia; or Universal Dictionary of Arts, Sciences & Literature" in 1819 as saying that, "he measured a meridian line of three degrees with this instrument; and found it to agree minutely with the observations of latitude. An Allowance however, was made for the irregularities of the ground whenever they occurred". Their history of course is much longer than that. It is supposed that Archimedes was ...

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