Finch & Co




**FRENCH LEATHER BACKSWORDING GUARD**

AN UNUSUAL FRENCH LEATHER BACKSWORDING GUARD THE INTERIOR MARKED WITH A RED NAPOLEONIC 'N'
LATE 18TH CENTURY
SIZE: 15CM DIA. (MAX) 12CM HIGH – 6 INS DIA. (MAX) 4¾ INS HIGH

**LITERATURE**

A BACKSWORD IS A SINGLE-EDGED METAL SWORD, BUT AS STEEL WAS VERY EXPENSIVE, AND COULD BE LETHAL, PROVINCIAL CONTESTS WERE OFTEN FOUGHT WITH A STOUT STICK. BACKSWORDING WAS USED AS PRACTICE FOR EITHER FENCING OR SWORDSMANSHIP. A STRAIGHT ASH OR OAK 'CUDGEL' WAS PLACED THROUGH AND HELD IN A PROTECTIVE LEATHER GUARD BY THE HAND. TO WIN A GAME ONE HAD TO SCORE A 'BLOOD', WHICH WAS TO PRODUCE A ONE-INCH LONG TRICKLE OF BLOOD FROM A POINT ABOVE YOUR OPPONENTS' EYELINE. CONTESTANTS WERE CONSTANTLY LOOKING FOR AN OPENING TO GET UNDER THEIR OPPONENTS GUARD AND THEN WHEN THEY DID, STRIKING HARD TO MAKE THEIR MARK.