

THE COTTAGE HOSPITAL

"ANYONE TAKEN ILL OR HAVING A BABY IN MARKET RASEN HOPED TO GET A BED AND THE BEST MEDICAL CARE AT THE MARKET RASEN COTTAGE HOSPITAL."

The Market Rasen Cottage Hospital opened in 1868 to provide medical care for the people of the town. This was long before the NHS was founded, so in those days people, no matter how poor they were, had to pay for their medical care. So lots of people in Market Rasen would pay some money each week into a club which would then pay for their medical care if and when they needed it – this system was the start of our modern day healthcare insurance policies.

The hospital had just eight beds – four were for maternity care and four for general cases. So anybody treated there was quite lucky to get a bed in the first place! The Cottage Hospital was mainly funded by donations and subscriptions, and the local community put on lots of fundraising events to keep the hospital up and running – there would be dances, all sorts of social events and collections taken at church to help towards the hospital's running costs.

The managers of the hospital, however, were wealthy town members and doctors had to apply to be appointed to the staff – unpaid – in order to treat their own patients. This caused quite a bit of ill feeling between the rich and poor of Market Rasen...but not as much concern as the 'jinxed' bed!

From the 1930s there was one particular hospital bed that seemed to be a 'death bed' for anybody unfortunate enough to be placed in it! Its first two victims were Mr Parker of Tealby, who died from pneumonia, and then a motorcycle accident victim who died almost straight away as he was put into the bed. Next into the bed was Peter Cook, who had been taken into hospital with a 'demon' arm. A Dr Torrens was called in to see the patient, and he advised the nurses that there was no hope for Peter



Market Rasen's Cottage Hospital today, now a private residence



The old Doctors' Surgery in King Street



The Foyer on King Street, formerly The Grange, home of Dr Barton

and that he would die. Keen to free up the bed, the nurses had Peter moved to hospital in Lincoln – where he made a full recovery and then lived to the ripe old age of 91!!

The hospital closed in May 1941 and the two nurses who had worked there – Nurse Langley and Nurse Wholey - bought the property and continued to provide district nursing services from there for several years before living in it as a purely private residence. Today, the property looks much the same as it did all those years ago when anyone taken ill or having a baby in Market Rasen hoped to get a bed and the best medical care at the Market Rasen Cottage Hospital.

REFERENCES

- Kelly's, White's, Post Office and Morris' Directories between 1822 to 1937
- www.ancestry.co.uk
- Apprentice records, censuses, doctor registration, college and war records.
- Lincstothepast.com, parish records.
- Rase Heritage Society
- Market Rasen Mail
- An Early Victorian Market Town 1850s
- The History of The Grange by Young Roots Team
- Photographs of Cottage Hospital, 5 Dear Street
- The Foyer (The Grange), King Street and surgery 34 King Street
- The memorial to the Barton Family in Graveyard

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MarketRasenHeritageTour.co.uk

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Memorial to Zephaniah Barton MD, 'for many years an eminent practitioner in this town', and his family. At St Thomas' Church, Market Rasen