

## DR JOHN CONOLLY

HE BELIEVED IN TREATING INSANE PATIENTS WITH 'INVARIABLE KINDNESS' AND HE WAS HAILED A HERO FOR HIS PIONEERING WORK.

**John Conolly was born on 27th May 1794 in a house which used to stand on the corner of Church Street, Market Rasen, and he was to become a leading figure in the treatment of the mentally ill, with his legacy still evident today.**

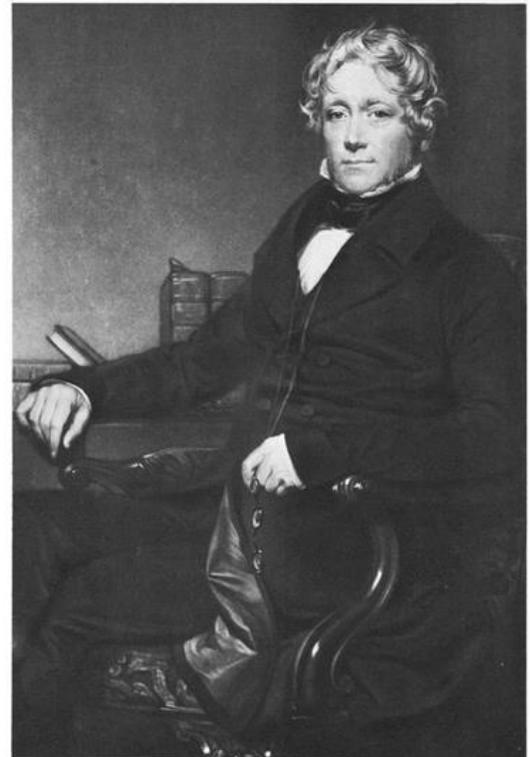
John had a tough start in life, losing his father at a young age. But he went on to train as a doctor and early in his career he developed a passion for improving care for the mentally ill.

In John's day the mentally ill were treated in the most awful way. They were chained in handcuffs or leglocks, fastened into straitjackets or tied to 'coercion chairs'. John could see that this was barbaric treatment, and so when he was appointed Resident Physician to the Middlesex County Asylum at Hanwell in 1796 – the largest asylum in the country- he set about having all patients removed from their restraints. Within four months, John had achieved his aim and brought about the greatest change in the care of the insane in this country.

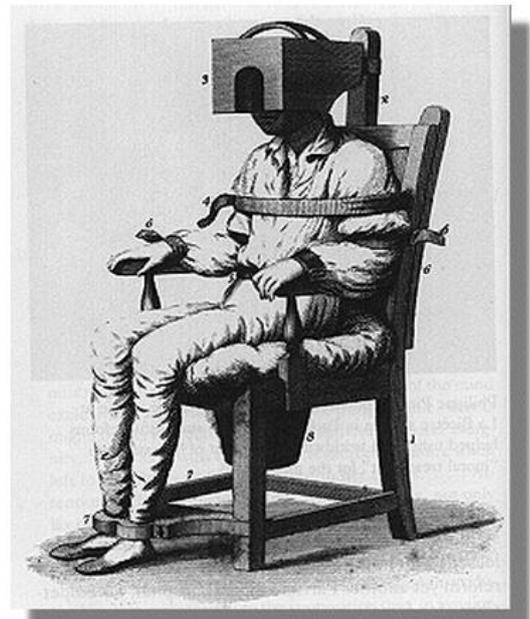
He believed in treating insane patients with 'invariable kindness' and he was hailed a hero for his pioneering work. His practice of non-restraint was soon employed countrywide, and just a few years after his death in 1866 his bold approaches were being used in most of Europe and America.

As his success at treating the mentally ill grew, more and more families brought more and more patients forward for treatment. The asylums simply didn't have space for these patients, so John brought in a new method of caring for them – today we'd call it 'care in the community'. Some patients were put up in houses near the asylum where, under supervision, they could take on menial jobs and make a contribution to society.

John Conolly continued to work for the fair treatment of insane patients until his death in 1866. In 1869, he was honoured by the American government for his groundbreaking work in the treatment of the insane.



John Conolly M.D. 1794 - 1866



The Coercion Chair, dating from the early 19th century

All this from a man born into humble beginnings in Market Rasen!

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Dr John Conolly's Grave at Hanwell Cemetery, London



Dr Conolly was born in a house that used to stand at this corner



Canvas and leather strait jacket, c 1930, from the Science Museum collection