

# From the Archives – 14<sup>th</sup> November 2024



## Golf

The final of the Croydon Alliance Inter-Club Foursomes Tournament took place 100 years ago at Roehampton Club. The competition involved amateur and professional golfers representing their club as a pair against other clubs. Roehampton Club was represented by George Gadd, Head Professional and Mr PD Miller, 12 handicap, son of Lt Col CD Miller, one of the founding Members of the Club.

In the final, played over 36 holes, they defeated Arthur Havers, Professional at Coombe Hill Golf Club and his partner Ronald Burton who was playing off scratch. The match report featured in the Daily News refers to Havers playing very much below form with his iron shots and providing little assistance to his playing partner.

Gadd on the other hand played a very good scratch game with helpful contributions from his partner, Miller. At the end of the first round, the Roehampton Club pair were two up despite being one down at the eighth prompting a winning run of four of the next five holes.

In the afternoon, they won four of the first nine holes to go 7 holes up at the turn. Coombe Hill won the tenth hole but halves at the next three holes completed a win of 6 and 5 to the team from Roehampton Club. The photograph of the winning pair is also featured in the Roehampton Club Centenary Book by Elizabeth Hennessey.



## Tennis

Miss Joan Austin, the well-known lawn tennis player, referred to in the newspapers as one of the 'Lawn Tennis Babes', announced her engagement to her mixed doubles partner Mr Randolph Lycett. The couple were pictured together in the Sketch Newspaper 100 years ago following their announcement.

They had begun their successful career as a pair winning at Roehampton Club. She had started her career as a singles player very young by winning the Girls Singles Championship of the UK in 1920 and again the following year.



She also achieved success as a female doubles player with Miss Evelyn Colyer contesting the final of the Ladies Doubles Championship at Wimbledon in 1923 losing out to Suzanne Lenglen and Elizabeth Ryan.

LEADING LAWN TENNIS PLAYERS: X—MISS JOAN AUSTIN.



ONE OF "THE CHILDREN" - A YOUNG PLAYER OF DOUBLES FAME.  
Miss Joan Austin started her tennis career very young by winning the Girls' Singles Championship of the United Kingdom in 1916 and again the following year. Since then she has generally obtained success in a doubles play with the stars - Miss Helen Godwin, and with her eventual partner, Miss Suzanne Lenglen, and Miss Ryan. This year she just won Wimbledon in the mixed team by Miss Wriggins and Miss Ryan Wills.



### Remembrance Day at Roehampton Club

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> November marked the day of remembrance for those who sacrificed their lives defending our freedom during the First World War. It is a time to reflect on the contributions made by many of our former members of the Club and the local families affected by the hardships and loss of life as a result of the conflict. Only the dwindling number of family

members born in the early 1930s will have the opportunity of recalling stories from their parents at the time of the Great War.

The Club has a proud heritage of a membership founded by senior military figures who served the country in many different ways. Our founders, the Miller brothers were responsible for approximately three hundred members recruited from the military in the first year of its existence.

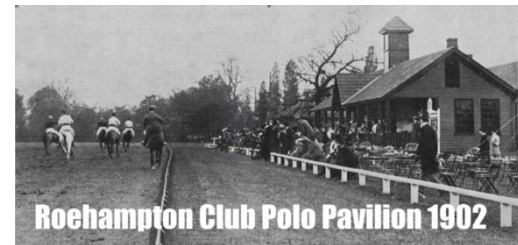


During the war, the Club was used to support the training of Balloon Observation Officers who were stationed at Grove House (now used by the University of Roehampton) and Lower Grove House (now the site of the Fairacres development).



The administration of the Royal Naval Air

Service was based in the Polo Pavilion while the officers were billeted at Grove House. The polo fields and the golf course were used to erect tents for the many visitors who were here to learn the techniques of navigating a balloon tethered to the ground to spot enemy positions close to a battlefield. This involved two people in a basket – one to guide the balloon and the other to send messages to the command positions on the ground. The balloons were also attached to warships to assist in the spotting of enemy submarines.



Needless to say this was a hazardous existence in the face of enemy fire with those on board representing a large slow moving target full of inflammable gas. Unsurprisingly, the average life expectancy of a balloon was a fortnight with only a parachute to help your escape. Despite the possible dangers, there was no shortage of willing volunteers who achieved the nickname of 'The Balloonatics'.

Within the Club archives, there were a number of our Members associated with this activity and later regarded as pioneers in military aviation. Notable Members included Viscount Combermere (also known as Francis Lynch Wellington) who joined the Club in 1916 showing his rank as Second Lieutenant in the Kite Balloon Section of the Royal Flying Corps.

Several other individuals who joined Roehampton Club at this time were also members of the Royal Aero Club. The formation of the Royal Air Force which we know today took place on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1918 representing the merger of the Royal Naval Air Service and the Royal Flying Corp. The first Roehampton Club Member from the RAF was Major GL Lloyd who joined the Club in 1919.

**Steve Riedlinger, Club Archivist**