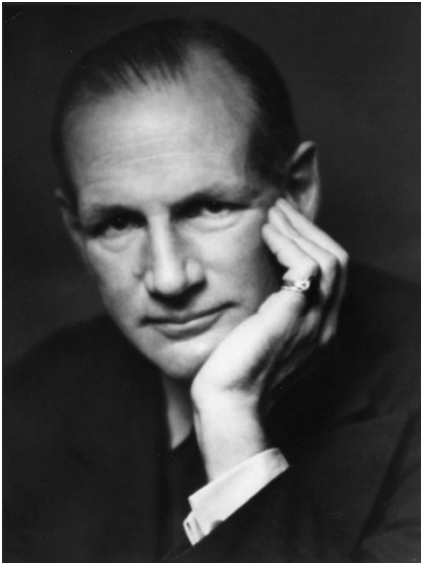




From the archives

Samuel Courtauld – British textile magnate at Roehampton Club



Samuel Courtauld joined Roehampton Club in May 1922 to play tennis. At the time of his application his address was 19 Berkeley Square, London W1. He was also Chairman of the family business established in 1798 as a manufacturer of silk, crepe, and textiles.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the business enjoyed a particular period of success with the boom in black crepe in Victorian England as the ritual of mourning was formalised, publicised, and commercialised. This golden period in the fortunes of the company was symbolised by the employment of more than 2,000 individuals across three of its silk mills becoming the country's biggest manufacturer

of mourning crepe until the ritual began to fall from fashion in the 1880's.

At the peak of their success, the two principal Directors of the business were drawing just under £6m per annum in today's money. The growth in their employment numbers reached its peak in 1975 when the company had more than 100,000 individuals on its payroll. It was 1898 when Samuel Courtauld, great nephew of his early namesake, joined the business. At around 1900, the Company acquired the British rights to the viscose process for making 'synthetic silk' promoting a shift from silk to rayon. According to a Company history, the cost of acquiring these rights was £25,000 – equivalent to c £3.24m today.

In 1908, Samuel Courtauld became General Manager of all the textile mills and, with the support of the Managing Director, HG Tetley, he became the dominant force in the Company. Tetley went on to become Chairman of Courtaulds in 1917. On his death in 1921 the leadership of Courtaulds passed into the hands of Samuel Courtauld, great-nephew of the Samuel who had founded the family business. Under the leadership of the second Samuel Courtauld, the company became a highly respected multinational concern, and its great financial strength was not matched by any comparable enterprise in technical innovation.

As the leadership of Courtaulds changed, so also did the circumstances in which the firm operated. The end of World War I approximately coincided with the expiration of the basic patents. New firms moved into the rayon industry all over the world. New rayons, notably that made by the cellulose acetate

Tennis frocks and tyres — two products as far apart as Wimbledon and the Great North Road, and yet rayon is an important part of both. The rayon cord tyres which do service on the King's Highway, or on runways, are tough and resilient. Hard work comes easily to them; mileage is increased, petrol consumption reduced. And replacements become much more infrequent. TENASCO is Courtaulds' brand name for high tenacity rayon and, therefore, the best of its kind the world produces.

Courtaulds
THE GREATEST NAME
IN RAYON

COURTAULDS LIMITED, 16 ST. MARTIN'S-LE-GRAND, LONDON, E.C.1.

ENDURANCE

in your tyres, too
—thanks to
RAYON

WHAT makes for ENDURANCE? In simple words—long-lasting toughness, strength and stubbornness. Just as they are the essential qualities of the rugby-player, so they are those of the High-Tenacity Rayon Cord carcass in your tyres.

The strength of rayon tyre cord improves year by year. A single strand of the newest rayon cord—Tenasco Super 105—now has a breaking strain of over 350, nearly double the strength of the original rayon tyre cord.

Fast-running tyres can get as hot as boiling water and because of this some tyre cords lose too much strength; but not rayon. RAYON HAS A HIGH RESISTANCE TO HEAT.

Rayon tyres keep their shape. IT IS RAYON'S SHAPE STABILITY WHICH ADDS MILEAGE TO YOUR TYRES.

HIGH-TENACITY RAYON HAS ENDURANCE—THIS MEANS SAFER, MORE ECONOMICAL DRIVING FOR YOU

You're safer when you ride on RAYON
COURTAULDS HIGH-TENACITY RAYON
THE WORLD'S LEADING TYRE CORD

TENASCO

process, were developed. Filament yarn, seen as a substitute - though rather a poor one - for silk, was joined by staple fibre, used as a substitute for cotton or even wool. The result was a gigantic boom in the output of rayon. From 1920 to 1941, world output rose from 32 million pounds to over 2.8 billion pounds. Moreover, as competition grew fiercer and as costs were cut, rayon prices fell sharply, much more than those of silk, cotton, or wool. Cheap woven or knitted fabrics and hosiery in rayon or rayon blends made cheaper stockings, underwear, furnishing fabrics, and dress materials.

Recognised for its contribution to the development of Rayon – the first artificially produced fabric, the Courtaulds name is best known in the arts world. It was Samuel Courtauld who became known to a wider public in the 1930's as a patron of the arts. His collection of Impressionist paintings became the basis of the Courtauld Institute of Art, which he set up and endowed in 1931. The Courtauld Institute of Art commonly referred to as The Courtauld, is a self-governing college of the University of London specialising in the study of the history of art and conservation. It is now regarded among the most prestigious specialist colleges for the study of the history of art in the world and is known for the disproportionate number of directors of major museums drawn from its small body of alumni.



The Institute has a number of other notable Directors associated with its past including Sir Anthony Frederick Blunt who was a leading British Art Historian. He is best known for his confession in 1964 as a spy for the Soviet Union although this information was kept as a closely guarded secret for many years until 1979 when it was publicly revealed by Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher in 1979.

Steve Riedlinger, Club Archivist

