THORPE HAMLET HISTORY GROUP

Article 4 : THORPE MATERNITY HOME
By Debbie Russell

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Thorpe Hamlet once had a select maternity home, it was situated on Aspland Road and was housed in a very grand looking 19th century mansion house with a garden on two sides of the house. Records show it was open in 1927 and closed around 1946. It was run by Miss B. Hawkins who was Matron and Miss Anderson who was a S.R.N (State Registered Nurse), S.C.M (State Certified Midwife) and C.S.M.M.G (Chartered Society of Masseuses and Medical Gymnasts). All the nursing staff held their C.M.B certificate (Central Midwives Board). The maternity home could accommodate 14 patients at a time, and boasted 13 wards or bedrooms, a nursery fully equipped and heated by coal fire and a sun balcony, 2 bathrooms, 2 labour wards and 4 toilets. There were also 2 nurses bedrooms plus a bedroom for the Matron and Sister, With a sitting room for them. The servants had bedrooms and a sitting room on the upper floor. Meals were cooked and prepared on the premises in a kitchen with vegetable preparation area, pantries and larders, a scullery. There was also the sluice room and laundry with a copper and boiler.

The brochure printed at the time states that the home is 'spaciously built with wide staircases and large airy rooms. The furniture and appointments ensure every comfort and at the same time provide all that is necessary in up to date equipment'. The nursery was fitted on one side with a vita glass balcony to ensure the maximum of sunlight. All rooms had gas fires and hot and cold running water. The home was constantly staffed with staff living in. To have a baby at Thorpe Maternity Home would cost you £4 4s (£4-20) a week if you shared a room with two other women or £6 6s (£6-30) if you had a room of your own. Included in the fees were full board, nursing and attendance. No charge was made for patient's laundry, use of the labour ward or accommodation for babies in the nursery. There was however a charge for drugs, medicines and visitor's teas. The home closed around 1946 and in 1947 it became a boarding house. It later became used for offices of the Area Health Authority until it was demolished and now a row of new houses stand where this lovely old house stood.