

From the Archives – 19th February 2026

The Stage Golfing Society at Roehampton Club 100 years ago



This month marks the centenary of the golf match at Roehampton Club with the Stage Golfing Society – one of the oldest golf societies in England founded in 1903 by theatre impresario George Edwardes for members of his London theatrical companies, initially as the ‘George Edwardes Golfing Society’.

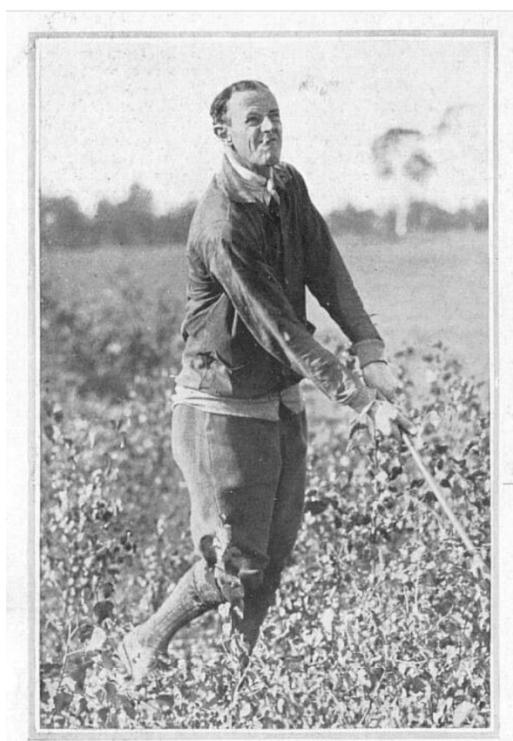
His aim was partly paternal: to keep actors out of pubs during the day so they were in fit condition to perform in the evening. Membership soon widened from Edwardes’s own casts to actors across the London stage and then to performers from theatres throughout Britain.

After Edwardes’s death in 1915 and the First World War, the society was renamed ‘The Stage Golfing Society’ in 1919 to reflect its broader professional base. Over time, as entertainment expanded beyond the West End, it welcomed film and television performers, and now includes musicians, comedians, dancers, presenters, directors, writers and producers.

The society’s early headquarters were above the Salisbury public house in St Martin’s Lane, in the heart of the West End, before it was invited in the mid-twentieth century to make The Richmond Golf Club in Surrey its home, where it enjoys its own historic Stage Room and honours boards dating back to 1903.



The ten a side match at Roehampton Club involving singles and foursomes was reported in *The Stage* newspaper as the opening fixture for the season resulting in a win for the home club.



The singles matches in the morning were closely contested with the Club gaining a one-point lead winning five, halving one and losing four. The afternoon foursome matches also went in favour of the home team resulting in a final result of 9 and a half points to 5 and a half points.

The team representing the Stage included Basil Foster, County Cricket player for Worcestershire, the MCC and Middlesex and was also known as an accomplished footballer and rackets player becoming an actor so he could combine his theatre career with cricket.

Another three members of the Stage team were pictured together in 1924. Ernest Graham was a British film and

stage actor primarily active in the silent film era and the vibrant theatre scene of the 1920's. He also acted as Secretary for the Stage Golfing Society.

Leslie Henson was one of the best-known comic actors in London's West End in the first half of the 20th century and became one of the Society's most prominent personalities. In 1920, he presented the Henson Cup and was also instrumental in bringing the Society's 'Gold Cup' into being, an involvement that places him in the inner circle during the mid 1920's.

Little seems to be known about the career of Guy Saunders but he does appear in the cast of a musical production 'Sunshine of the World' at the Royal Theatre in Brighton in playing the part of an Indian Rajah.



THREE OF THE COMPETITORS: MR. ERNEST GRAHAM, THE SECRETARY (L.), MR. LESLIE HENSON, AND MR. GUY SAUNDERS (R.).



Arthur W Bascomb was a prominent member of the Golfing Society as a well-known comedian pictured here in 1925 giving his daughter some lessons in their garden.

As for the Roehampton Club team, no less than the Captain of the Golf Club in 1926, Sir Harold Ben Fawcus played his part in the outcome of the match.

Sir Harold has featured previously in the *Roehampton Cub Recorder* highlighting his links with an existing family at the Club.

Subsequent matches with

the Society at Roehampton Club have proved difficult to find in the British Newspaper Archives but the Society lives on at The Richmond Golf Club with an eclectic mix of existing and former entertainment professionals both male and female enjoying their golf at all levels.

It seems fitting in this special year at Roehampton Club and its 125 celebrations to acknowledge another anniversary event from the past with a neighbouring club.

Steve Riedlinger, Club Archivist

