

# From the Archives 100 years ago

## 18<sup>th</sup> September 2025



### Tennis – Surrey Hard Court Championships

Roehampton Club played a major role in British tennis throughout the 1920s. During this decade, the Club rapidly expanded its tennis facilities – increasing from 12 grass and 12 hard courts in 1922 to a total of 37 courts by the end of the 1920s. These courts saw almost continuous play on weekends and made Roehampton Club one of the largest and most active tennis venues in the country.

The Hard Court Tennis Tournament at Roehampton Club in 1925 was part of the Surrey Hard Court Championships, a prestigious event founded in 1919 and hosted at Roehampton Club until 1939. The event featured both men's and women's clay court competitions and regularly attracted notable international players.

The women's event captured a great deal of interest in the newspapers with pictures of the leading players such as Miss Southam appearing in the Daily Mirror.



### Sheffield Independent

MONDAY, 21 SEPTEMBER, 1925.

#### MISS McKANE'S RETURN TO PLAY IN ROEHAMPTON CLUB'S TOURNAMENT.

The Sheffield Independent Newspaper reported 111 names alone for the Women's Tournament including the return of Miss Kitty McKane from America.

The London Daily Chronicle also reported on the weather which had affected the tournament showing a photograph of resident Roehampton Club player, Miss Kitty McKane with Miss Eileen Bennett waiting to play their match.



The Daily Mirror also headlined the effects of the weather. Kitty McKane went on to win her match making it to the Final. Pat Spence was the winner of the Men's Event.

### Tennis – Newspaper feature on Miss Dudley Larcombe

After retiring from competitive play in 1922, Ethel Larcombe became one of the first recognized professional female tennis coaches in the UK. She was appointed by the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) at Roehampton Club and was employed specifically to coach girls.

This was significant at a time when professionalism in tennis was rare, and female coaches were even less common. Her appointment marked an important step in women's involvement in tennis instruction and helped advance female participation and skill development in the sport.

In the Ladies Field publication in September 1925, Miss Larcombe was featured with a photograph making reference to her coaching of the leading female tennis players at the time including Miss Ryan, Mrs Satterthwaite, Miss Ridley, Miss Hardie and 'many other players in the hard court game.'

Her husband, Major Dudley Larcombe, had started his career in tennis administration as Games Manager at Roehampton Club before his appointment as secretary of the All England Club (the organizing body of Wimbledon) from 1925 to 1939 and was also the Tournament Director responsible for Wimbledon Championships.



### **Golf – The British PGA Matchplay Championship**

The event held at Moor Park Golf Club in 1925 was also known as the News of the World Match Play. This prestigious event took place on the High Course, which had only opened in 1923 and was designed by the renowned architect Harry Colt. Hosting the championship so soon after opening was a significant mark of Moor Park's status within the professional golf circuit at the time.

The 1925 Tournament at Moor Park featured a number of prominent British professional golfers of the era. The field included established names such as George Gadd (Golf Professional at Roehampton Club) and a number of regular players in the Open Championships including Arthur Compston, Abe Mitchell, and Aubrey Boomer. All these players were among the top British pros in the 1920s.

The format for the event was match play, conducted over multiple rounds to determine the champion. Key matches included the quarter-final and semi-final rounds where favourites and crowd favourites faced off with closely contested results.

George Gadd, the professional from Roehampton Club, won his earlier matches to reach the final. Arthur Compston similarly advanced through the field, prevailing over notable opponents.

In the final match, Arthur Compston defeated George Gadd by a margin of 3 and 1 over 36 holes to claim the tournament title. Other key matches featured strong performances from Abe Mitchell and Aubrey Boomer who reached later rounds but fell short of the final.

**Steve Riedlinger, Club Archivist**