

From the Archives – 13th June 2024

Moment in time in the history of Roehampton Club 100 years ago



Caption competition for the best club

The Bystander Magazine announced a competition for their readers offering a prize of £50 (approximately £3,800 in today's money) for the best phrase describing the character of any established club chosen by the reader.

In order to assist the entrants, the magazine provided a list of 34 clubs which included London dance clubs, cabaret shows, country clubs and restaurants. Roehampton Club was included in this list alongside other notable establishments such as Claridges Hotel, Hurlingham Club, Ranelagh Club, Ritz Hotel, Savoy Hotel and Simpsons Restaurant.

The event proved to be so popular that the magazine extended the entry date until September when they announced the winning phrases. The publishers announced that two winners from the thousands who had entered the competition were to share the £50 prize money between them. The names and winning phrases were announced as follows:



BYSTANDERISMS

The Winning Phrases in "The Bystander" Competition

THE extraordinary popularity of our recent competition is responsible for the delay in awarding the prizes. At last, however, after careful consideration of the thousands of attempts submitted, the judges have decided to divide the £50 Prize equally between the senders of the following two Bystanderisms:

- SIMPSON'S: "NEVER OUT OF JOINT"
- SAVOY HOTEL: "SAVOIR-FAIRE-SAVOY FARE"

Cheques for £25 have, therefore, been forwarded to MISS MARY BROADBENT SCHOFIELD, WOOD LAWN, WILMSLOW, CHESHIRE, for the first of the above phrases, and to MR. THOMAS GORDON BROWN, ELINDENE, MAIDENHEAD, for the second.

In addition to the winning Bystanderisms quoted above, there was a field of really good "also-rans" which put up a good fight for the winning places. For instance, the fashionable "on-with-the-dance" atmosphere of Ciro's is well suggested by the Bystanderism, "Belles on Their Toes," whilst the summer glories of Hurlingham—now, alas! departed till next year—are suggested by "Pro Polo Publico." That haunt of London's Bohemia, the Hambone Club, was considered "A Gn'awfully Nice Place" by one reader, whilst another asserts that it "Thrills to the Marrow."

SIMPSONS – 'NEVER OUT OF JOINT'

SAVOY HOTEL – 'SAVOIRE-FAIRE – SAVOY FARE'

Although Roehampton Club was not mentioned in any of the results of this particular competition, the Centenary Book by Elizabeth Hennessey refers to the Tatler and Bystander Magazine some years later in 1934 conducting a survey of London Clubs concluding

with the following pronouncement about our Club 'People do not put on their dresses to go to Roehampton – they go to play games.' We can only speculate had this description been submitted to the publishers ten years previously.

Historic golf match at Roehampton Club

In March 1924, the British Newspaper Archives make reference to a historic golf match between male and female golfers taking place at Roehampton Club between the Club Professional, George Gadd and Miss Cecil Leitch winner of twelve national titles as well as the French Ladies Amateur Championship and the Canadian Womens Amateur.

Having previously gained her share of honours in previous matches against other famous golf professionals such as Harry Vardon, James Braid, JH Taylor, Abe Mitchell, Jack White and Arnaud Massey, Ms Leitch found George Gadd playing at the peak of his game.



Even with the benefit of six handicap

strokes which Ms Leitch had used to good effect to win her previous match a week ago, Gadd won the 36-hole match 3&2.

The construction of three squash courts at the club

The minutes for the General Management Committee relating to the club in August 1924 record the decision to erect three squash courts at a cost of no more than £3000 (equivalent to approximately £228.5k in today's money). The courts were officially opened in 1925.

By Steve Riedlinger, Club Archivist