Golf Oil `painting Of Dr WIlliam Laidlaw Purves, R & A, Blackheath, Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers, Hon. John Collier

£900

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REF: 28436

Height: 119.5 cm (47")

Width: 78.5 cm (30.9")

Description

Impressive modern Golf Portrait, William Laidlaw Purves.
Large oil on canvas of Dr. William Laidlaw Purves after the original oil painting by the Hon. John Collier (1850 - 1934), a prominent London artist. The painting is un-framed but is stretched and ready to hang, artist of this particular painting is unknown. The original painting now hangs at Royal St. George's, Sandwich. William Laidlaw Purves, oculist and obsessive golfer, was an Edinburgh born surgeon who worked in London, but remembered by most for his contributions to the golfing world. A very influential man, he was one of the key figures behind the spread of the game of golf in England towards the end of the 19th century. He won many important club trophies, the last being in 1914, aged 71 with a handicap of 3. He died at his home Hardwick Cottage, Wimbledon Common on 30th December 1917, and at the time he was a member of no fewer than 32 golf clubs.

As a student Purves had played golf at Bruntsfield Links in Edinburgh and by the time of his London appointment he was a member of both the Honorable Company of Edinburgh Golfers and the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews. Upon his move to London in 1874 he joined the London Scottish and Wimbledon Golf Club. The two clubs shortly separated into two separate clubs, The London Scottish Golf Club and the Wimbledon Golf Club, but both continued to play on Wimbledon Common. In 1882 the Wimbledon became the Royal Wimbledon Golf Club and Purves became an active committee member, later being elected Captain. As the two clubs also shared the Common with the public play was restricted, so together with a fellow Scot and keen amateur golfer (Henry Lamb), Purves sort out a suitable place on the south coast of England for a seaside course for affluent Londoners.
Wanting to play on similar links to the ones they had both played on since childhood in the east coast of Scotland, they sort to emulate and rival St Andrews. In 1887 the site at Sandwich in Kent was where Purves designed and supervised the laying out of the course which he called St. George's, later becoming Royal St. George's Golf Club (it is said that the land was spied when viewed from the top of the church tower). In 1894 it was the first course outside Scotland to host the Open Championship. Purves was the first Captain of the club and can be seen in another famous oil painting, Members of Royal St. George's, 1892.
In 1888 he also designed the Littlestone golf course at New Romney, Kent.
Along with Henry Lamb and Issette Pearson, Purves introduced the golf handicap system into the UK, setting out the rules for the universal handicapping in 1898, evolved at Wimbledon where is was a member. He became an active supporter of women's golf and instigated a meeting of fifteen ladies' golf clubs in the UK in 1893 which led to the formation of the Ladies' Golf Union (LGU) later that year.

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