

From the Archives

Sydney Scott, former Golf Professional at Roehampton Club

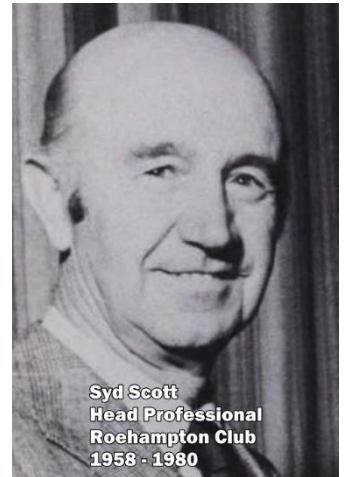
Sydney Simeon Scott was the Head Professional at Roehampton Club between 1958 and 1980. His arrival at the Club was featured prominently in the 2001 *Centenary Book* by Elizabeth Hennessey at a time when the number of golfers had just exceeded that of the Polo players at Roehampton Club who had previously dominated the membership.

The golf course had also emerged from the shadows with a 'deceptive innocence' according to the description in an official handbook in 1956 and although it gave a 'flat impression', it falls away in the south-west corner and rises in the south-east.

The book also refers approvingly to the wealth of trees on the course, including oak, chestnut, sycamore, elm (later to disappear as a result of Dutch Elm Disease) and cedar. Syd Scott's appointment followed the retirement of George Gadd on medical grounds. He had been extremely popular, a fine golfer and renowned in the Club for his integrity, generosity, and kindness (by way of example, he would often give lady Members on the first tee a new golf ball 'for luck'). After a brief interim period following his departure in 1956, he was succeeded by Sydney Scott who managed the difficult feat of winning similar affection from the Members in a noticeably short space of time. It was a mark of the Club's standing that it was able to attract one of the leading golfers at the time with his numerous appearances in major golf tournaments, including the Open Golf Championship, selection for the Ryder Cup Team and record-breaking scores in difficult conditions on some of the most famous courses in the UK. His reputation had been quite rightly established from regular articles in the newspapers which are now available to see in the British Newspaper Archives.

The following selection of these reports serve to reinforce the achievement of the Club in attracting such a player of note. He had already made his name finishing joint runner up in the 1954 Open Golf Championship to Australian, Peter Thomson at Royal Birkdale after a thrilling finale on the

18th green (image right) on the last day. In the following years between 1954 and 1955, he played with distinction in the following tournaments: the Spanish Open Golf Championships in





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Madrid, the Dunlop Masters at Little Aston GC, the News of the World Match Play at Walton Heath, the German Open Championship at Falkenstein where he finished in second place, the Daks Tournament at Sunningdale, the Spalding Tournament at Moor Park and the Swallow-Penfold Tournament at Southport and Ainsdale GC contesting in the first tournament to have a £1,000 cash prize for the winner.

One of the highlights of this period, playing some of his best golf was finishing high enough in the order of merit to play in the Ryder Cup Team under the Captaincy of Dai Rees at the Thunderbird Country Club on the West Coast of the United States losing 8-4 to a strong US team led by Chick Harbert. With a description of his personality as 'quietly spoken', it must have come as a surprise to many when people saw his name embroiled in the politics of the game alongside that of Henry Cotton and other leading players campaigning for a bigger say in the selection of the Ryder Cup Team and more active participation

in the running of the Professional Golf Association. This dispute with the Professional Golfers Association reached a point when those involved threatened not to play in any international matches sponsored by the parent body. The 'rebels' which included Syd Scott, formed their own committee spreading the word among fellow professionals throughout the country to join the campaign. The outcome of this activity was an 'amicable' meeting with the administrators of the PGA although it seems that nobody issued an official statement following the meeting. Syd Scott joined Roehampton Club after previous appointments as Golf Professional at Hartlepool GC and Carlisle GC. This marked the beginning of a relationship with the Club that endured for more than 20 years justifiably described as a 'classic stylist' and 'the quiet man from Cumberland'.



SYD. SCOTT

Steve Riedlinger, Club Archivist