

From the Archives

Famous Polo brothers at Roehampton Club

The Miller brothers were not the only family steeped in the history of polo and responsible for cementing the reputation of the Club at the turn of the 20th century.



Major Patteson Wormsley Nickalls, Colonel Cecil Patteson Nickalls and Morres Nickalls were regarded as undoubtedly, three of the most brilliant players of the day. They were featured with the Miller Brothers in the *Bystander Magazine* in 1909 in an article

looking forward at the prospects for the polo season that year.

They were the sons of Sir Patteson Nickalls and 'afford an example of the remarkable way in which polo ability runs in certain families. All three of the brothers had joined Roehampton Club together in December 1901 only one month after the formation of the Club and some months before the opening of the Club in April 1902 becoming part of an exclusive band of early members who went on to recruit other



individuals of high social standing and exceptional ability in the game of polo.

The article begins by inviting the reader to imagine a glimpse of English society at play by securing a voucher for admission to one of the London clubs on a big polo day where you will be charmed with everything that greets your eye. You will see the best dressed women and the smartest men in town following with close interest, the most stirring of our sports and pastimes. You will find yourself quickly fascinated by the polo. Little or nothing you may know on your first afternoon



An Important "Confab" at Roehampton:
Capt. E. D. Miller and his brother-in-law,
Mr. P. W. Nickalls

RANDOM SNAPSHOTS OF POLO
PERSONAGES

of the rules of the game; but you will not fail to appreciate the masterly horsemanship, the marvellous accuracy of hitting, the clever combination, and the desperate energy marking the play in a well-contested match. Some breakneck gallop in mid-field or down by the boards, with eight players riding their hardest with the object of goal-getting and goal-saving, will make your pulse quicken. And when at last, an exceptionally great effort is crowned by the ball being driven between the posts, you will feel inclined to raise your voice in warm applause with the rest of the crowd. When the match has been lost and won, the brilliant gathering around the arena breaks up for the inevitable tea in the pleasant shade of glorious trees in front of old-world clubhouses. It is again a charming scene, and one which the visitor will not readily forget leaving the individual to imagine the attractions of other polo clubs – their croquet lawns, their pretty gardens, their gymkhanas, the music of their military bands, their hundred and one features which make for real enjoyment knowing that a first time visit will make you eager to renew your experience of one of the most remarkable phases of London social life.



Colonel Cecil Patteson Nickalls

The article continues with a commentary on the improving standards within the sport mentioning that ten years previously, there were only eight or nine really first-class civilian players and that in 1909 there are at least thirty who are considered to be the front rank and worthy of a place in the top echelon of players. The author goes on to say that polo can obviously never be a game for the masses as the expense attached to a season in the sport is inevitably large, yet there are many men in the country who enjoy two or three games a week for a comparatively modest outlay. Those in the counties are asked to consider the benefits of signing up for a summer season in one of the London clubs but the point is also well made of the irresistible attractions of social life in the metropolis at Hurlingham, Ranelagh and the Roehampton Club. This fascinating snapshot of the Club and its prominence in the sport of polo in the *Bystander Magazine* was written by Arthur W Coaten.

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