

From the Archives

Fifty years of sport by Colonel Miller – III

Colonel Edward Darley Miller was one of the three brothers who founded Roehampton Club in 1901. In 1923, he published a retrospective account of his 50 years in sport from his early days of fox hunting to the many other sports in which he played.

This book was serialised in the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News Magazine* from January to April in the same year. The newspaper articles provide a fascinating insight into his upbringing and the many notable characters he met along the way with many of them recruited into Roehampton Club. In this instalment, Colonel Miller has looked back at the notable people in his upbringing in Hertfordshire with many of these individuals going on to become exceptional figures as soldiers, sailors, political leaders, businessmen or sportsmen of every kind.

He begins his recollection with the name of Sir Henry Rawlinson and his two sons who remained friends with the Colonel for the rest of his life. The eldest son achieved the title of General Lord Rawlinson GCB and was the celebrated commander of the British 5th Army going on to become Commander-in-Chief in India. As a soldier, he had also achieved the rare distinction of surviving a number of campaigns in Burma, the Indian Frontier, Egypt, South Africa, and the Great War in Europe.



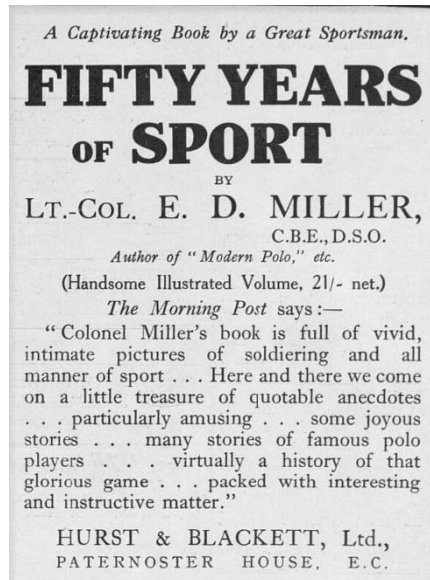
Lord Rawlinson

Colonel Miller also refers to his sporting prowess as an all-round sportsman particularly in the game of polo – a game he continued to play until late in life. His interest in the game in India extended into its organisation helping to bring in regulations for the training of charges to polo, lecturing young officers and promoting the sport by personal example. It seems that the South African War interrupted his polo career for many years but retained his interest in the game at the end of the First World War when he took on the Chairmanship of the Hurlingham Polo Committee in 1918.

Even at the age of fifty-nine years, Lord Rawlinson continued to successfully play in many tournaments. By way of example in one of his letters to Colonel Miller in 1923, Lord Rawlinson confirmed that he was just preparing to play in a tournament at Lucknow in India. In the newspaper article, Colonel Miller also includes examples of the artwork by General Lord Rawlinson such as the Christmas Card he received in 1923 and another picture drawn by 'an ardent pig-sticker'.



Other notable individuals are mentioned by Colonel Miller as having a 'very special charm of manner to everyone they meet.' Included in this description are Lord Charles Beresford, Lord Dufferin, Lord Roberts, and Admiral Beatty.





Lord Charles Beresford



Sir Frederick Roberts



Admiral Beatty

The Admiral and Lord Rawlinson are both singled out as having 'an extraordinary attraction for everyone with whom they come in contact, but they are blessed with an inexhaustible fund of energy and give one the impression that everything is always for the best in this best of all possible worlds.' The Colonel also goes out of his way to mention Lord Rawlinson's son 'Toby' and his 'most varied and interesting life,' his service in the Great War and his brilliance as a polo player

With the possible exceptions of Freddie Freake, Cecil Nickalls and his brother George, the Colonel regarded 'Toby' as the best forward in England. The Colonel also makes mention of 'Toby' at the time as one of the pioneers in motoring giving him some frightening recollections as a passenger in his 'Tin Lizzie' described an 'awful rattle trap which took about an hour to prepare for a start, and whose brakes and steering wheel and interior arrangements generally made one feel inclined to add one's life insurance. 'Toby' set up a manufacturing business in the motor industry becoming Managing Director of Darracq Cars. The business proved to be extremely successful allowing 'Toby' to buy the Duke of Fife's House at East Sheen. A few years later, 'Toby' took to the skies with aeroplanes. These adventures and the continuation of the book by Colonel Miller will appear in the next edition of the Club newsletter.

Steve Riedlinger, Club Archivist