

From the Archives – 13th July

## Ladies' Golf at Roehampton Club – concluding report on the Eve Foursomes

This is the final article about a major event in Ladies Golf at Roehampton Club. The Eve foursomes event sponsored by a leading magazine in the 1920's and written up by golf journalist and author Eleanor Helme marked the reputation of the Club and its ability to organise and manage large numbers of lady golfers playing between two local venues - the Ranelagh Club in Barnes (now defunct) and Roehampton Club.



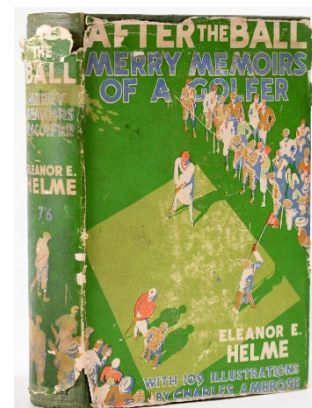
Eleanor Helme was a huge advocate for the Club as the competition grew and its distinctive atmosphere was broadcast to a wider audience. Eleanor Helme also recognised the unique characteristics and abilities associated with the demands of organising large numbers of participants in a competition. She had personal experience as a single figure golfer playing at other clubs and went on to become a leading administrator in Surrey golf.

**THE "EVE" AUTUMN  
FOURSOMES**  
AT RANELAGH AND ROEHAMPTON  
*How they were lost and won*  
By ELEANOR E. HELME

Her contribution was recognised by the County in the naming of the Helme Shield competition played to this day. In this last report on the Eve Foursomes, readers will be provided with a glimpse behind the scenes and some eventful years of the competition.

The previous edition of the newsletter referred to a typical day in the organisers office when the telephone line cuts out during a call with a player wishing to play. The scene is described in the book 'After the Ball - Merry Memoirs of a Golfer' written by Eleanor Helme at the end of her illustrious career as a journalist covering forty six championship events and other golfing occasions with Clubs, notebooks, and pencil.

Up until this time, everything has been running smoothly in the build up to the competition. Following the problems with the telephone line during a call with one of the participants, a frantic message is conveyed to the telephone authorities to let them know that the telephone line is out of order, and they must make the necessary repairs immediately at whatever cost. Implications are made to escalate the problem at government level with the Prime Minister himself being informed by the owners of the magazine.



In the meantime, the organisers desperately glance down the list of thirty-five names on the wait list hoping to find the owner of the unknown voice who thought a place in the competition should have been kept for her. Ms Helme is working in the organisers offices and notices that the post is late arriving but uses the time to type out an announcement regarding the payment of caddies.

She begins to think about the worst possible outcomes of the event in which couples leave the first tee without knowing the names of their opponents or their odds, that no results

are noted on the scoreboard and that somehow three couples remain to contest the final. She recovers from these nightmare scenarios when the post arrives with the following consequences.

Two couples have scratched at the Ranelagh Club leaving places to be filled from Roehampton Club, ten places from the waiting list to be filled at Roehampton Club, twenty couples have reduced their handicaps and several waiting-list pairs have reduced to thirty one or thirty and will have to come first on the list.

The unknown voice cut off during their call is so many places further from inclusion. Two couples to be moved to Ranelagh need to be notified by a non-existent telephone line. The telephone authorities are cursed under her breath but makes a note of their address in London which means that there is still time for them to respond to her call later on that day. If things could not get worse, the ten couples next on the waiting list to come to Roehampton Club need to be notified by telephone as soon as possible as they are based in different parts of the country and will need to make arrangements to travel to London from the Midlands, Isle of Wight, Yorkshire, Cheshire, and Lincolnshire.

She begins to make corrections to the draw when the telephone line suddenly begins to work again, and the first call happened to be the last caller who was cut off. She is asked to confirm her name and address and politely advised that according to their handicap there are a number of pairs ahead of her in the pecking order but would be advised of any movement in the waiting list. Ms Helme then starts to use the phone working her way through the wait-list to find that certain pairings have already made alternative arrangements on that day and could only play if they were given an early tee time and even then they would say that they 'might' turn up.

Numerous calls were made by Ms Helme during a long day which finished at 11.30pm. Her efforts have concluded with the last corrected draw sheet issued for the Press with the exception of three couples who have yet to find out if their partners can come. One hundred and twenty score cards are made out for those taking part. Her suit case is packed with all her bits and pieces ready for tomorrow. It is only nine hours to go before the first tee off time at the Ranelagh Club. After fifteen hours of calls, chants and corrections, Ms Helme calls it a day in the organiser's office satisfied with her work.

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MISS ELEANOR HELME describes her book, "After the Ball," as "an entirely frivolous chronicle of twenty-three years good fun," and she dedicates it to "All light-hearted golfers, good or bad." I find it most interesting, bringing back many happy memories of the courses of which she writes.

**Steve Riedlinger, Club Archivist**