

From the Archives – 9th May 2024

Croquet Celebrities at Roehampton Club in 1923

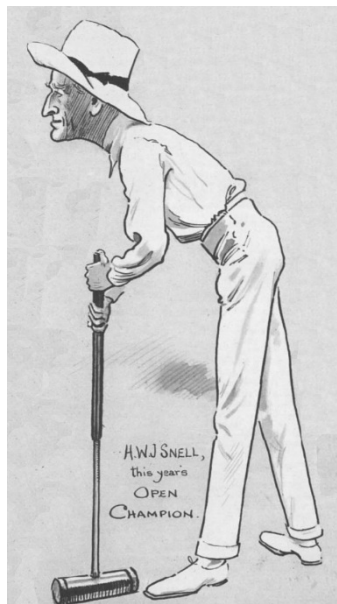
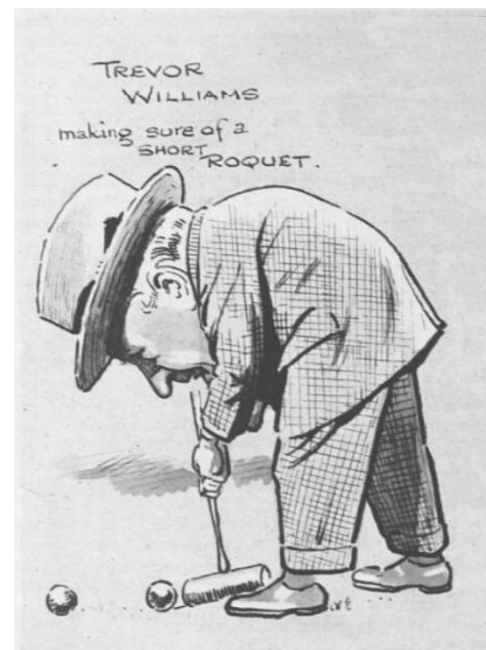


Just over 100 years ago, the Sketch Newspaper featured a number of caricature figures under the title of 'Enthusiasts for Outdoor Billiards' specially drawn by HF Crowther-Smith.

In the accompanying text, the article refers to the game of croquet being regarded in the minds of most people at the time being played by curates in an environment of gentle philandering at Victorian garden parties imagining the game to be a 'rabbity' pastime played with large wide arches, and a bell in the centre of the court.

It goes on to say that this form of croquet is, however, no more croquet than rounders is cricket, and the game, as played at Roehampton Club (the headquarters of the Croquet Association), at the weekly tournaments through the season, is an affair of great skill and science – which is then really described as outdoor billiards.

The article concludes by making reference to the fact that 2000 members are now part of the Croquet Association, and the King is the Patron with Lord Desborough, the famous all-round athlete, as President. The individual figures featured in the drawing are listed as follows.



Trevor Williams regular participant in the Open Croquet Championships making sure of a 'short roquet'.

HWJ Snell – Open Champion at Roehampton Club.

The Honourable AA Capell – Vice Chairman of the Croquet Association.

LORD DONERAILE, an ardent of the SUPPORTER game.



Lord Tollemache – full name shown in the membership application forms as Baron Bentley Lyonel John Tollemache elected to the Club in 1919.

His address was shown as Peckford Castle, Cheshire. He was also responsible for writing a book on the game of croquet.

LORD TOLLEMACHE, WHO HAS WRITTEN A BOOK ON THE GAME.



Lord Doneraile who chaired the first meeting of the Croquet Sub Committee at Roehampton Club in 1905 and continued his ardent support for the game for many years.

R Leetham Jones – Editor of the Croquet Gazette.

Steve Riedlinger, Club Archivist



R. LEETHAM JONES, EDITOR of the CROQUET GAZETTE.