

British Legion Oxted Branch Opening Ceremony 11th December 1926



On Saturday 11th December 1926, the new building for the Oxted Branch British Legion, overlooking Master Park was opened by Admiral Sir Charles Madden. The building cost over £2,200. The door was ceremoniously opened using a Golden Key.

Admiral of the Fleet **Sir Charles Edward Madden, 1st Baronet**, GCB, OM, GCVO, KCMG, (5 September 1862 – 5 June 1935) was a Royal Navy officer who served during the First World War as Chief of the Staff to Sir John Jellicoe in the Grand Fleet from 1914 to 1916 and as Second-in-Command of the fleet under Sir David Beatty from 1916 to 1919. He was Commander-in-Chief of the Atlantic Fleet after the war and served as First Sea Lord in the late 1920s.

The event was organised by the Chairman Captain Browne. The Admiral was met by a guard of honour, Lady Madden was presented with a bouquet of flowers, the door was unlocked by the Admiral with the golden key and Sir Charles invited guests to follow him in. Tea was served to the visitors and interesting speeches were given. (see more details given in press cuttings below).

The key is silver gilt which now over the years the gilding has worn off leaving only faint traces. The key's silver hallmarks show that it was made in Birmingham in 1926 by James Fenton & Co Silversmiths. The key is on display in the Legion wall cabinet in the main Bar.

Note: Photo of Clubhouse and builders from original 1926 newspaper cutting has been AI improved by Chat GPT.

Westerham Herald
18 Dec 1926

OXTED'S NEW BRITISH LEGION HEADQUARTERS.

OPENED BY ADMIRAL SIR CHARLES
MADDEN.

The new headquarters of the Oxted Branch of the British Legion, which have cost over £2,200, were opened on Saturday, by Admiral Sir Charles Madden.

The building was designed to be in keeping with the local traditions of the district. It is constructed of solid oak framing and it is built with timber and plaster. The accommodation includes a steward's flat arranged on the first floor. The interior is fitted up with oak fittings and furniture all executed by Mr. C. A. Williams. There is a ladies room and a writing room and at the rear is a large games room and billiard room which can be shut off from the main hall by means of screens. Consideration has been given to the front appearance and a simple design of rock garden has been carried out by Mr. T. Bennett, a local landscape gardener, who had done his work exceedingly well. The architect was Mr. A. Douglas Robinson, A.R.I.B.A., and the contractor was Mr. Williams. Many people in the district have been very generous in supplying furnishings and Mr. Buxton and Mr. J. Flint have supplied curtains for the windows while Mr. Granville has presented a bookcase for the writing room.

On Saturday Admiral Sir Charles Madden was met by a Guard of Honour made up of delegates from Belmont, Caterham, Ditton, Esher, Limsfield, Malden and Coombe, Kenley, Godstone, Redhill, Shoreham-on-Sea, Horley, Wimbledon, Warlingham, Bletchingley and Chatham.

Before the Admiral unlocked the door with the golden key, Lady Madden was presented with a beautiful bouquet, and then Sir Charles invited the visitors to follow him into the club which he declared open.

Interesting speeches followed.

Tea was served to the visitors, and in the evening a smoking concert was held at which there was a very large attendance, Capt. Stanley Brown being the chairman. Among those present were Sir Henry Gibson, Sir A. Clarke, Messrs. Luke, A. N. Abrahams, Scott-Moncrieff, Col. Thrupp, Col. Grantham, Major Cohen, and representatives of other Legion branches. A splendid concert was presented by Mr. A. N. Abrahams, Mr. Percy Broad, Mr. Chillman and Mr. Dimmock, Mr. F. G. Bunn being the pianist.

The result of the Prize Gift scheme was announced as follows: Motor cycle given Mr. W. H. Spark, won by Mr. E. H. Maskell, Oakroyd, Hurst Green; roadster cycle, given by Mr. W. Rice, won by Mr. F. W. Cooper, Bell Cottage, Oxted; wireless set, given by Mr. B. Job, won by Mr. G. Tompkins; dinner service, given by Messrs. H. H. Blades and Co., won by A. Green, Lingfield.



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OXTED.

THE GONDOLIERS.—The Bletchingley and District Amateur Operatic Society visited the Barn Theatre, on Tuesday night and gave an admirable performance of Gilbert and Sullivan's delightful opera, "The Gondoliers," to a large audience.

NEW BRITISH LEGION HEAD-QUARTERS.—Last week's "Sunday Pictorial" contained a photograph of the new headquarters of the Oxted Branch of the British Legion, which is to be opened to-day (Saturday) by Admiral Sir Charles Madden.

WOMEN'S INSTITUTE.—A very satisfactory report of the year's working of the Hurst Green Women's Institute was read at the first annual meeting of the Institute, on Thursday last week. Miss MacRae resigned from the position of president and Mrs. Thrupp was appointed to act as president during the ensuing year.

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OXTED.

BRITISH LEGION.—The new headquarters of the Oxted Branch were officially opened on Saturday by Sir Charles Madden, who was handed a golden key for the purpose. He described the premises as second to none in the country. The buildings were erected by Mr. C. A. Williams to the designs of Mr. A. W. Robinson, the cost being £2,250. Towards this amount £1,215 has been promised or is in hand. It is hoped by the end of next year to pay off the overdraft which had been guaranteed to the bank by Sir Henry Gibson, Sir Ernest Clarke and Mr. A. N. Abrahams. Lady Madden, who accompanied Sir Charles, was presented with a bouquet by Miss A. Whitney. The Admiral was received by a guard of honour composed of members of the British Legion from the Oxted, Limpsfield, Godstone, Redhill, Caterham, Kenley,

MEMORIALS, CROSSES, HEAD-STONES, ETC, erected in any Churchyard or Cemetery at lowest prices. Write for Catalogue.—**A. BURSLEM and SON,** 77, Calverley-road, Tunbridge Wells, and at Sevenoaks. The leading Monumental Masons in the South of England. Skilled staff of over 100 employees.

Kent and Sussex Courier
17 December 1926.



The original Newspaper cutting.