

Ladies' Golf Captain's Blog – 19th February 2026



Centenary Ladies' Open Gold Challenge Cup

Looking back a century to early 1926 – the year our late Queen Elizabeth II was born – Roehampton Club crowned its first champion, Mrs R. J. McNair, in the inaugural Roehampton Gold Cup.

Eleanor Helme, one of the leading golf journalists of the day, proclaimed that the trophy would become one of the most coveted in the women's game. With the extraordinary expansion of women's golf over the last hundred years, that prediction may sound a little overstated, yet victory in the Gold Cup has undeniably served as an important stepping stone in the careers of many distinguished players, including Trish Johnson, Catriona Matthew and Georgia Hall.

In that first year McNair had not expected to feature on the leaderboard. Disappointed at failing to break 80, she assumed that an 82 on the par-75 course had put her out of contention. What she did not realise was that her closest rivals were faring no better.

Even the distinguished Miss Molly Gourlay – one of the most celebrated golfers of that era, whom I had the privilege of meeting as a Surrey girl in the 1980s – struggled on the greens, her putting difficulties contributing to an uncharacteristic 84.

Many members today are delighted with a score in the 80s, with the benefits of modern equipment, lightweight clothing, and the immaculate condition of the course. Viewed through that lens, the scores achieved in the 1920s were exceptional. Competitors played in restrictive tweed suits and ties, wielding hickory-shafted clubs that demanded precision, rhythm, and remarkable skill.

Yet despite these challenges, scoring improved rapidly in the years that followed. The finest golfers of the early era graced the fairways at Roehampton Club, including British champions such as Miss Cecil Leitch, Miss Enid Wilson, and Miss Pam Barton (pictured below in that order), establishing a legacy of excellence that continues to resonate a century later.



Mrs R. J. McNair



MISS CECIL LEITCH



Gold Cup 2026 and Centenary Pro Am

In less than two months, on Friday 10th April, the Club will host a special Pro Am to celebrate the centenary of this historic event, welcoming back many past winners to mark the occasion, including Charlotte Ellis (pictured here). The Gold Cup itself will be contested the following day, accompanied by a VIP lunch for many of the distinguished former competitors who are now past their playing days but remain an important part of the tournament's story.



Captain and Pro

I very much enjoyed the fourth in my series of Captain and Pro matches, partnering Sam, against Astrid Drayson and Sara Morgan. It was a tightly contested encounter, with some purple patches all round and good dovetailing, played in the friendliest competitive spirit.

Sam was in particularly fine form launching the ball miles – and straight on most holes – taking full advantage of the bucket holes and temporary greens to make five birdies and an eagle. Sara Morgan had to chip in at 13th for a half! I was relieved to score 4 on the 16th hole to finish the match off 3/2, as giving shots on the final two holes could have been a tall order. Many thanks to Astrid and Sara for a fantastic game and their kind donations.

Ricky and I teamed up again to take on our next challengers, Sandra Drum and Helen Maguire. We agreed on a 14-hole match, navigating temporary greens and bucket holes. Ricky came out blazing – 4-under through the first four holes – yet somehow, we still trailed by one. Sandra and Helen dovetailed brilliantly, both striking the ball beautifully and making every clutch putt to keep the pressure firmly on us.

We hung in and reached the turn all square, fully aware that only birdies would be enough to win holes. Fortunately, two arrived at just the right moment on the 3rd and 4th (playing as our 12th and 13th), courtesy of Ricky and me respectively. I then produced a par four on the 5th hole to take us over the line by one hole. What a fantastic game!



Competitions in early 2026

To say the rain has put a dampener on the start of 2026 is an understatement. The longest unbroken spell of wet weather on record has been extremely challenging for the green staff to manage the course, and disappointing to see so many competitions cancelled but in truth there hasn't been much appetite to compete in such consistently unpleasant conditions. Thankfully a few competitions have managed to go ahead since my last blog:

Tuesday 20th January – Yellow Ball

While that darn yellow ball has the potential to double your points, it seems to cause far more stress than it should, especially with the constant fear of losing it and letting the whole team down. On that note, I owe a big apology to my playing partners, Henrietta O'Shea and Joanna Bright. I didn't actually lose my yellow ball – but managed to do something even worse by playing the wrong one, only realising at the end of the hole. A double faux pas for not checking properly. Thank you to both Henrietta and Joanna for being so understanding!

Congratulations to the winners who managed to make the most of their yellow ball:

1st Patricia Morgan, Tessa Ringrose and Melanie Schreyer 108 points

2nd Lou Wills, Katy Preston and Kasandra Spalding 106 points

3rd Lydia Roper, Kathleen Bacon and Jackie Beedle 97 point

Tuesday 3rd February – four clubs and a putter

The popular four clubs and a putter competition managed to go ahead as an individual Stableford, albeit reduced to 9 holes with temporary greens and bucket holes. It was a pretty mirky, rainy day but quite refreshing to get out there again and have a swing. Given the conditions there were some great scores and many congratulations to Pippa Walker for topping the leaderboard with 19 points on a countback from Emma Angood. This lovely picture was taken the following day during a rare moment of beautiful sunshine and blue sky!

1st Pippa Walker – 19 points (countback)

2nd Emm Angood – 19 points

3rd Sandra Drum – 17 points

4th Cathy Staveley – 16 points (countback)

5th Charlotta Lyckeus – 16 points



Tuesday 10th February – Charity Golf Foursomes and Bridge Day

Despite the relentless rain and the temporary course closures, it was a relief to have a brief break in the weather allowing golfers to get out and enjoy some foursomes (with trollies!) before settling down for bridge in the afternoon. Lots of people chose to play off mats and, by all accounts, thoroughly enjoyed the experience. The heavy conditions still made scoring tricky, so many congratulations to the winners, **Henrietta O’Shea** and **Amanda Campbell Lambert**, with a brilliant 37 points. **Val Patten** and **Cathy Staveley** finished second on 30 points.



Although there was a slightly depleted field of 32 for golf, with many still escaping the UK or preferring not to brave the wintery weather, we had a buoyant roomful of 64 for bridge! **Fiona Pollard** topped the podium with an impressive 4,000-plus points, followed by **John Fooks** with more than 2,200 points.



A particular big thank you to everyone at Roehampton Club for the very generous donations of raffle prizes and **Rita Gallinari** for donating a lovely bridge wallet which was won by Helen Maguire for being the last person to win a trick with a two!

Members, **Mary and Nick Hill** of Foxford Vineyard, who not only donated a bottle of their delicious vintage cuvée but added a cheese and cold meat, wine tasting lunch and a tour of the vineyard. **Ronél** from the Wellbeing Studio donated an extremely generous £75 skin and body care voucher. **Patsie** in the Events Team arranged a voucher for a dinner for two in the Bistro. Finally, **Suzanne Collins** helped arrange two tickets to the BMW PGA. There were lots of happy winners!

I am delighted to say the raffle made a wonderful £750 and the event overall made an incredible £1,216. A very big thank you to everyone for their support.

Remembering Alan Scott

It was with great sadness that we received the news in January of the passing of Roehampton Club's loyal former professional, Alan Scott, who served the Members from 1980 to 2008 with unwavering dedication, courtesy, and wisdom.

He was a perfect example to the Members with his gentle, uncomplicated way of teaching, always immaculately dressed, sporting wonderful shiny shoes!

Alan's bond with Roehampton Club was lifelong, having grown up at the Club from the age of 15, when his father, Syd, himself a successful tournament player, became Head Professional.



Although he spent his later years helping others improve their golf, Alan was an immense talent himself, winning the Roehampton Club Championship four times while holding the course record of 64. He knew every inch of the course and shared that knowledge generously, offering insights that Members still recall fondly – such as his reminder to watch out for the subtle undulations on the fairway bend of the dog-leg 15th hole to avoid an unexpected and embarrassing 'top' and never to give a putt on the 6th green!

Personally, I appreciated the fact that he was always interested to hear about our successes while being hugely encouraging when things hadn't gone so well! This year's Alan Scott Trophy on Saturday 21st February will be especially poignant. The event provides a wonderful annual opportunity to remember Alan, and it was so special to see him at the prize giving last year (pictured in the photo above).

Notices

Players are still needed for the friendly match against Royal Mid Surrey on Friday 20th March. If you would like to play, the sign up is on intelligent golf. Please contact Emma Angood on emma.angood@gmail.com if you have any queries or questions.

Please remember to protect the course by replacing divots and repairing pitchmarks. Mats are available in the Sports Shop but going like hot cakes!

Jo Thesiger, Ladies' Golf Captain