

From the archives

Leslie Arthur Boosey – founder of music publisher Boosey & Hawkes

Leslie Arthur Boosey applied to join the Club in May 1922 as an Ordinary Member to play croquet and golf. He was subsequently elected to the Club in July. His application form confirms his address in Chelsea and his occupation as a 'Publisher'. It also refers to him as being a member of the Bath Club – a sports themed, London based Gentlemen's Club in Dover Street, Mayfair.

Bath Club was noted for its swimming pool and that it was one of the very few Gentlemen's Clubs that admitted women. The club was bombed during the Second World War, merging with the

Conservative Club at St James' Street before moving to Brook Street in 1959. It was a very sophisticated club near Claridge's Hotel retaining its ladies' section with an elegant drawing room for afternoon tea.

Closed in 1981, when a consortium of members acquired control of the club and then proceeded to sell the lease. Members were unable to prevent the sale but were afforded the opportunity of joining either the Naval and Military Club or the Carlton Club.

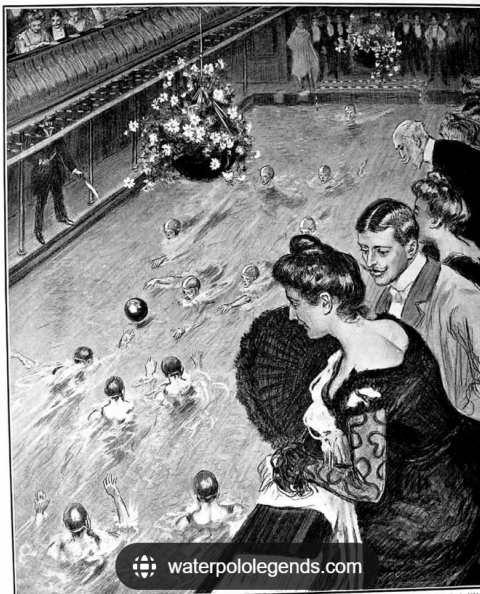
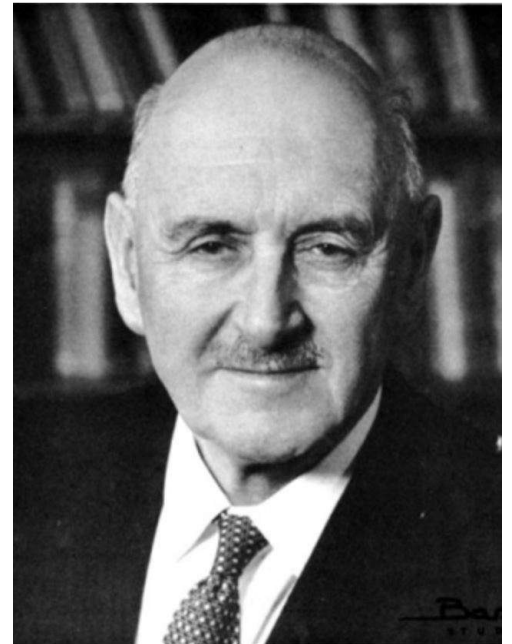
At the time of his application to join Roehampton Club in 1922, he referred to his pre-war golf handicap of 14 at Chislehurst Golf Club which he now estimated 16.

Two years before his arrival at Roehampton Club, Leslie Boosey had assumed the role of Chairman of Boosey & Co. Representing the fifth generation of the family, he had learned his trade well drawing on a long tradition and deep reserves of wisdom and

experience as he took the reins of a rich and venerable music business that owned half of Regent Street in London. Within ten years, he was to steer the firm into the merger with Hawkes & Son and beyond, exerting a calming and steadying influence on the new enterprise.

Commenting on this relationship with his new business partner, Leslie Boosey's verdict of Ralph Hawkes

was quoted as saying that 'He was the engine, and I was the brakes.' This account has been taken from the archives at the British Library, from an article written by Dominic Newman – Manuscripts Cataloguer at the Library titled 'Honour and understatement: a portrait of Leslie Boosey. The archives for Boosey & Hawkes are



THE UNIVERSITY POLO MATCH AT THE BATH CLUB
The water polo match was played at the Bath Club, Dover Street, on Friday, June 21, and was attended by many old university athletes. The goalkeeping of Steve (O'Brien) was the feature of the evening. The match ended in a draw.



held at the British Library in Euston Road, London NW1 including business records, correspondence, music scores and reprographic material tracing the administration of the firm and many of its activities in the twentieth century. Boosey & Hawkes was established in October 1930 by a merger between Boosey & Co and Hawkes & Son – both well-established British family firms engaged in the publication of sheet music and the manufacture of musical instruments.

Among Leslie Boosey's surviving general correspondence, there is however notable breadth of scope at item level, particularly in the 1920's and 1930's. Correspondents include composers, conductors, music publishers, professional and amateur musicians, musical societies and ensembles, composers' associations, musical promoters or directors, churches, infant and junior schools, public officials, neighbours of the firm in Regent Street in London, Boosey & Hawkes own personnel record and members of the general public.

Leslie Boosey went on to serve as Chairman of Boosey & Hawkes almost continuously until 1964. A history of the Company was written by Helen Wallace in which she described Leslie Boosey as the 'very model of a Victorian gentleman, dignified, inscrutable, with a strong sense of family duty.' Dominic Newman finishes his article in the archives with a reference to the entry for Leslie Boosey in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography in which the character of the man is entirely discernible as a public-spirited man and music-lover dedicated to the flourishing of music and composers in their own right, and not for commercial use. His legacy has been celebrated since 1980 with the Royal Philharmonic Society's prize awarded biannually for work done 'behind the scenes' of the musical world.

Steve Riedlinger, Club Archivist

