

HOW THE RAILWAY OPENED UP NEW HORIZONS

"UP UNTIL THE STATION OPENING IN 1848, THE ONLY WAY TO GET ANYWHERE WAS BY HORSE AND CART, WHICH COULD TAKE MANY HOURS."

Since it opened in 1848, the Market Rasen Railway station has played an integral part in local life here.

The townspeople suddenly had more opportunities to travel further afield than ever before. Up until this point the only way to get anywhere was by horse and cart, which could take many hours. When the railway opened, immediately the people of Market Rasen began to use it for both business and pleasure.

For example, local solicitor Thomas Rhodes encouraged working men to save up for a day trip to the Great Exhibition in London in 1851. Only men were allowed to go – but just imagine the experience it must have been to travel to the capital city by train for the very first time!

Lots of trips and excursions were organised – townspeople could now take the train to Bridlington or Scarborough for a day out at the seaside, and the railway brought people into Market Rasen too. In 1856 the North Lincolnshire Agricultural Society held its Annual Gala in the 'rapidly improving town of Market Rasen', with guests arriving by train.

The railway was used to transport more than just people. As the races at Market Rasen grew in popularity, horses were brought in for the events by train – and racegoers too came to the town by this new mode of transport. Farmers were able to send cattle they had sold to buyers in other parts of the country. The railway really did open up a whole new world of possibilities for the people of Market Rasen and surrounding villages.

There is a remarkable story from 1856 which tells of two year old Thomas Sutton walking along the



Market Rasen Station postcard showing the station with its roof (Eric Croft)



Removal of station roof in 1941



View of the signal box from the train (1970) (King)

railway line to visit his grandfather – and then being sent to walk home the same way! And the station also attracted a new crime – thefts from the Goods Depot.

And it's sad to think that, for many young men, Market Rasen Railway station was their very last glimpse of home as they left to serve in the two World Wars – never to return.

Today the train station serves the town with a local service and we take this mode of transport for granted. But how very different things were all those years ago when the ordinary people of Market Rasen were presented with this extraordinary chance to go further than ever before...

REFERENCES

- Post Office Directories 1855, 1861, 1868
- Whites Directories 1856, 1872, 1882
- Kelly's Directories 1856, 1872, 1882
- Lincoln, Grimsby and District Trades Directory 1962
- An Early Victorian Market Town Market Rasen Branch WEA published 1971
- Rasen Mail
- Lincolnshire Chronicle
- Lincolnshire Archives
- Eric Croft - Reflections of a bygone age published 2000
- Photographs - Maurice Higham collection

Find more stories, photos and videos at:

MarketRasenHeritageTour.co.uk

Supported by The National Lottery through The Heritage Lottery Fund. A project by the Market Rasen Business Improvement Group (MR BIG) and Rase Heritage Society



Ladies Day Out organised by British Railways Eastern Region in June 1971 (Market Rasen Mail), over 400 ladies took part



Ernest Raithby, Station Master from 1938 to 1951 (photo from Victoria Tambor, Granddaughter)



The last Station Clerk Michael Fletcher (L) and last Station Master, Rex Kew in the Booking Office c 1965 (photo Mrs Fletcher)