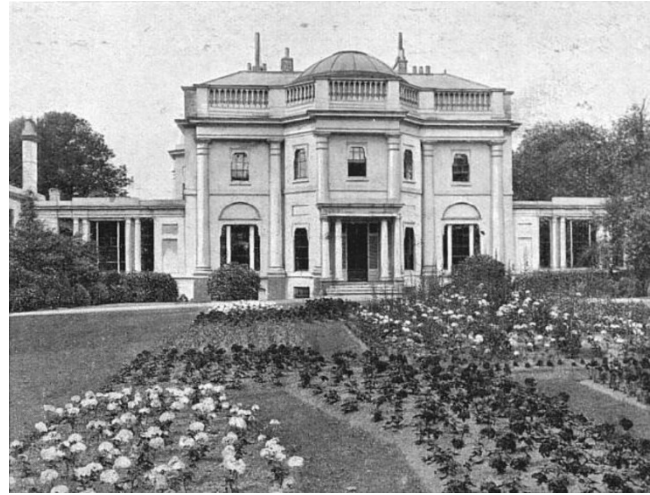


## From the Archives

### Homes for heroes at Roehampton 100 years ago

According to the *Centenary Book* by Elizabeth Hennessey at the time of the First World War, the Club had more than seven millionaires living in the immediate vicinity. Two of these individuals agreed to the use of their prestigious properties to support the war effort. One was the shipping magnate and Roehampton Club Member, Kenneth Wilson who was featured in a previous article allowing the use of his residence to become the Queen Mary's Convalescent Auxiliary Hospitals.

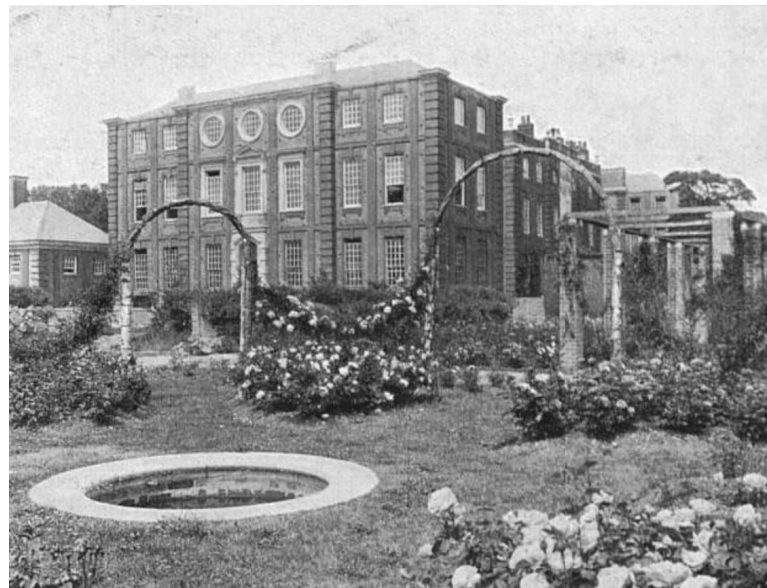
The other was John Pierpoint Morgan also mentioned in the *Centenary Book* who generously lent his home at nearby Dover House (right) for the use of Army Officers. While Kenneth Wilson had acquired his fortune from Ellerman Shipping Lines, Pierpoint Morgan's family had achieved their success in Investment Banking amassing a vast amount of capital estimated at more than 1.2 billion pounds in today's money.



The British Newspaper Archives carries an interesting article in the *Graphic Magazine* in which both individuals are highlighted for the respective uses of their Roehampton addresses. Their homes became world-class centres for the treatment of wounded soldiers who had lost their limbs fighting for king and country. This initiative was created by Mary Eleanor Gwynne Holford who enlisted the help of Roehampton Club Member CH Kenderdine. With the approval of the Queen and

the consent of the Directors General of the Navy and Army Medical Services, they formed a committee to deal with this difficult problem.

Kenneth Wilson subsequently agreed to the commandeering of Roehampton House (right) by the War Office for the purposes of this scheme with a similar agreement signalled by J Pierpoint Morgan for the use of Dover House by Officers. Roehampton House was initially capable of accommodating about two hundred cases, but the Committee decided to erect temporary wards for another seventy-five beds. Dover House was large enough to accommodate 25 officers. The hospital at Roehampton House was intended to focus on the recovery of as many maimed soldiers as possible by fitting their artificial limbs and concentrating their rehabilitation under the best possible conditions and



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## Homes for Heroes

with the advice and assistance of eminent orthopaedic surgeons. This was a fundamental change of direction in the treatment of limbless soldiers in existing hospitals where the accommodation was severely limited and the outcome for many of the patients was unsuccessful in dealing with their infirmity.

More time and effort could be afforded to patients inquiring into their circumstances providing them with helpful advice and local support when they were released from hospital. Roehampton became a centre of excellence with the development of a bespoke manufacturing business for artificial limbs. Lessons were clearly learnt from the early days when limbs were made in standard sizes taking no account of the balance with the other side of the body and the feeling of helplessness engendered by the patients from ill-fitting appendages. Who would have thought that this part of southwest London would become a haven for those missing their limbs and the opportunity to maintain a quality of life worth fighting for?



No one epitomised the human spirit in the face of this adversity than Douglas Bader who was treated at Roehampton. He also managed to play golf at Roehampton Club after his release from hospital making regular appearances in a special competition in aid of the British Limbless Ex-Soldiers Association (BLESMA). Members wishing to see Douglas Bader in action at Roehampton Club can do so by searching for 'Douglas Bader, Roehampton' on YouTube.

Steve Riedlinger, Club Archivist