

## The Baslow Medical Practice

Baslow has a long record of doctors dating back Dr Condell who arrived here in 1835. He was the local general practitioner, as well as being Physician to the Duke of Devonshire. This ducal post was taken over by his successors, though it disappeared when the NHS started. Dr Condell lived in Park Lodge in Nether End once it was completed in the early 1840s. He retired in 1859 and was followed by Dr Edmund Mason Wrench, a remarkable person who would have a major impact on village life and politics. He also had his misfortunes, three of his children died of tuberculosis in their early twenties.

He built Ashenfell House in 1898 for his surviving son Edward who had trained as a doctor and became assistant to his father. He left after a few years. Dr Richard Edleston was the new assistant. Soon he had married Dr Wrench's daughter Annie and moved into Ashenfell House. On the death of his father in law in 1912 he took over the practice and the post of Physician to the Duke.

At the time, doctors usually saw their patients in their own homes. Some, probably the better off, came to the Ashenfell House and were seen in the dining room. In 1920, in the Duke of Rutland's Sale of Lands, Dr Edleston bought two fields behind the house giving him the space to build a one story surgery adjoining his house and a tennis court at the end of his new extended garden. Surgery hours were 9-9.30 am and 6-6.30 pm. He became busy as later it took 2 -3 hours to clear the waiting room.

In 1936, he employed Dr Sinclair Morris Evans as an assistant. His health failed shortly after and he retired in 1939 leaving Dr Evans owner of the practice. The war years were difficult, and proper assistants were unobtainable. He survived the 24 hours on call every day with the help of several women doctors living the area.

After the war he was joined briefly by Dr Alexander, then by Dr Eric Wilkes. The National Health Service started in 1948 and the old surgery soon became very inadequate. At their own expense they commissioned a new building on the tennis court. There was a main consulting room and a second for private patients, a dispensary, a waiting room and a loo. Miss Fischer the dispenser and only employee ran everything firmly and efficiently.

After I arrived in 1966 things began to change. We employed a secretary. A midwife and then a health visitor were attached to the practice. More staff were needed. As medical practice became more detailed the whole organisation grew and two extensions were needed, in the early 1970s and late 1980s.

Dr Wilkes was the inspiration behind the conception and building of St Luke's Hospice in Sheffield before leaving the practice to become Professor of General Practice in Sheffield. The vacancy filled by Dr Michael Chadwick who rapidly acquired a skill in the care of the elderly. I became the medical officer of Edale Mountain rescue team. Dr Evans continued as senior partner providing a steady hand and insisting on a high standard of medical care. He was awarded an honorary degree (MD) by the University of Sheffield for services to medicine. He retired in 1978, to be replaced by Dr Julian Newton who brought in an expertise in paediatrics and soon acquired skills in terminal care.

The new millennium brought many changes. In Baslow the three male doctors, so long together, all left within a short period of time. The Practice continues to thrive under the guidance of Louise Jordan and her partners.

The Baslow Medical Practice has long history – long may it prosper.

David Dalrymple-Smith (Dr)

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