

## Pick of the Week

### 'Record' skirt lifter rises to the occasion

Searching online for the term 'skirt lifter' is probably unwise in the public domain, but an intriguing item sold at Graham Budd's latest auction shows it is a popular collecting field.

The 4½in (11cm) long Victorian lady lawn tennis player's skirt lifter c.1870s, the design incorporating crossed racquets and three tennis balls, sold for £3200 (plus 17.5% buyer's premium) against an estimate of £75-100 at the May 21-22 auction in London.

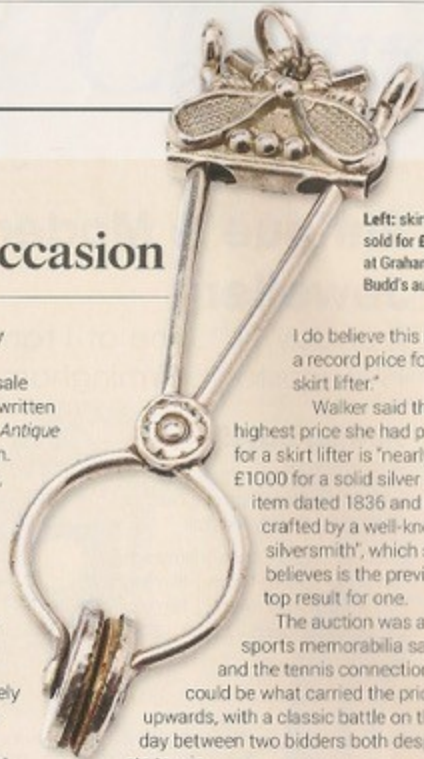
Such items were used by Victorian women to clip up their full-length skirts, in this case above the lawn to avoid grass stains during a game of tennis.

This example was consigned by the UK trade and bought by an overseas private buyer online competing with an overseas phone bidder, and the hefty price

is thought to be an auction high for any skirt lifter.

One of the earlier bidders at Budd's sale was Carole Walker, an expert who has written *A History and Guide to Collecting Ladies' Antique Skirt Lifters* (2016), available on Amazon. She told ATG she arranged a phone bid, but "after placing a final bid of £260 (which at that price I thought was on the excessive side for a base-metal, smallish skirt lifter), I listened as, unbelievably, the bidding went higher and higher.

"I was amazed when the bidding reached £1000 and was absolutely flabbergasted when the hammer went down at £3200 – an unprecedented price.



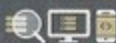
Left: skirt lifter sold for £3200 at Graham Budd's auction.

I do believe this is a record price for a skirt lifter."

Walker said the highest price she had paid for a skirt lifter is "nearly £1000 for a solid silver item dated 1836 and crafted by a well-known silversmith", which she believes is the previous top result for one.

The auction was a sports memorabilia sale and the tennis connection could be what carried the price upwards, with a classic battle on the day between two bidders both desperate to win.

Tom Derbyshire



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