

From the Archives

Eleanor Helme at Roehampton Club – The Latest Episode



Eleanor E. Helm – AGW Member (1938 – 1967)

In a previous article about Eleanor Helme and her links with Roehampton Club, the content had been largely provided by a resident of Somerset living in the picture postcard village of Luccombe where Eleanor Helme had retired from her successful career as a Surrey Golfer, Journalist, Author, Naturalist, and lover of Exmoor.

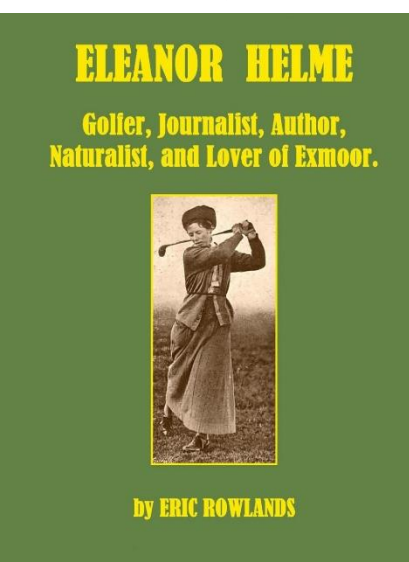
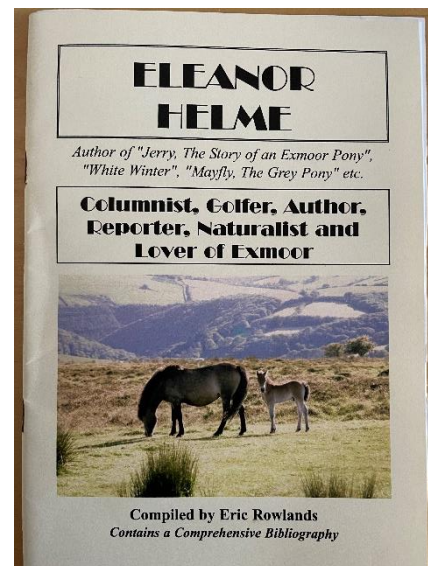
The British Newspaper Archives had also been used to take extracts from her many articles on Ladies Golf along with other reports of her own achievements. Eric Rowlands is the Somerset resident in question and has been kind enough to provide new photographs of Eleanor Helme at Roehampton Club.

He also confirmed the availability of one of Eleanor Helme's books *After the Ball – Merry Memoirs of a Golfer*, which has now been acquired and includes several complimentary references to Roehampton Club.

This combination of new material from different sources represents the latest chapter in the Club's strong affiliations with someone so closely associated with the heritage of Ladies' Golf in Surrey. Eric Rowland's publication includes several images of Miss Helme at Roehampton Club. The most interesting photograph shows her accompanied by other players in the Ladies' Open Championship at Roehampton Club in May 1925.

In the book written by Miss Helme in Chapter 30, Eleanor talks about her playing career in various Ladies' Open Meetings held at different golf courses across the UK. She was overwhelmed with a plethora of meetings in and around the London

area and her impressions of Roehampton Club make for interesting reading as follows 'Roehampton of the glittering Gold Cup, to which, in my palmy days, I dared to aspire. Roehampton (Club) is or was a comparatively



Above right: THE LADIES' OPEN GOLF MEETING AT ROEHAMPTON: Mrs Heriot Glen, Mrs D. Thornton, Mrs Lewis Smith, Mrs Deane and Miss E.E. Helme . WINNER OF THE PRIZE FOR THE BEST SCRATCH SCORE. Miss E. E. Helme, the well-known lady golfer, and member of the Leatherhead Club, won the prize for the best scratch score at Roehampton with her 82. (*The Sketch* March 25 1925)

short course and it lacks those alien influences of bandstands and the like which make the Ranelagh Club disquieting. The air of simplicity about Roehampton though, is deceitful. Once, with the product of a sweep there, I purchased a pair of gold sleeve links, and to remind myself of what may be done with the courage of despair, I had engraved on one, my score for the outgoing half and on the other, that of the incoming. The outgoing was 48 and the incoming 33. I have since lost the 33 link and retained the 48, a sad allegory of the downward path of my golf, and anyway, those links were all the gold of Roehampton that I ever held!

Chapter 40 covers the transition of her abilities as a player to those required as Honorary Secretary for Surrey Golf and the burden of responsibility as organiser of a golf tournament sponsored by the magazine for whom she worked as golf correspondent. The book provides a fly on the wall account of what goes on behind the scenes the day before the Autumn Foursomes at Ranelagh and Roehampton. 'Up to that moment all is in order. A number of copies of the draw have been brought up to date with all changes of partner and handicaps shown, so that the Press may not announce that Mrs What-Not and Miss Here and Miss There have much regretted have beaten Miss Here and Miss There by 7 and 6 when in reality Miss Here and Miss There have much regretted that they were obliged to Scratch and their places taken by Miss Uphill and Miss Downdale'.

Steve Riedlinger, Club Archivist