

From the Archives – 15th January 2026

Programme of events at Roehampton Club in 1926

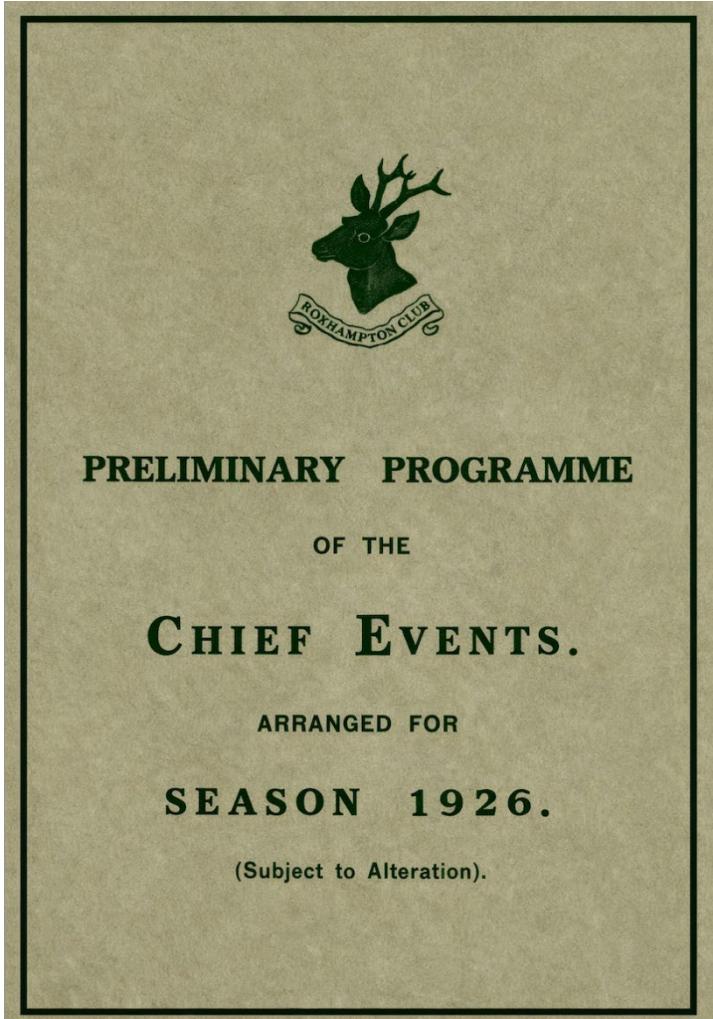
Preparations for Roehampton Club's 125th anniversary celebrations in 2026 are consciously echoing its heyday from a century ago, when the 1926 programme of events showcased the Club as a leading multi-sport and social institution announcing an extensive calendar of sporting and social events running through an eventful year. An image of the front cover of the programme has been included in this article together with the Club logo which was used at this time.

Overview of the programme of events at Roehampton Club

The 1926 programme of events at Roehampton Club represents an extraordinarily dense calendar spanning polo, lawn tennis, golf, croquet, squash rackets, riding lessons, cricket coaching and various social activities, revealing this extraordinary Club at its peak between the two world wars. Running from January through December, the programme combines competitive tournaments with inter-club matches, spectacular exhibitions and elegant social events, catering to an influential membership drawn from the military, aristocracy and professional classes. The events were described in the programme as follows.

Polo dominates the summer season, opening on 1st May (weather permitting) and running through a structured series of challenge cups and championships. The calendar includes the Roehampton Junior Challenge Cup (staged three times through the season), the Whitney Cup with its final at Hurlingham, the Roehampton Open Challenge Cup, the Regimental Challenge Cup for military teams, the prestigious Roehampton Cup and the Ladies' Nomination Challenge Cup in July. Two Pony Gymkhana 'open to Ladies and Men' on Friday afternoons (28th May and 25th June) provide lighter, mixed equestrian entertainment between the formal polo fixtures, reflecting the Club's commitment to inclusive participation alongside elite competition.

Lawn Tennis runs across three seasons with an ambitious tournament and match programme. The spring opens with inter-club matches against Ranelagh, Melbury, Army and other London clubs, building to the 19th Annual Spring Open Hard



Court Tournament incorporating the Surrey County Championships in April. June brings the fifth Annual Invitation Grass Court Tournament, including preliminary eliminating rounds for Wimbledon, and a spectacular Second Annual Reception of Overseas Players on 20th June, hosted by the International Lawn Tennis Club of Great Britain with exhibition matches featuring stars such as Suzanne Lenglen and the French 'Four Musketeers', accompanied by the Royal Air Force Band. Summer fixtures continue through the Wimbledon fortnight and into the Members' Grass Court Tournament in July, concluding with the sixth Annual Autumn Open Hard Court Tournament in September.

Golf maintains year-round activity with matches against service sides (Royal Army Medical Corps, Brigade of Guards, Royal Navy, Royal Air Force, Royal Artillery) and civilian clubs, showing the Club's integration into both military and metropolitan golf networks. Key events include the Ladies' Annual Bogey, Men's Annual Bogey Cup, Ladies' Spring Meeting and Annual Medals, and the seventh Annual £200 Professional Invitation Tournament in April, underlining Roehampton Club's importance as a professional venue. The Pearson Trophy ladies' matches against Mid-Surrey, Royal Wimbledon and Coombe Wood run through spring, while the Roehampton Cup (36 holes medal) and Captain's Prize feature in April. Although not explicitly mentioned in the programme, 1926 was the inaugural year of the Roehampton Gold Cup for Ladies Golf in March originally known as the Ladies Open Golf Gold Challenge Cup. More on this event to come.

Croquet follows a championship structure from May through September, with the Peel Memorials, Club Championships, national Croquet Championships (Challenge Cups, Gilbey Cup, Beddow Cup and Ladies' Field Cup), and a Men v. Ladies match in September, reflecting Roehampton Club's standing as a premier croquet venue.

Squash Rackets operates on three standard courts with timed booking slots, professional coaching from F. J. Pearce and F. Ashford, and handicap tournaments scheduled for November-December 1926 (men's) and January-February 1927 (ladies'), with Sir John Page Wood, Bart. winning the 1925 tournament.

The Riding School under Major C. C. Lister offers structured lessons for children and adults, polo instruction, Richmond Park rides on hired ponies and winter stabling arrangements, maintaining the equestrian culture central to Roehampton Club's identity.

Special events showcase Roehampton Club's appetite for modern, headline attractions: Alsatian dog demonstrations on Whit Monday 24 May featuring Mr F. N. Ricketts' 'Marco of Welham' jumping through fire, and most spectacularly, A Flying Day on Saturday 17th July organised by the Royal Aero Club with exhibition flying, free passenger flights balloted during the afternoon, prizes presented by the Duke of Sutherland and music from the Royal Air Force Band.

Social life centres on Saturday dinner-dances from 22nd May onwards (dinner at 8pm, dancing 9pm to midnight, evening dress obligatory), the Roehampton Eton and Harrow Ball on 10th July, daily bridge sessions in the Card Room, weekend orchestra performances and catering at fixed prices, creating a continuous round of club life that frames the sporting calendar and underlines Roehampton Club's role as a 'second home' for its affluent membership.

Further details of these events will be posted in subsequent editions of the Roehampton Club Recorder in the build-up to our 125 celebrations.

Steve Riedlinger, Club Archivist