

From the Archives – 15th June

Ladies Golf at Roehampton Club – The Eve Foursomes

In the continuing account of Ladies Golf at Roehampton Club featured in the book *After the Ball* by Eleanor Helme, we now come to a Chapter in which she proudly talks about the role of her magazine *Eve* (and later *Britannia and Eve*) and its role in the development of a series of Ladies Foursomes golf tournaments.

She openly admits to blowing her own trumpet in the reporting of the *Eve's* Autumn Foursomes at Roehampton Club and other Ladies Foursomes events across the country. She also gives due recognition to the *Ladies Field* magazine which instigated the 'Victory Foursomes' event at the now defunct Ranelagh Club in Barnes.

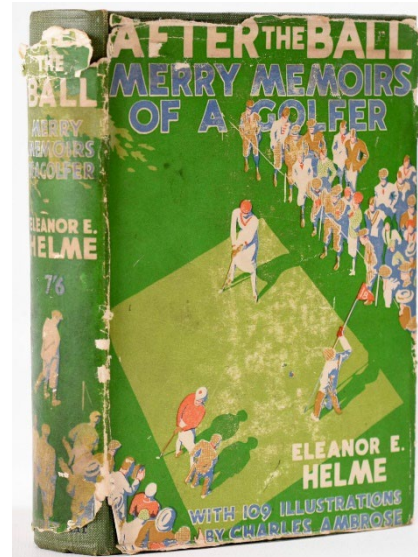
Foursomes golf had become extremely popular after the First World War with more than 600 players making up the field at four courses in the Autumn Foursomes at Roehampton Club and other venues. Her magazine took responsibility for these events in 1922.

Ranelagh Club started the first of these successfully attended competitions albeit in unexpected circumstances with many players attending a wedding at the venue and wishing to play in the morning. Many of them had heard that friends from their own club were playing in the event and wished to join them. It was duly explained to them that this was a match play event and 128 couples could not start, let alone finish, in daylight. There were some participants who thought that the draw might have been 'cooked'. Other players were more polite in suggesting that the order was seeded.

Eleanor Helme suggests that it was the nine o'clock starting time which first inspired the Managing Director of *Eve* to introduce chocolates to those involved. The idea was even initially opposed by Eleanor Helme who thought that it may detract from the legitimate golfing interest of the event and that people would even think that they were being patronised. Despite these reservations, the amount of chocolate consumed would grow each year with warm appreciation from the recipients.

It was reported in 1928 that an absent-minded railway company had mislaid the whole 600 boxes and the lamentations from the regular players provided convincing proof that the chocolates were a welcome part of the event. From this moment in time, the chocolates were to become a perpetual part of the *Eve* Foursomes.

The early competitions at the Ranelagh Club were duly reported by Eleanor Helme in her book 'where strange things are almost sure to happen in the Autumn Foursomes. Statues may look down their noses at more modernly attired females, bandstands repel a crooked second with hard-heated malignity, ponds and the Beverly Brook engulf rubber cores by the dozen. All the same, in the early days, the best couples managed to rise superior to those adventures and to com through. Even such a distressing accident as missing the ball entirely





on the first tee in the first round did not stop Miss DR Fowler and Miss Jocelyn Rogers winning at the first attempt.'

Competition winners that followed in the early years were primarily low handicap or distinguished players of the time. The Cups donated by Eve carried a list of well-known and less well-known winners.

In 1930 the event was won by Miss Diana and Miss Lulu Esmond with the longest handicap and shortest age. The pair were also regarded as a novelty being the first pair of sisters to get their names on to any of Eve's Cups. Reference was also made at this time to the speculation of when a mother and daughter combination would get their names on the trophy.

This is where Roehampton Club is mentioned for the number of these pairings taking part in the Roehampton Autumn Foursomes. It was also initially regarded as an 'overflow' event and an off shoot of Ranelagh going on to rival the parent event in size, excitement, and chocolate boxes. The atmosphere of the Roehampton Foursomes was also described as having an 'air of careless gaiety' compared to the seriousness of Ranelagh. The next edition of the Club newsletter will continue the evolution of Ladies Foursomes Golf at Roehampton Club and the players who participated.

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