

## March 1914 ...

Whoops-a-daisy! Poor Doctor Trotter is out of action for the foreseeable future, confined to his bed after he popped his knee out when he stumbled out of a neighbour's house. He should have been more careful! Mind you his absence will only affect those who can afford his fees and for the rest of us we still await the appointment of a new nurse in the town. You see it has been three months since Nurse Pickett left her post to care for her seriously ill sister, and of course family comes first and no one blames her for leaving at such short notice, but the Brandon Nursing Association, a charity who oversee nursing in the town, could not afford to replace her straight away.

Nurse Pickett will be a hard act to follow and in her nine months with us she conducted more than 800 home visits! She was paid £1 a week from subscriptions paid in by the town's wealthier residents, so even the £3 from Freddie Gentle's Christmas competition didn't last long and truth be told while subscriptions are dwindling, costs get bigger. The subscriptions also have to pay for the nurse's uniform, cycle, insurance and stamps, as well as dressings and medicines. The cycle alone cost £2 to repair last year. Anyway, rumour has it that a new nurse will join us before the end of the month.

Responsibility for the state of the town's health also falls upon Brandon's Rural District Council and the Medical Officer gave his annual report to the council. He stated that last year the district had a death rate of 1.38% and a 12% infant mortality rate and both were the highest for five years, although the schools hadn't had any serious epidemics in that time which was good for the little ones. He also says our water supply is very good and better than those villages that rely upon wells to draw water, but there had been some pollution found in the water supply of the school. One thing where we are behind the bigger towns is our lack of a decent sewerage system and most residents still have an outside privy with a bucket to do their 'business' in. Everyone is responsible for the disposal of their waste, or "night soil", and the Council regularly issue formal notices to residents because they are not dealing with their waste properly. Last year a few people contracted tuberculosis and the Council had to go in to their home and ensure it was sprayed with disinfectant to kill any lingering disease, and only then could the house be lived in again. They tested the cattle in the town's farms and none were found to have it and some think it was spread by people spitting. Anyway most people agree the best place for someone with this disease is in a Sanatorium well away from here!