

Hazelwood Court, Grange-over-Sands.

Hazelwood Court, Lindale Road, Grange-over-Sands is a country house, self-catering holiday venue created by the Stilling family in 1972 in the former North Eastern Counties Friendly Societies (NECFS) Convalescent Home, which was built in 1897.

The proposal for such a home in Grange was first mooted in 1888, when it was suggested that various Friendly Societies from the North East, should unite to provide a convalescent home for the benefit of their members. A place where they would be able to recover from illness or injury and enjoy the “health invigorating characteristics of Grange.” Premises were soon found suitable for 6-8 patients, at Yewbarrow Cottage, Eggerslack Road, premises which were rent free, thanks to the generosity of Mrs Williams of Yewbarrow Grange.

The 1891 census shows that Miss Mary Chislett, a teacher, was in charge and that there were 4 boarders;- an engine fitter, a joiner, a stonemason and a blacksmith's apprentice.

It very quickly became evident that there was demand for such a home and that larger premises were needed, Mrs Williams offered to build a home for 20 patients, which the Society rented for £60 per year. In 1892 Mr & Mrs Sergeant from Sunderland were appointed master and matron at a salary of £30 per annum.

The growing popularity of the Grange-over-Sands Convalescent Home meant that soon even more accommodation was necessary, so in 1896, two acres of land on Lindale Road, overlooking Morecambe Bay at Blawith Point were purchased for £488-5-6d. A local architect and builder were selected and work began immediately on the first phase of a building to accommodate 50 patients. A grand opening ceremony took place on May 7th 1897 when a special train was chartered to bring members of Friendly Societies and their guests from South Shields.

The 1901 census for Grange shows;- Albert Sergeant, manager, his wife Charlotte, a cook, kitchen maid, 2 housemaids and 21 boarders.

On July 23rd 1904 the Westmorland Gazette reported the opening of a new wing increasing the number of beds to 80 and completing the building which is still recognisable from Lindale Road.

Throughout this whole period news of the NECFS Home at Grange was extensively reported in local newspapers in the North East, there were notices for Flag Days, Smoking Concerts and other fund raising events, as well as regular financial statements at monthly, quarterly and annual meetings of the various Friendly Societies involved in the project. In 1897 the Shields Daily Gazette published a letter, written by a member, Mr Thomas Loughton, describing his visit to the Home and praising the treatment he had received.

The 1911 census details;- Albert Sergeant, superintendent. Charlotte Sergeant, matron with 7 servants;- a 14 year old matron's maid, a cook, 5 housemaids and 32 patients.

Grange and District Red Books tell us that from 1916 until 1937 the NECFS Home was under the superintendence of Mrs Watson and a photograph from that period shows a roadside notice board naming her as matron and that visiting hours were 3pm to 4pm.

The National Archives Hospital Database records that in 1929 the home has 80 beds for men only, admission by recommendation forms at 56s. each to admit for 14 days, and that some non-members were admitted at 63s. for a fortnight.

In 1930 the secretary of the Society wrote to J.W.Grundy Esq., Architect, Ullverston about proposed alterations to the building. Records held in Barrow Local History Library Doc Ref.Z1290 detail 3 proposed alternative schemes by the architect for the provision of extra housing for staff, also included in the file are floor plans and external drawings of the building. There is however no indication of which scheme was selected or if the work was ever carried out.

The 45th A.G.M in 1935 was told that 1088 people had stayed in the Home during the year.

1938-1941 the superintendent was Miss Naughton.

At the 1939 A.G.M it was proposed that plans should be made to celebrate the jubilee of the Home in 1940.

March 16th 1949. The management report states that for some time Friendly Societies have not made full use of the accommodation at Grange-over-Sands. The provision of treatment under the National Insurance Act by reservation of 50 beds per week will assure extra income from outside authorities. During the past year there have been 676 patients and 100 visitors.

It seems that visitor numbers continued to fall, until the NECFS Convalescent Home finally closed sometime around 1958. The building remained empty for nearly 20 years and rapidly deteriorated, suggestions were made that it should be demolished but conversion into its present form took place in the 1970s.

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