

History of the RBL Oxted Branch



King, Country, Comradeship

1918 The Oxted Branch of Comrades of The Great War was established. A well built 20ft x 80ft Army hut costing £377 was opened in July 1919. The hut was sited on the corner of the then recreation ground owned by Mr Charles Hoskins Master, near St Mary's Church. Major C G Tosswill was deputy Chairman. Their motto "King, Country, Comradeship". They were affectionately known as "Comrades of The Hut"

The branch was one of about 700 in 30 counties UK wide. An organisation created to inaugurate and maintain in a strong, stimulating, united and democratic comradeship all those who have served in any capacity in the Sea, Land, and Air Forces during the Great War, so that neither their efforts nor their interests shall be forgotten or neglected.

Service not Self

May 1921 The British Legion was founded bringing together four similarly minded organisations, creating a unified national voice for ex-servicemen and their families. The Oxted Branch of the Comrades of the Great War became the Oxted Branch of the British Legion.

November 1921 Sgt T Brown DCM MM of the Oxted Branch unveiled the Great War memorial in St Mary's Church.

23rd March 1923 Master Park, excluding the triangle of ground upon which the Legion and Scout huts stood, was given to the parish by [Charles Hoskins Master](#) of Barrow Green Court, for the healthy recreation of the inhabitants. In following years his son gave further ground to extend the size of the park.

1924 the club furniture included a billiard table the bank cash balance was was £150.00

The President Mr A.N. Abrahams was noted for his solid work and business experience.

Chairman, Captain P Sorami, Treasurer, Mr A.W. Mabey, Secretary, Mr P. Whitney.

A public meeting held at the Barn Theatre on Thursday 20th November 1924 to explain the Aims and Objects of the British Legion. The meeting was chaired by Sir Ernest Benn, also present was; Sir Henry Gibson, Sir Ernest Clarke, Col Grantham (chairman of South Eastern Area Council of the British Legion), Captain E B B Towse VC, CBE, Major G C Tosswill, along with the Oxted Branch committee members listed above. Dr Laing (President of the Limpsfield Branch) and Mr J R Griffen the Assistant Secretary British Legion Headquarters.

Captain E B B Towse the blinded VC recipient spoke and urged the necessity of forming a Women's section. Col Grantham emphasised that the Legion clubs were not "Boozing Dens" that they were fine institutions where comrades could meet without feeling under obligation to drink. He stated that the time was not too far distant where the Oxted branch would have a permanent club building.

Mrs Leaf had been asked to formally propose the formation of the Women's Section of the Legion to be known as the Oxted Branch. This was seconded by Mrs Abrahams. Mrs Leaf became the first Chairman of the Women's Section.



In November 1926 the Hut was put up for sale.

In December 1926 the Oxted Branch (Club) new building overlooking Master Park was opened by [Admiral Sir Charles Madden](#). It cost over £2,200. Designed with a ladies room, a writing room a large games room and bar at the rear and Stewards



accommodation above. The architect was Mr A Douglas Robinson A.R.I.B.A. Mr Granville presented a bookcase for the writing room

The building was later extended to the front, rear and right side over the years. The Ladies room on the left had a bay window extension and became the TV/ Children's room. The Writing room was extended to the front and right side and became the front bar as we see it today.

In 2024 the TV room was refurbished with a new ceiling and downlighting to become the Veteran's Hub.

Within the Branch, the provision of 'welfare' services to Veterans has been reinvigorated by Branch Chairman Rob Cogan and it now has a growing 'military' community, with Veterans from World War Two through to those that have served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Some statistics:

Poppy sales:

1927; £73 11 shillings.

1928; £150

1939; £136

1953; £148

2023; £30,000

2024; £32,000

Membership:

1926; 145.

1928; 258.

1939; 275

References:

(1) The Surrey Mirror and County Post page 2 Friday 9th May 1919.

The Surrey Mirror and County Post Fri Nov 28th 1924 p.12.

Westerham Herald 18 Dec 1926, Sat Page 5

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