

From the Archives

Edward Leicester-Penrhyn – first Chairman of Surrey County Council

Edward Hugh Leicester-Penrhyn was an early Member of Roehampton Club elected in February 1902. His application form refers to his address as East Sheen, London and his occupation as a Justice of the Peace for Surrey and Hampshire. He was also a member of other clubs including St Stephens and Sheen House.

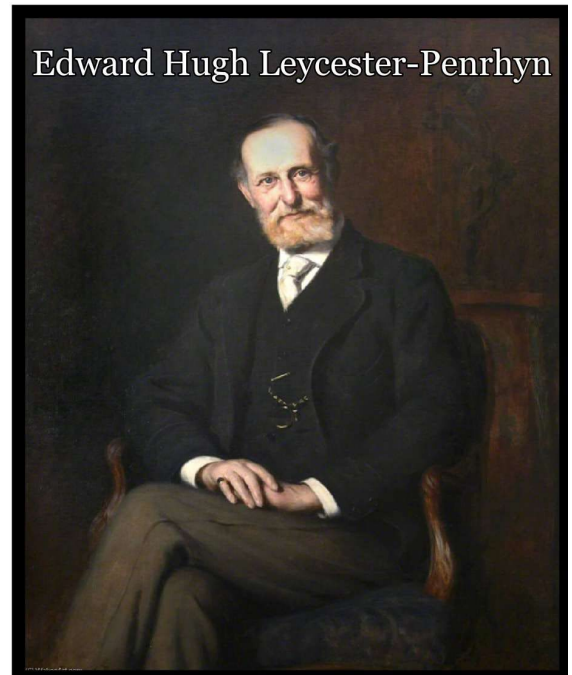
The St Stephen's Club took its name from St Stephen's Chapel, the original meeting place of the House of Commons and was initially connected with Conservative Party Members of Parliament and civil engineers. Benjamin Disraeli, twice Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, was among the founding fathers. In 1886, a group of six Irish Conservative MPs met at the St Stephen's Club to form a Parliamentary Ulster party which went on to become what is now the Ulster Unionist Party. The original premises were sold to the government in the early 1960s and the club moved to 34 Queen Anne's Gate before its re-opening by former Prime Minister Harold MacMillan. At this time, it was the tradition for the Chairman of the Conservative Party to take over the role of Club President. More recently in 2003, the Club was acquired by new owners changing the character of the club to become apolitical choosing to operate as a private members' luncheon club and venue for evening functions. It did however retain its unofficial connections with the Conservative Party and was used by the Club in 2010 by former Prime Minister David Cameron as the



The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, David Cameron, leaving the St Stephen's Club

meeting place with former Liberal Democrat Party Leader, Sir Nick Clegg to form a coalition government. Unfortunately, the Club was closed in January 2013 due to lack of members and soaring running costs during a difficult a difficult period in the economy of the country and its inability to generate a waitlist of new members. At the time when Edward Leicester-Penrhyn had joined St Stephen's

Club, it was enjoying a successful period in its history. According to Charles Dickens Junior, first child of the English novelist Charles Dickens he wrote the following description in 1879 about St Stephen's Club, Victoria Embankment – The only persons eligible for membership are those who profess and maintain Constitutional and Conservative principles. The committee have power to select for ballot twenty candidates annually from those duly proposed and seconded, who shall be called selected members. St Stephens Club was clearly popular with other members of Roehampton Club as other notable individuals enjoyed the facilities at both clubs in the early years of the 20th century.



ROEHAMPTON CLUB.

No. 211. Date FEB 12 1902. Elected FEB 12 1902.

Full Name of Candidate Edward Hugh Leicester-Penrhyn

Address East Sheen, Surrey

Occupation (if any) JP for Surrey & Hants

Clubs of which a Member St Stephens Club, Sheen House &c

Polo Player or Ordinary Member Ordinary Member

Proposed by Henry Whitworth

Seconded by C. D. Miller



Edward Leycester-Penrhyn stayed in East Sheen for the rest of his life until reaching the age of ninety-one years before passing away after a lengthy illness at his residence named 'The Cedars'. His father had moved to East Sheen in 1824 following his marriage to Lady Charlotte Stanley, daughter of the thirteenth Earl of Derby when he assumed the name of Penrhyn. The report goes on to recognise the contribution of Edward Leycester-Penrhyn to the benefit and welfare of the parishioners of Mortlake. He was ex-officio of the Guardian of the Poor from 1853 to 1894 and was Chairman of the Board for part of that time. For many years he was the treasurer of the Jubilee Coal Fund, which was founded to celebrate the jubilee of George III, while the Penrhyn Lodge of Oddfellows Parish as Penrhyn Road, Kingston continuing the family name in the County of Surrey.

His association with the county alongside his father was also worthy of mention in another newspaper report published the year before on the occasion of his ninetieth birthday. From 1844, his father, Edward Penrhyn had held the Chairmanship of the Surrey Quarter Sessions until his death in 1861 when his son Edward Henry Leycester-Penrhyn took over this position until the formation of the Surrey County Council becoming the first Chairman of this body and continuing the role before retiring due to increasing deafness. This father and son combination represented a period of more than fifty years of service to the local community with the road bearing their name leading fittingly to the County Hall in Kingston. Current enquiries with the Local Studies Group at Richmond Museum are also ongoing to establish if a similar gesture was made for the naming of Penrhyn Crescent in East Sheen.

Steve Riedlinger, Club Archivist

