

From the Archives

Roehampton Club and Queen Elizabeth II

The passing of our monarch after such a long life, influencing generations of families, through good times and bad with her characteristic qualities of calming reassurance and encouragement, Queen Elizabeth represents a bookmark in the lives of so many people around the world and particularly with the members of the many clubs that have enjoyed her patronage.

Her personal connections with the Club go back as far as 1950 when she made her first appearance at the Club with Princess Margaret. The following extracts from the *Centenary Book* by Elizabeth Hennessy and the British Newspaper Archives chart the occasions of her time at Roehampton Club. References have also been made to the other royal connections covered previously in Club newsletters including the patronage of Prince Philip and Lord Mountbatten.

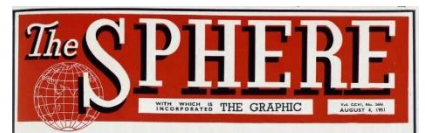
The first reports of Princess Elizabeth making a visit to the Club appeared in the newspapers in July 1950. It was a big week for the Club that month with a Polo Tournament and Croquet Championship taking place at the same time. The polo matches involved 16 teams competing for the Roehampton Cup which included an Argentinian Team, and it was Princess Elizabeth who presented the cup to the winning team. *Tatler* featured a photograph of the presentation ceremony under the heading

of 'Flying Hooves at Roehampton' showing the Princess handing the trophy to Mr J Lakin, Captain of Sussex.

The following year in August 1951, the *Sphere* publication published several photographs featuring King George VI and his family in a round of engagements in London and Norfolk. Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret are shown walking to the stables at Roehampton Club during a visit to a polo match.

Other royal connections with the Club highlighted previously in the Club newsletter can be summarised from the inception of the Club when Lord Charles Bentinck became one of the original shareholders at the turn of the 20th Century. He was related to Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother through the Cavendish-Bentinck side of the family.

From the opening of the Club in April 1902, royal and aristocratic personalities have appeared regularly as Members of the Club. The succession of the first three Club Presidents provides a perfect illustration with the appointments of HRH The Duke of Teck, The Marquis of Cambridge, and HRH The Duke of Gloucester. In 1929, the Club enjoyed the patronage of the Duke of York when he accepted the role of Golf Captain and in 1935, the Duke and Duchess of Kent and the Duchess of Gloucester were made honorary Members of the Club.



THE PRINCESSES GO TO A POLO MATCH—PRINCESS ELIZABETH AND PRINCESS MARGARET WALKING TOWARDS THE STABLES DURING THEIR VISIT TO ROEHAMPTON



Following the marriage of Princess Elizabeth to Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh in 1947, another leading member of the royal family played polo regularly at the Club following in the footsteps of Lord Mountbatten. Key members of the royal household were also early applicants to join the Club such as the Right Honourable Lord Farquhar responsible for one of the largest departments in the royal household. Known as the Master of the Royal Household, he is recognised as the Operational Head of the 'below stairs' elements of all the royal households of the United Kingdom. The role has charge of the domestic staff, from the royal kitchens, the pages and footmen, to the housekeeper and their staff. The current incumbent is responsible for more than 250 employees and may well find himself at the centre of the slimming down of the monarchy mentioned by the commentators as one of the initiatives by the new king.

The 15 Prime Ministers associated with the reign of Queen Elizabeth II is also a remarkable milestone. The first of whom was Winston Churchill who was also another celebrated Member of Roehampton Club. It is amazing to think that this amazing 96-year-old lady and her first Prime Minister together represent the entire history of the Club.

Steve Riedlinger, Club Archivist

