

THE MARKET RASEN RACES AND PUBLIC HOUSES

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The Market Rasen races and our public houses have long been linked together – in fact, when the races first started in the 1800s they were held on a ‘point-to-point’ basis with the horses and gentlemen riders, starting from one of the local inns over farm land to the finishing point.

The races began as part of the festivities known as Feast Week, which was organised each year by the landlords of local inns and the Friendly Societies. This was a week of celebrations and fun for all the townspeople and, at first, the horse races were just one of the entertainments laid on. But quite soon the popularity of the races grew, with innkeepers providing land to host the race meetings - Mr George Rowell of the Gordon Arms allowed his land to be used for 13 out of 31 race meetings between 1848 and 1872.

It was the White Hart Friendly Society which first brought horse racing to Market Rasen – the White Hart being one of the main inns in the town then. This Society existed from 1800 to 1888 and at first held two race meetings a year – sometimes with just two horses running! But when the railway arrived in Market Rasen in 1848, horses could be brought to town by train and spectators could travel here to watch the races. In 1857, 3,000 spectators came to town for the races, a huge number of people in those days!

The innkeepers would provide refreshments and entertainment before and after the races – so their businesses were booming - and the White Hart would host dinners for all involved in the races themselves.

Today's race course was bought in 1924 by the Racing Committee and the very first race was won by 'Have a Care' – a horse owned by J.G. Lyall and ridden by his son Bob, the grandson of George



IN THE PADDOCK AT MARKET RASEN RACES

In the Paddock at Market Rasen Racecourse



Famous racehorse Red Rum visits Market Rasen, May 1985

Rowell who was such a supporter of the race meetings all those years ago. Now many people flock to Market Rasen to enjoy the race meetings but also to sample what's on offer in our modern public houses. So things really haven't changed that much at all!

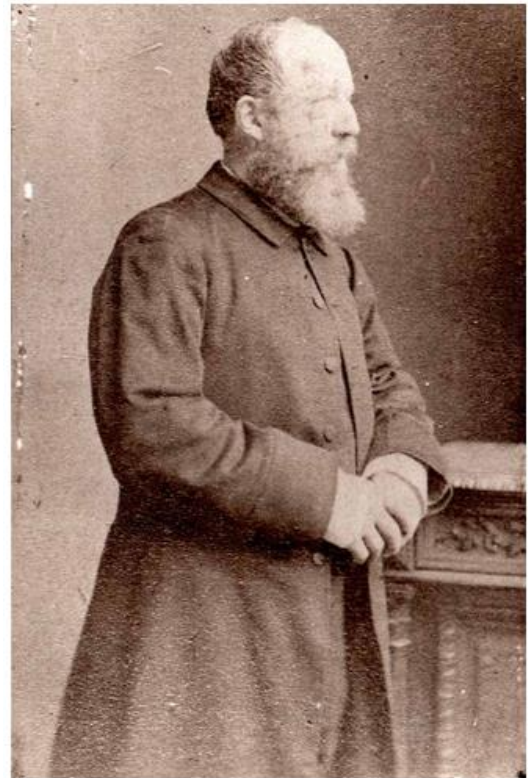
REFERENCES

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- Jean Lucas - Market Rasen Racecourse
- Kelly's Trade directories between 1848 - 1880
- Rasen Mail various dates
- Stamford Mercury 17th April 1868

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MarketRasenHeritageTour.co.uk

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Edwin Cuthbert Harward (Vicar), who gave a church service in 1868 for the 68th Anniversary of the White Hart Friendly Society