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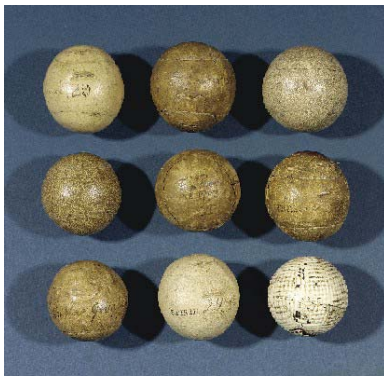
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CHRISTIE'S TO OFFER SUPERB COLLECTION OF RARE GOLF BALLS FROM THE 19TH CENTURY

South Kensington – Christie's sale of Tennis, Cricket and Golf on 5 July is to offer a rare



collection of nineteen 19th century golf balls, with a collective estimate in the region of £100,000 to 150,000. The collection includes eighteen feather-filled golf balls and one hand hammered example, all dating from the 1830s and 1840s and all in excellent condition. Every example of the collection comes complete with superb provenance: most are still complete with original receipt, and the remaining examples were exhibited in the Glasgow International Exhibition of 1901. The individual estimates range from £3,500 to £18,000.

The origins of golf lead back to a game played in the East coast of Scotland in the 15th century. By the middle of this century, golf had already become incredibly popular; the looming threat of English invasion in 1457 saw King James II ban the sport as it was causing such a distraction to the training of his soldiers! The popularity of the game continued to spread across Europe, but it was not until 1851 that golf became a professional sport and the first major national championship was contested.

The early game of golf involved hitting a wooden ball with a wooden stick, but the game was revolutionized in 1618 with the introduction of the 'Featherie' golf ball. A wet cowhide sphere was stuffed with a top-hat fill of wet goose feathers. As the cowhide dried, it shrank and as the feathers dried, they expanded, thus creating a hard, compact ball. These were then painted and sold, usually for a greater price than a golf club. The expense of these golf balls are thought to have contributed to the notion of golf as a rich man's sport.

As a career golfer in the 18th and 19th centuries, there were few ways to make money. Golf matches were usually contested for money, but the primary source of income was manufacturing golf equipment. The 'Featherie' golf balls to be offered at Christie's on 5 July include examples made by Williams, Gressick, Pirie and Tom Morris, all of whom were golf players based in St. Andrew's. Tom Morris is the most famous of these names. Having apprenticed with Allan Robertson, golf's first great professional, he established his own golf equipment manufacturing business by the side of the 18th green on the Old Course at St. Andrew's. This business continued throughout his lifetime, consistently employing six skilled craftsmen. Morris is famous for having won four Open championships in the 1860s, and he still stands as the oldest person to have ever won the event at the age of 46. He contributed to the design of a number of famous golf courses, including Royal Dornoch, Muirfield, Carnoustie and Royal County Down.

The sale of Tennis, Cricket and Golf Memorabilia on 5 July will offer a wide range of items from traditional sport, including tennis rackets, cricket caps, porcelain, paintings, medals, golf clubs and books.

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Images available on request
Visit Christie's at www.christies.com

TOP 5 PRICES FOR GOLF MEMORABILIA AT CHRISTIE'S:

Christie's has been holding sales dedicated to Golf Memorabilia since 1982, and hold an annual sale in July of each year. The following list shows the Top 5 prices realized for Golf Memorabilia at Christie's.

1.	7 th July 1998	Property of the Royal Perth Golfing Society Collection	£365,000
2.	9 th July 1993	Charles Lees, The Golfers, a grand match played at St. Andrews	£199,500
3.	18 th July 1991	Sir Francis Grant, Portrait of Sir John White Melville	£165,005
4.	7 th July 1998	A rare metal-headed blade putter, late 18th/early 19th century World Record Price for a golf club at auction	£106,000
5.	7 th July 1998	The Royal Perth light iron, late 18th/early 19th century	£82,800