

\$140,000 for 'grotty old clunky' putter



Arnold Palmer

Mike Brooke & general manager Simon Rowe hold the empty cabinet which used to house the putter.

MIKE WATSON

A 'clunky' golf putter, battered with dents and nicks from being played with by one of the world's most famous golfers, has been sold at auction for NZ\$140,000.

The putter once owned by Arnold Palmer was put up for sale by New Plymouth Golf Club after being used by the club as a junior golf team trophy for almost 40 years.

Palmer used the putter to win the Masters tournament for the fourth time at Augusta in 1964.

At the time Palmer was going through a lean period of success on the greens but eventually went on to win 12-13 championship tournaments with the club.

New Plymouth Golf Club manager Simon Rowe said the winning bid on the Green Jacket Auction website had exceeded expectations.

"We always wanted it to go for

more but at the end of the day the price was what someone wanted to pay for it," Rowe said.

The putter had sat in a glass trophy cabinet at the golf club since 1980 and was presented to the winning junior golf team from an annual regional wide club tournament.

Rowe said the golf club were originally looking to have it valued when it was decided to sell it instead after interest came from Christies auction house in London, and the on-line Green Jacket auction site.

Bidding started on March 22 at US\$12,000 until the winning bid came in on April 9.

"Bidding was quite slow at first but then it ramped up in the last days," Rowe said.

In the final five hours the price increased from US\$55,000 up to US\$97,691, or NZ\$140,724.

It was the second highest winning bid from 1100 items auctioned on the

Arnold Palmer Fact Sheet

- Turned professional after winning US Amateur in 1954
- Won seven Majors, including the Masters four times.
- First professional win Canadian Open 1955, winning \$2400.
- Was player agent Mark McCormack's first client
- Piloted own plane for 55 years to help overcome fear of flying

website. "We feel blessed it went for as high a price as it did," he said.

The golf club was given the putter by Palmer after a club member Mike Brooke rang the famous golfer asking for memorabilia he could use to promote junior golf in the province.

An autographed golf club used to win one from one of the world's major tournaments was the last thing he expected, Brooke said.

He hoped the golfing great would send a clip, or a glove.

Instead Palmer told Brooke he would look around for golf club, or putter to send over.

KENNY JACKSON/FAIRFAX NZ

"I was a great admirer of Palmer's, I liked the way he took chances on the course and the many times it came off," he said. Brooke emphasised he didn't contact Palmer for personal monetary gain.

"It wasn't for me but for the club to treat it as a revered trophy. I was just rapt Palmer was interested enough in junior golf to hand over his putter he used to win the Masters."

In spite of his admiration for the golfer, Brooke said he found the putter "a bit clunky". "It really looked like a grotty old putter." No decision has been made by the golf club on how the proceeds will be spent, Rowe said.

"The club is now \$140,000 better off, instead of having \$140,000 sitting in a trophy cabinet," he said. "A final decision will be made after the board of management had canvassed ideas from club members."

Arnold Palmer's famous putter which has been sold at auction for NZ\$140,000.