



WIMBLEDON  
LAWN TENNIS  
MUSEUM

# EXPLORE WIMBLEDON

BOUNCING ALONG



# THROUGH THE HOOP

In 1868, six gentlemen started the All England Club. But before tennis came to Wimbledon, there was another very popular Victorian sport.

Look at the photograph. What sport do you think they played?



Answer: Croquet

In 1874, Major Walter Wingfield launched a new and more exciting sport called Sphairistiké.

Firstly, can you say it?  
s-phair-isti-kay

Each Sphairistiké kit included four rackets, balls, a net and a set of instructions.

What is it more commonly known as today?

Answer: Lawn Tennis

# THE FIRST CHAMPIONSHIPS

Seven years after the Club was founded, the members of the All England Croquet Club became very excited at the invention of a new sport called lawn tennis.

In 1877, they decided to use the croquet lawns to host its first tennis tournament on grass.



## DID YOU KNOW?

There were only 22 competitors in the first tournament and they were all British men?

Imagine you work for a Victorian newspaper and have been asked to report on the world's first Lawn Tennis Championship.

Use the Newspaper template on the next page to create a headline for your article and draw a picture of the champion and his winning trophy.





# Wimbledon – GUARDIAN



Price - 1d

All England Croquet & Lawn Tennis Club

19 July 1877

*Create your own headline*

*Draw your Champion*

Spencer Gore, Wimbledon's first Lawn Tennis Champion holding Field Cup

The world's first lawn tennis tournament came to an exciting end today with Spencer Gore taking the Singles title. Known as 'The Champion - ship', this competition was hosted by The All England Croquet and Lawn Tennis Club in a bid to raise money for the repair of

a broken pony roller, essential for the upkeep of the lawns. The tournament began on 10th July with 22 keen male competitors, all from Great Britain, who had paid one guinea each to take part. Ten days later, the final was played today in front of a crowd of 200 people, who each had paid one shilling. The final eventually

came after rain had stopped play for three entire days beforehand. Spencer Gore, a 27-year-old rackets player from Wandsworth, became the first Wimbledon champion by defeating William Marshall, in three straight sets in a final that lasted only 48 minutes. Gore received 12 guineas in prize money and a silver challenge cup.



# WHAT A RACKET

Inventors and craftsmen have experimented with all different kinds of racket design.

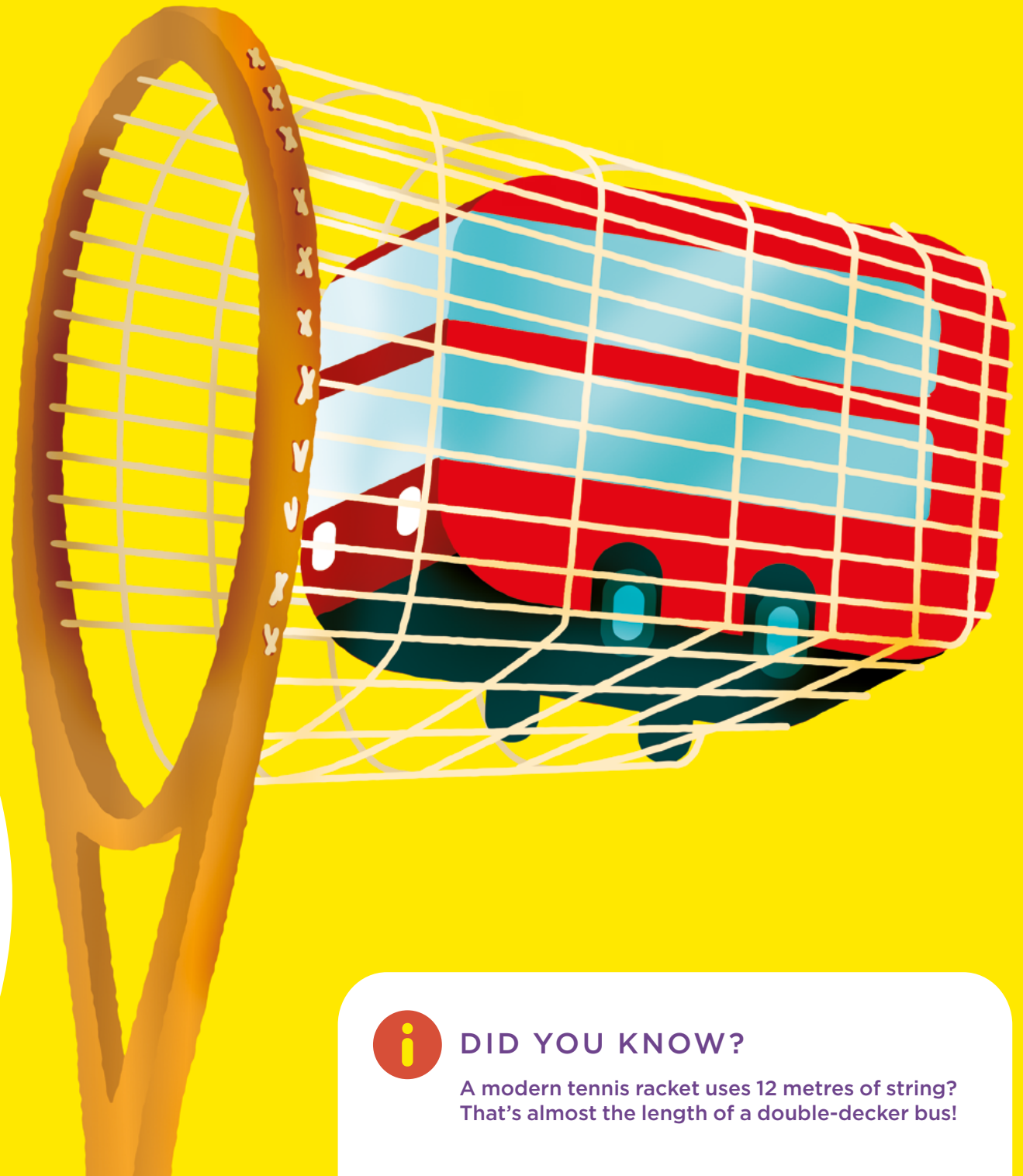
Unlike tennis balls, they come in different shapes and sizes.

**Challenge:** Design and make your very own tennis racket. Be creative! Maybe it has special powers, or it's made from a brand-new material?

Be sure to think about:

- Shape
- Material
- Colour
- String pattern

Use things that you can find around the home. Make sure you ask your parent/guardian's permission first.



## DID YOU KNOW?

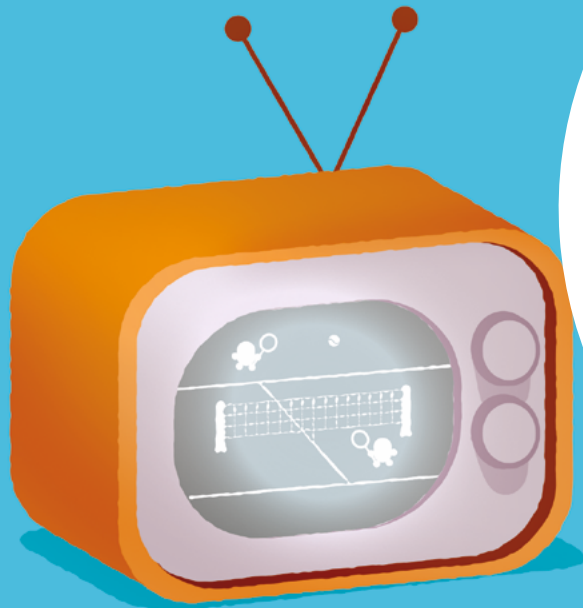
A modern tennis racket uses 12 metres of string? That's almost the length of a double-decker bus!

# NEW BALLS PLEASE

Tennis balls are made from bouncy rubber and a fuzzy covering. Before leaving the factory, each ball is gently steamed to fluff up the cover. Being fluffy makes the balls softer and easier to hit.

Ball Boys and Ball Girls have an important job during The Championships.

They need to be able to feed and roll a ball perfectly.



**Challenge: Do you have what it takes to become a Ball Boy or Ball Girl?**

**Take part in the 'BBG' perfect ball roll challenge!**

**Try and roll a ball in a straight line.**

**Too easy? Roll the ball and make it stop at a set point.**



## DID YOU KNOW?

White balls were used for 108 years at Wimbledon, before being changed to yellow in 1986. This made the balls easier to see on colour television.

