

CHRISTIE'S

THE ART PEOPLE

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ROGER BANNISTER'S RUNNING SHOES TO BE SOLD TO BENEFIT CHARITABLE CAUSES AT CHRISTIE'S

HISTORIC SHOES SIR ROGER BANNISTER WORE
TO BREAK THE FOUR-MINUTE MILE
TO BE OFFERED FOR SALE IN SEPTEMBER



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South Kensington – Christie's announces that the running shoes worn by Sir Roger Bannister CBE when he broke the record for the four-minute mile in 3 minutes 59.4 seconds will be offered in the 10 September *Out of the Ordinary* auction at South Kensington. The running shoes carry an estimate of £30,000 - 50,000 and will be presented for sale together with an accompanying letter of provenance signed by Sir Roger Bannister, and a letter written by Eustace Thomas to Sir Roger prior to the race denoting 'the lightness' of the shoes made by GT Law and Son. We understand that Sir Roger Bannister will be donating some of the proceeds of sale to the Autonomic Charitable Trust (ACTI), a charity which raises money specifically for medical research into autonomic conditions, and some other good causes in which Sir Roger has specific interests.



Sir Roger Bannister CBE: *"I could see there was an advantage in having the shoe as light as possible. The leather is extremely thin and the spikes are unusually thin, as I used a grindstone to make them even thinner. These shoes are the last tangible link I have with the four-minute mile. All my trophies are now on display at Pembroke College Oxford, where I was Master.*

They served me great purpose, I'm grateful to them. I think it's the right time to part with them and I plan to give part of the proceeds to the Autonomic Charitable Trust (ACT) which encourages the area of neurological research to which I have devoted most of my life. Other worthwhile causes in which I have an interest will also benefit."

An exclusive interview with Sir Roger Bannister CBE can be viewed [here](#). This interview can be used by media reporting on the sale at Christie's by embedding the link at the end of the video.

Roger Bannister started his running career whilst he was a medical student at Oxford in 1946 and showed great promise as a 'miler'. He was selected as an Olympic 'possible' in 1948 and went on to compete in the 1952 Olympics in Helsinki where he finished fourth, and set a new British record of 3:46.30 (3:46.0) in the 1500 meters. After missing out on a medal, Bannister set himself a new goal: to be the first man to run a mile in under four minutes.

This historic race took place on 6 May 1954 during a meet between the British AAA (Amateur Athletics Association) and Oxford University at Iffley Road Track in Oxford. The race was broadcast live by BBC Radio and commented on by 1924 Olympic 100 meters champion Harold Abrahams, of Chariots of Fire fame. The shoes Bannister wore for the race were made by Charles Law of GT Law and Son, Wimbledon Park, and weighed four and a half ounces, much lighter than any existing shoes. In his memoir *Twin Tracks* Bannister remembers going to St Mary's hospital, where he was studying, on the morning of the race: *"I was sharpening my spikes on a grindstone in the laboratory. Someone passing said, 'You don't really think that's going to make any difference, do you?' Then I rubbed graphite on the spikes so that the wet cinder of the track might be less likely to stick to the spikes."*

Sir Roger Bannister had a distinguished career in neurological medicine and was in 2005 given the first lifetime achievement award from the American Neurological Association. He made leading academic contributions to the field of autonomic failure. He became the first ever chairman of the Sports Council and was knighted for his service in 1975. His sporting accolades gained after his athletic career include *Forbes* magazine naming his historic time as the 'Greatest Athletic Achievement of the 20th century'. He was also the first recipient of the *Sports Illustrated* Sportsman of the Year award for 1954.



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Christie's South Kensington

Open seven days a week, Christie's South Kensington is one of the busiest salerooms in the UK attracting over 200,000 visitors each year. With over 100 sales and offering more than 30,000 lots annually, estimates start from under £1,000. Interiors sales dedicated to home furnishings are held every month alongside sales of single-owner collections. Specialised sales for the avid collector are scheduled throughout the year according to category, and include Vintage Posters, Islamic Art, Jewellery, 20th Century British Art and Chinese Works of Art, amongst others. In 2014 25% of buyers in Christie's South Kensington's sales were new to Christie's and the saleroom welcomed registrants from over 100 countries.

This year Christie's South Kensington is celebrating its 40th anniversary. Details of how we are marking the anniversary are available [here](#).