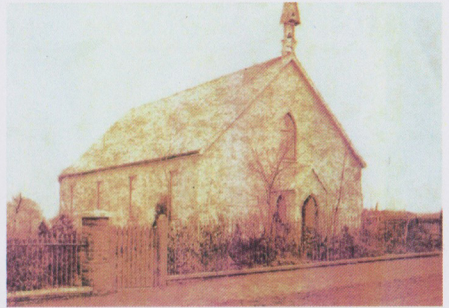
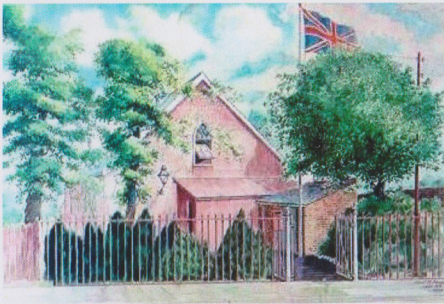
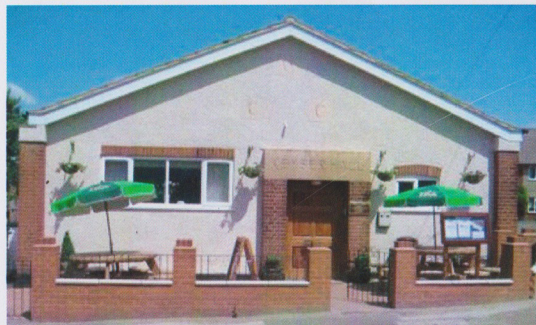


# Oxhey Conservative Club



Centenary Year, 2011



Historical Notes

## CHARLES EDWARD KEYSER (1847-1929)

### Our Founder and Benefactor



Charles Edward Keyser was an Old Etonian, a successful businessman and a generous philanthropist. In about 1893 he bought an old non-conformist chapel in Paddock Road, (known locally as the “Tin Tabernacle”), in order to retain a vote in Bushey, and provide a parish hall for St Matthew’s, Oxhey. By 1911, the Church had been able to build a new hall in Pinner Road, and the old chapel was leased to the newly-founded Oxhey Conservative Club.

Keyser was a man of many diverse interests. He played cricket and bowls and was interested in archaeology and church architecture. He was churchwarden at St James’, Bushey, where he paid for a new bell, and he contributed to the restoration of the pulpit at St Albans Abbey. He was one of the promoters of the Colne Valley Water Company, formed to supply fresh water to the district following an outbreak of typhoid in 1871. Keyser remained on the board of the Company for 56 years, becoming Chairman in 1903. He was a high-ranking Freemason, a member of 36 Lodges and founder of the Lodge which still bears his name. He endowed the chapel at the former Royal Masonic School.

Keyser was married for over 50 years to his wife Mary. In 1893 they left their home at Merry Hill House, Bushey, and moved to Aldermaston, where Keyser continued to be a pillar of the community. He was a Justice of the Peace and a Deputy Lieutenant and High Sheriff of Berkshire. He was a friend of the King (Edward VII). The Oxhey Conservative Club was extended in 1923, Keyser having sold the freehold to the Club for a nominal price. The Club responded by naming the new building Keyser Hall after their benefactor. Keyser himself performed the opening ceremony and presided over a celebration dinner, where tribute was paid to his “kindness, good nature and generosity”.

### Our very own Page 3 Girl

**Agnes Keyser (1852-1941)** Charles’s sister, Agnes, was the long-time mistress of Edward VII. Of all of Edward’s mistresses, with the exception of socialite Jennie Jerome, Agnes Keyser was the best accepted within royal circles including having the acceptance of Edward’s wife Alexandra of Denmark. She remained with Edward VII until his death in 1910. According to author Raymond-Lamont Brown, Agnes Keyser and another lover, Alice Keppel, held an emotional bond with Edward VII that others did not. This trait made her favoured in Royal circles.



## Oxhey Village

### Origins of the name and a short history from earliest times

Various sources suggest that the village has roots which span back as far as the years 757-796 and the Kingdom of Mercia. Apparently, the local area was then known as **Oxengehaege**.

The name of the village is said to derive from the Old English words oxa (for oxen) and haegin (for hedges); taken together the words mean "an enclosure for oxen".

**Oxengehaege** was given to the Abbey of St Albans around the end of the first millennium AD and was the subject of a Charter dated 1007. The Charter was translated from the original in 1897 by the Reverend Newton Price.

A translation of the Charter can be found in the publication entitled "Oxhey in Pictures" published by the Oxhey Village Environmental Group (OVEG). The book was published in the year 2000 and its ISBN Number is 0-9539685-0-2.

After about 300 hundred years, the Anglo Saxon name Oxengehaege was used less and less in its original form and the area became more familiarly known as Oxhey. The first recorded mention of the name **Oxhey** was in 1390 although the name was probably in use for many years before that date.

Following the dissolution of the monasteries by an Act of Parliament dated March 1536, ownership of Oxhey passed over to King Henry VIII.

In 1604, the land was purchased from the Crown by Sir James Altham.

Oxhey grew during the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century with the coming of the London and Birmingham Railway. In 1837 the line ran from Euston to Boxmoor. The line to Birmingham was completed in 1838. Oxhey continued to grow to house the railway workers. Bushey station was opened in 1841. This led to the continuing development and expansion of the area.

The London Gazette of 1880 refers to the formation of the Parish of Oxhey

There are a number of interesting websites which contain much more detailed information about the origins and history of Oxhey. If you wish to study these, you can go to the Google home page on the Internet, type in the words "Oxhey history and origins" and spend some not inconsiderable time looking at the various references. Good luck with all this

## **The Club – the past 100 years**

### **Notable events and milestones**

1911	–	Concert for opening night celebrations (16.12.1911)
1923	–	Extension of Club premises (rear hall)
1953		Front part of Club premises gutted by fire
1975	-	Harry Price became Mayor of Watford
1978	-	Sam Deakin became Mayor of Watford
1983	-	Geoffrey Greenstreet became Mayor of Watford
1991	-	80 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations
2004	-	Land at rear of premises, including Bowling Green sold to Howarth Homes for residential development
2006	-	Start on major alterations and refurbishment of Club
2007	-	Official Opening of refurbished premises (20.11.2007) by David Gauke, Esq, MEP for South West Herts.
2008	-	Front garden area paved, tables and hanging baskets installed and flag pole erected
2009 (September)		Extension of kitchen facilities within Club
2009 (November)	-	Launch of Club's website <a href="http://www.oxheyconservativeclub.co.uk">www.oxheyconservativeclub.co.uk</a>

### **The Club's Stewards**

1975-1988	-	Alan and Barbara Brereton
1987-1988	-	John and Carol Gibson
1989-1990	-	Clive and Angela Armstrong
1990- 2007(July)	-	Alex and Linda Morgan
2008 (October)	-	Joan and Jack Harland assisted by son Stuart to present

**Programme for Opening Night celebrations - 1911**



**OXHEY**  
**Conservative & Unionist Club,**  
 Lower Paddock Road, Oxhey.

**OPENING NIGHT,**  
 December 16th, 1911, at 8 p.m.

**Programme of Concert.**

Chairman of the Club :

**A. BROMET, Esq.**

Vice-Chairman :

**ALLAN LUSH, Esq.**

Hon. Secretary :

**A. R. GULSTON, Esq.**

Hon. Treasurer :

**F. W. HOCKER, Esq.**

Concert Committee :

**Messrs. H. FAZACKERLEY, F. W. HOCKER,**  
**and A. KING.**

**PROGRAMME - ONE PENNY.**



Warren, Printer, Watford.





In 1953, that part of the Club premises which had been the former Baptist Chapel was gutted by fire. This picture shows the cleaning up operations in progress.



Bowling Green at the rear. After its use as a Bowling Green was discontinued, the green was used occasionally for grazing horses or donkeys. It was also used to host outdoor events such as B-B-Qs and firework displays for the benefit of Club members, their families and friends. The last firework display occurred about 1990 (Photos courtesy of Alan Luto, Assistant Secretary)

Programme for 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations 1991



OXHEY  
Conservative & Unionist Club,  
Lower Paddock Road, Oxhey.  
80th ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
**OPENING NIGHT.**  
December 16th, 1911, at 8 p.m.

**Programme of Concert.**

Chairman of the Club :

W. WATSON, Esq.

Hon. Secretary :

R. E. DIXON, Esq.

Hon. Treasurer :

J. HAWKINS, Esq.

PROGRAMME - ONE PENNY.



Luto, Printer, Stanmore

## Some notable events from 1911

### WORLD EVENTS

24th July - Hiram Bingham (USA) discovers Lost City of the Incas in Peru

22<sup>nd</sup> August – Mona Lisa stolen from The Louvre in Paris (recovered in 1913)

14<sup>th</sup> December – Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen first explorer to reach the South Pole

15<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> December – At Sydney, in the Test Match against Australia, the English team lose to Australia by 146 runs but go on to win the next four games..

December – Cold winter in USA/Canada - Niagara Falls freeze over

### UK EVENTS

Census of Population – that of Oxhey was 2212 spread over 622 households

31<sup>st</sup> May - Titanic launched (built in Belfast and registered in Liverpool)

22<sup>nd</sup> June – Coronation of King George V

9<sup>th</sup> September - First European airmail service (Hendon to Windsor) to celebrate Coronation of King George V

4<sup>th</sup> October – opening of first public lift – Earl's Court Station

3<sup>rd</sup> November – First edition of Womens Weekly

18<sup>th</sup> November – Maiden flight of Britain's first sea plane

The Indian cricket team toured England in the 1911 season and played 23 matches. It was the first tour by an 'All Indian' team. Of the 14 first class matches, the Indians won two games and drew two.



### LOCAL EVENTS

Re-opening of Watford Palace Theatre. (Built in 1905 and refurbished in 1911)

Grimsdyke Mansion - Death of W S Gilbert (of Gilbert & Sullivan comic opera fame) in lake while attempting to help a local girl, Ruby Preece, who had got into difficulties while swimming. (Ruby Preece later became the second wife of the English painter, Stanley Spencer)

### Founding of Oxhey Conservative Club



**Things which were not available in 1911  
(had not been discovered, invented or manufactured at that time)**

Domestic washing machines  
The Panama Canal  
Package holidays (introduced by  
Thomas Cook to take bereaved  
families to visit War Graves after  
the first World War of 1914-18)

Credit cards

TV

Domestic refrigerators

Domestic freezers

CD/DVD players

IPOD's

Mobile Phones

Photocopiers

Fax machines

Computers

The Internet

Email/Twitter/Facebook/Skype

The Channel Tunnel

Contraceptive pill

Canned drinks

Electric kettles

Electric Toasters

Curling Tongs

Surf Boards

Skate Boards

Mountain bikes

Plastic surgery

Hip and knee replacements

Open heart surgery

The London Eye

The European Union

Bendy Buses

Votes for Women

Social Security benefits

National Health Service

Nylon

Teflon

Nuclear Power

Political correctness

Human Rights

Air conditioning

Road humps (we had holes in  
roads instead)

Compulsory driving tests  
(introduced in 1934)

Digital watches

Digital cameras

Decimal currency (introduced 1971)

Video cameras

Compulsory education to 14

Electric lawn mowers

Pressure washers

Biro pens

Media studies

Antibiotics

Motorways

Hovercraft

First Labour Government (not until  
1924)

Space Stations

Penicillin

Satellite Navigation (SatNavs)

Parking meters

Microwave ovens

Velcro

Crossword puzzles

Insulin

Aerosol sprays

Synthetic rubber

**BUT**

Great Britain had an Empire on  
which the sun never set

**AND**

The Royal Navy policed the oceans  
of the world

**ALL MANAGED**

Without computers, mobile phones  
and text messaging

## Past and present Officers of the Club

(Regrettably not all our records are complete)

### Presidents

#### A. Bromet Esq (First President)

.....

Clifton (Cliff) Bate

Wesley Twigg

Roy Bushell

John Hamperl (2009 – to present)

### Vice Presidents

.....

F. O'Conner

C. Walters

Freddie Snashfold

Margaret Spruce (2008 – to date)

Jim Hawkins (2008 – 2010)

### Chairmen

#### A Bromet Esq (First Chairman)

.....

Sam Deakin

William (Bill) Watson

Bruce Baxter

Maurice McKay

Audrey Adams

Ian Russell (April 2011 – to date)

### Secretaries

#### A R Gulston Esq.(First Secretary)

.....

Len Gough

Julian Barrett

Ivor Lines

Ron Dixon

Alan Luto

Peter Manix

Ron Baldwin

Bruce Baxter

David Hobart (April 2008 to date)

### Treasurers

#### F W Hocker, Esq

.....

L. P. Edgar

Len Jeacocke, MBE

Jim Hawkins

Dennis Brown (April 2008 to date)

### Assistant Secretaries

.....

P. Samuels

Julian Barrett

Alan Luto (April, 2008 to date)

### Members of the Club who became Mayor of Watford

Harry Price (1975)

Sam Deakin (1978)

Geoffrey Greenstreet (1983)

### Our Local MP



Richard Harrington  
Member of Parliament for Watford  
(born 4<sup>th</sup> November 1957)  
first elected to Parliament  
6<sup>th</sup> May 2010

### Average ANNUAL earnings in different occupations in 1911

Occupation	1911
Agricultural Labourers	£46.96
General Labourers	£74.04
Messengers and Porters (exc. govt.)	£85.91
Government low-wage	£67.95
Police, Guards, Watchmen	£70.62
Miners	£83.63
Government high-wage	£161.61
Skilled in Shipbuilding	£102.34
Skilled in Engineering	£125.21
Skilled in Building Trades	£105.14
Skilled in Textiles	£108.50
Skilled in Printing Trades	£97.29
Clergymen	£206.00
Solicitors and Barristers	£1,343.50
Clerks (exc. govt.)	£229.89
Surgeons, Medical Officers	£272.75
Teachers	£176.15
Engineers, Surveyors	£287.37

### Club Members laying the foundations for the rear hall (1923)



### Acknowledgements

The Editor is pleased to acknowledge the financial contributions made by the Officers of the Club and its Committee Members towards the publication of this booklet and the Centenary dinner.

Also the generosity of Dayla Ltd for their kind donation of beer to help celebrate our past 100 years