

THE MARKET PLACE

"A MARKET HAS BEEN HELD HERE SINCE 1219 AND AS IT GREW IN IMPORTANCE IT GAVE EAST RASEN (OR LITTLE RASEN) THE NAME WE HAVE TODAY - MARKET RASEN."

The Market Place has been in existence for 800 years now. The market was first given a charter in 1219 and as it grew in importance it gave East Rasen (or Little Rasen) the name we have today – Market Rasen.

The markets were held on a Tuesday and people from all around would flock to Market Rasen to buy and sell their goods and then relax in the inns around the square – and maybe even abuse whoever was unfortunate enough to be in the stocks that day! Up until 1877 the market place was also used as a livestock market. Another event would be the hiring fairs.

Anybody looking for work would come to the market place and mill around hoping to be chosen for work – people would be hired for just one year, hence the annual hiring fairs. They would carry the tools of their trade to show prospective employers what their line of work was – so a house maid would carry a mop and bucket, or a field hand would wear a sheaf of corn in his hat. Once they had been chosen for work and settled on a fair wage, it was time to relax and celebrate and the market place would be alive with games and Punch & Judy shows for entertainment. A favourite game was confetti battles!

From 1800 to 1888 there would be a week of festivities every year at the end of September, organised by local innkeepers and the Friendly Societies and this was the start of the horse races for which Market Rasen is now famous. The horse races would be on the Monday, Tuesday was like a giant sports day with events like climbing a greasy pole or wheelbarrow races for the townspeople, on Wednesday there'd be a cricket match and every day there would be music and dancing late into the evening. Over the years this week of festivities grew to become an annual fair with rides and entertainment for all the townspeople to enjoy.



The start of a Decorated Bicycle Race, a preliminary to the old Feast Week celebrations, c 1905 (M Higham Collection)



Possibly the 1911 celebrations of the Coronation of George V (Starbucks Collection)



Troops gather in the Market Place, probably before leaving to fight in WWI

Markets continue to this day, with Tuesday still having a produce auction and the Saturday markets having monthly themed events.

REFERENCES

- Photos taken 8/3/2013 of the laser ride in the market place with the market stalls in front
- Photos of coronation celebrations 1953 taken by Des Goulsbra from Rase Heritage Society collection
- Aston Arms photo M Higham collection decorated bicycle completion
- Troops on parade probably before going off to fight in WW1

Find more stories, photos and videos at:

MarketRasenHeritageTour.co.uk

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Celebrating Elizabeth II Coronation in 1953 (taken by Des Goulsbra, from RHS collection)



Market Rasen's Tuesday Auctions in the Market Place, a tradition that continues to this today



The 'Extraordinary Pop Up Market', part of Market Rasen's Portas Pilot project. May 2012