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CRUZ QUEBRADA THE MECCA OF SOCCER

By a member

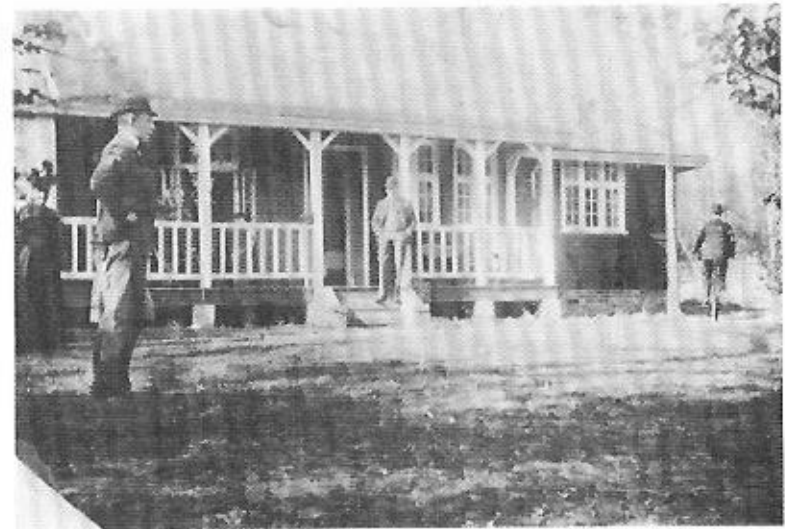
Few travellers on the slow Lisbon-Cascais trains that stop at Cruz Quebrada, are aware that the long wall covered in graffiti conceals a plot of land with an historic link with the past.

Terra da Ponte, as it was known, embraced a number of plots of arable land bordered by the Estrada Real and the Rio Jamor. Over the years numerous transactions were recorded, the last in 1930 when the property was purchased by Fábrica de Fermentos Holandeses, whose factory stands as a monument to the Lisbon Cricket Club where, between 1899 and 1921 British sportsmen indulged in a variety of social and sporting activities, such as cricket, tennis and football, to name a few; for those with less violent tastes there was a small bullring on the grounds.

Many years before the club moved to Cruz Quebrada sports events were held in the Campo Pequeno where at week-ends members pitched a tent and according to season, partook in games of cricket and football. Competitors were few in the early days and apart from Carcavelos, a British enclave, where the presence of foreigners was frowned upon, the match against Oporto was the highlight of the year.

The game of the century was, without a doubt, that of 1894 when Lisbon challenged Oporto, an event that was given wide coverage by the national press.

The fixture was tactfully arranged to coincide with the festivities to mark the 500th anniversary of the birth of Prince Henry the Navigator, which were held under the patronage of King D. Carlos and D. Amelia. Their Majesties had graciously agreed to be present at the duel between giants, a gesture which would



The clubhouse at Cruz Quebrada.

affix a symbolic Royal seal on the game of football.

On the great day, the Campo Inglês in Oporto was filled to capacity when at 3.30 pm the players lined up to welcome the VIP's.

After a long wait, Eduardo Pinto Basto Junior blew the whistle for the game to start; King or no King, 'pontualidade Inglêsa' had to be observed.

At half time there was still no sign of the regal spectators and, only half way through the second half did Their Majesties make an appearance and were led to their seats by the Consul and Mrs. Frank Hay Newton.

In no time D. Amelia gave every indication that she was

hooked on the game and having expressed disappointment that it was drawing to a close, by Royal command the players were ordered to play on in order to satisfy Her Majesty's wishes.

After the longest game ever, D. Carlos presented a silver salver to the visiting captain and the players were rewarded with the privilege of kissing Her Majesty's hand.

At the turn of the century, when membership exceeded 70, the decision was taken to move to the seaside resort of Cruz Quebrada where the grounds afforded all the facilities required.

Cruz Quebrada was a fashionable resort where the Lisbon high society converged in the summer months to enjoy its sandy beaches lapped by the crystal clear waters of the Tagus.

The low wall dividing the club grounds and the Estrada Real served as a grandstand for the holidaymakers who came to watch the British indulge in strange ball games.

The centre of all activities was the club house situated near the well; it served as changing rooms, otherwise it was used for social events such as teas and garden parties, to which the British were addicted.

The access to the grounds was through an iron gate which was never opened as the members had worn a gap through the hedge which afforded a short cut to and from the station.

The term 'football' meant nothing to the locals who were drawn to Cruz Quebrada as if by a magnet, the attraction was the 'jôgo dos Ingleses', played in the 'campo dos Ingleses'.

Meanwhile the aficionados were madly practising with anything that resembled a ball and forming their own clubs to challenge the 'mestres Ingleses'.

One of the early clubs to be formed was the Sport Cruz Quebrada whose members paid a monthly subscription of 120 Reis and its club house was the local chemist shop. As soon as sufficient funds were available an investment was made on a priceless item, almost too valuable to kick around, a real ball which cost the princely sum of one sovereign (4\$50) and, from that day they were in business.



A family of sun-worshippers on the golden sands at Cruz Quebrada.

The ever increasing number of clubs called for uniform standards of dress and at a committee meeting of the L.C.C. it was decided that players should wear white shirts with a light blue band, dark knickerbockers and stockings.

Anything of consequence that occurred at the club was given wide coverage by the press, as 'though they were important national events. In May 1901 it reports a field day when thirteen athletic events were contested, of which no less than five, including the sack race, were won by members of the Rawes family.

In 1906 the 'Sport e Tiro' sponsored the first league tournament which was to be played on three consecutive Saturdays; in the first leg Lisbon Cricket Club was drawn to play at home against Sport Lisboa. On 17th March, the lush green field with

the lines newly whitewashed made a perfect setting for the duel between giants.

To watch the event large crowds came from far afield which included numerous English and Portuguese ladies from Lisbon and Carcavelos.

The match started at four o'clock and during the early stages the teams appeared to be evenly balanced, however, as the game progressed Sport Lisboa dominated the field but failed to score.

When a draw seemed a certainty the ball was lobbed into the penalty area of Sport Lisboa where the full back Emilio stood, undecided whether to go for the ball or for Barley who was sprinting to intercept it.

According to the press, Emilio lost his head and made a brutal attack on Barley and brought him down. The judge consulted the rules and had no option but to place the ball on the regulation spot twelve metres from the post.

The captain, Williams, better known as Ginger, very wisely ordered John Rankin to take the penalty kick.

Móra the goalkeeper was confronted by a deadly and accurate shot and, as expected, the ball left Rankin's boot as if from a cannon. Amidst great jubilation Lisbon Cricket Club undeservedly qualified to play in the final.

Which club would play the English masters in the final was decided on 24th and, the result conceded that honour to Club International.

On 31st, before a packed house Williams won the toss and chose to play with the wind that was blowing strongly from the river.

The captain and centre forward of Club International was none other than Federico Pinto Basto, a veteran player and reputed to be the finest dribbler in the kingdom. His domineering presence in mid-field spelt disaster for Lisbon Cricket Club and, true to form, within two minutes he had dribbled the ball past his opponents and when a goal was imminent, Rawes the full back ignored the rules of the game and kicked Federico in the

shin and put him out of action for the rest of the game.

This dastardly act by the full back enabled Lisbon Cricket Club to win the coveted cup.

The same two rivals were drawn to play each other in 1907 and on this occasion a special honour was paid to the club, in the form of the presence of H.M. King D. Carlos. It was duly recorded that on this occasion, His Majesty arrived before the match started and remained until the end.

A few weeks after visiting the club, D. Carlos was cut down by an assassin's bullet.

When you next stop at Cruz Quebrada, pause and pay a silent tribute to those ex patriots who helped sow the seeds that germinated and blossomed into 'FUTEBOL'.