

# The Palace on the Hill

## The Early Years (1902 – 1947)



1905 - 2005

The North Evington Poor Law Infirmary (NEPLI) opened on 28th September 1905. The Palace on the Hill as the locals described it cost £79,595 and had provision for 512 patients. Mr Arthur Kemp, Chairman of the Board of Guardians officially opened the new infirmary. Until the 1940s the hospital was surrounded by 6 foot high spiked railings and the gates were kept firmly locked. Visitors had to be issued with passes before being allowed into the grounds and buildings.



**1905 – NEPLI Opening Ceremony**  
 Photograph of Mr Arthur Kemp with the Lord Mayor and guests at the opening ceremony of NEPLI, 28th September 1905. The hospital building cost was £79,575-9s-10d. The hospital corridor, at 194 yards long, was one of the longest in the country. (Now 333 yards long!).



**1924 – Mr W H Johnstone, Alvis ambulance driver**  
 The Leicester Workhouse had its own Alvis ambulance used by NEPLI. Photographed is Mr W H Johnstone, Alvis ambulance driver.



**c2000 – Palace on the Hill facade**  
 The hospital is a handsome red-brick building with Derbyshire & Hopton Wood stonework. Its location and grand appearance earned it the nickname of the 'Palace on the Hill'.



**1903 – NEPLI Foundation stone laying**  
 NEPLI foundation stone was laid at the old main entrance by Mr Arthur Kemp, Chairman of the Board of Guardians on 2nd April.



**1944 – Theatre 13**  
 Part of ward 11 was used as a makeshift operating theatre until the side room of ward 13 was converted to a proper theatre in 1944. Theatre 13 was still in use in the early 1980s.

**1900** 1902 - NEPLI Regulations

**1905** 1905 - The matron's report stated that there were no nurses under the age of 20; one either nursed or married. The grounds sustained farming until 1952 and there were well-kept gardens and orchards.  
 1905 - Opening ceremony of NEPLI, 28 September.  
 1905 - Palace on the Hill facade  
 1905 - NEPLI Opening Ceremony  
 1905 - Original front door  
 1905 - Stained glass windows of the original front door  
 1905 - Ward name plates

**1910** 1914 - 1918 – North Evington War Hospital (NEWH).

**1914** 1914 – 1st World War. The hospital was taken over by the war office. The 512 beds increased to approximately 1,010. On 9th May 1915 the first 100 war casualties were admitted. After the war, the hospital reverted back to civilian use and was called the North Evington Infirmary (NEI).

**1918** 1918-1930 – North Evington Infirmary (NEI).

**1920** 1926 – The nurses home opened

**1930** 1930 - 1948 – City General Hospital (CGH)

**1939** 1939 - 2nd World War.  
 1939 - Plans were drawn up to extend the hospital at a cost of £500,000.00, but with the advent of the 2nd World War these were shelved. During the war certain wards were set aside for nursing members of his majesty's forces.

**1940** 1944 - The special baby care unit was established in 1944, for several years it was the only one of its kind in Leicestershire. HRH Marina Duchess of Kent visited the hospital in 1945. Strict segregation of male and female patients ended in 1944; previously 16 wards each had 32 beds. Male patients occupied wards 1-8 and female patients wards 9-16.

**1944** 1944 - Theatre 13

**1948** 1948 – Creation of the NHS.  
 Post 1947 - Leicester General Hospital plan

**1950**

1902 - 1914 – North Evington Poor Law Infirmary (NEPLI)  
 1904 - NEPLI Hospital Bell  
 1903 - NEPLI Foundation stone laying  
 1924 - Mr W H Johnstone, Alvis ambulance driver