

From the Archives – 14th December Lawn Tennis Golf Competition *Part II*

In the last edition of the Recorder, details of the inaugural Lawn Tennis Golf Competition held at the recently opened St Georges Hill Golf Club in 1913 were reported. Reference was made to the Roehampton Club participants which led to the hosting of the event here at the Club in 1922.

Lord Desborough was there at the beginning to present the trophy to the winner of the scratch competition. He was a British athlete, talented sportsman, public servant, and politician. His sporting links were many and varied including mountaineering, swimming, fishing, rowing, and game hunting.

His achievements are truly remarkable – he swam the Niagara Rapids twice, climbed the Matterhorn three times, rowed across the English Channel and was Amateur Punting Champion of the River Thames.



Lord Desborough

Over the course of his career, he also took on a number of administrative roles which included President of the Amateur Fencing Association, President of Marylebone Cricket Club, and the Lawn Tennis Association.

In 1921, the event was held at Coombe Hill Golf Club and was reported in the Bystander Magazine with a full page showing the leading players from both sports as caricature figures. Lord Desborough was again involved at Roehampton Club in 1922 when the Club hosted the event involving 100 participants.



Lord Desborough attending the Pilgrims Society Dinner to welcome the US Ambassador in 1925



Roehampton Club member Captain Hope Crisp was also involved in proceedings – a distinguished Cambridge Lawn Tennis Blue. Despite losing his right leg in the First World War in 1915, he continued to play Tennis at a high level with the aid of an artificial limb but preferred to rely on his wonderful sense of balance when playing golf. The accompanying photograph shows Captain Crisp driving from the fifteenth tee.



CAPTAIN HOPE CRISP

The following year the competition was held at Coombe Hill Golf Club and was won by Roehampton Club Member Mrs AD Stocks – sister of Kitty McKane, winner of four Wimbledon titles.

Margaret McKane Stocks had also appeared in a Wimbledon final with her sister losing the women's doubles final to Suzanne Lenglen and Elizabeth Ryan in the same year as the golf event at Roehampton Club.



She also came to prominence in the All England Badminton Championships winning the Women's Singles title in 1925 and the Women's Doubles titles in 1921 and 1924 – again playing with her sister.

By winning the handicap competition at Coombe Hill, the Lawn Tennis Golf event was again held at Roehampton Club in 1924. Margaret McKane Stocks made a valiant attempt to retain her title but lost out by one stroke to the eventual winner, Mrs Chesterton. Her appearance in the 1924 event was captured in a photograph published in the Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News.

The name of Lord Desborough continues to this day in the Desborough Cup Tennis Players Golf Society. The Desborough Cup is awarded to the winner of the handicap golf competition for tennis players who have represented their country or county in International Tennis Federation (ITF) or Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) competitions.

His name also appears on the Desborough Bowl which is open to all members of an ITF or LTA affiliated tennis club. The most recent Desborough Cup meeting was held at the North Hants Golf Club.

Steve Riedlinger, Club Archivist

