

From the Archives

Fifty Years of Sport by Colonel Miller

Fifty Years of Sport was a book by Lieutenant Colonel Edward Darley Miller CBE DSO published in 1924 by Hurst & Blackett Limited. The book represented a collection of early memories of his life, his soldiering, and all manner of sports in which he excelled – particularly polo. It also featured many anecdotes of famous names and their claim to fame. It was described by the *Morning Post* as being ‘full and vivid, packed with interesting and instructive matter.’



Lieutenant Colonel Edward Darley Miller CBE DSO

The publishers were keen to promote the book in newspapers and magazines calling it ‘a captivating book by a great sportsman’. An arrangement was made in January 1925 with the *Illustrated Sporting & Dramatic News* magazine to serialise the book every week in each of their editions from January through to April.

At the time of the publishing of the book, Roehampton Club had only been established in less than 25 years, but Colonel Miller was now in his sixtieth year and was keen to share his sporting career which had begun previously as far back as 1872 when he experienced fox hunting for the first time with the Hertfordshire Hounds at the age of seven – it was hardly a momentous occasion. He described his pony as a ‘wicked little brute called Trusty’ which bolted as soon as he saw the assembled crowd in Hatfield Park and tried with both heels to kick a very tall horse in the



stomach. Fortunately, the pony was too diminutive to do any damage, but Colonel Miller remembers being sent home by his father in charge of his second horseman and not being allowed to go out again that season.

He also makes mention of the second horseman named Hartwell who had served the family for fifty-three years and was one of the best known and most respected men in the world of polo. He acknowledged Hartwell as being marvellously clever with horses and could have easily made a career as a leading trainer of thoroughbreds at Newmarket.

He goes on to attribute any successes by the Miller brothers in their dealings with ponies to the sharing of Hartwell’s huge knowledge over many years with the family until his passing in 1923. The first instalment of the book carries a short biography of Colonel Miller and his education at Harrow and Trinity College Cambridge joining the 17th Lancers at Lucknow in 1887 enjoying a distinguished military career serving in the South African Campaign and in the First World War.

Mention is also made that on five occasions, he has been the captain of the winning polo team in the Champion Cup at Hurlingham and his various roles as Polo Manager at Roehampton Club, Hurlingham, Ranelagh, Ostend, Cannes and Le Touquet. References are also made to his other responsibilities as Chairman of the County Polo Association, the National Pony Society and of the Hurlingham Polo Handicapping Committee. His reputation in the world of polo was also recognised in America and throughout Europe from previous publications on the subject such as ‘Modern Polo’ and ‘Horse Management in the Field’. This first article in the magazine talks of reminiscences from his early upbringing and his gradual introduction to fox hunting in his teenage years. Among these fox hunting stories, he mentions his sisters who also joined in despite the disapproval of their parents. He also mentions his two younger sisters who went on to become Mrs Cecil Nickalls and Mrs Pat Nickalls – both husbands were accomplished polo players joining Roehampton Club in the early years of its formation.

In these early years of his life, Colonel Miller became increasingly appreciative of the countryside in which he lived barely eighteen miles from Hyde Park Corner. The area was a sanctuary for wild birds of every kind in wooded country with barely a break from Potters Bar to Broxbourne – a distance of nearly ten miles. Nightingales and every kind of warbler were seen regularly along with sparrowhawks, kestrels, goshawks, owls, magpies, jays, polecats, and

A Captivating Book by a Great Sportsman.

FIFTY YEARS OF SPORT

BY

LT.-COL. E. D. MILLER,
C.B.E., D.S.O.

Author of "Modern Polo," etc.

(Handsome Illustrated Volume, 21/- net.)

The Morning Post says:—

“Colonel Miller’s book is full of vivid, intimate pictures of soldiering and all manner of sport . . . Here and there we come on a little treasure of quotable anecdotes . . . particularly amusing . . . some joyous stories . . . many stories of famous polo players . . . virtually a history of that glorious game . . . packed with interesting and instructive matter.”

HURST & BLACKETT, Ltd.,
PATERNOSTER HOUSE, E.C.

domestic cats gone wild, stoats, weasels and moles were also around in numbers. Colonel Miller fondly remembers this location as a paradise for children to learn natural history. He was saddened some years later in 1921 when he visited his old haunts to find a railway station close by at Cuffley where the first German airship had fallen in the First World War and where the woods had been destroyed for the cutting of timber required for the war effort and the making of new roads. He recalls not a pheasant or a partridge for miles and discovered that the family home, Tolmers House, had been converted into a girl's school.

To be continued in the next edition of the newsletter ...

Steve Riedlinger, Club Archivist

