



150 years of National Friendly

Here at National Friendly we have just recently celebrated a rather momentous occasion. The 20th April 2018 marked our 150th anniversary of servicing our members' health care needs. We're sure you'll agree that reaching 150 years really is an impressive achievement, especially when average life expectancy was at a frightening 40 years old back in 1868! We hope that you join in by taking a little look back over some important landmarks with us.



*The Founder
The Rev. Canon George Raymond Portal M.A. (Oxon)*

The year was 1868. A certain man, Rev. Canon George Raymond Portal, to be precise, had an idea. The Surrey Deposit Friendly Society was the name first coined by Portal at his residence, The Rectory, in Albury, Surrey. The idea stemmed from the fact that at the time, those who were in need of a doctor had to pay for it all by themselves. Families were going hungry when the breadwinner was unwell and were often reliant upon charity to help them through these tough times. In those days, if you died without any means, you were given a pauper's funeral. Rev Portal felt this was a very unsatisfactory state of affairs.

With the help of Rev Samuel Best, he created a deposit system which allowed contributors from the Surrey area to co-fund any need for medical assistance whilst also helping to pay for their own funeral in a pooled insurance scheme.

In the Albury Rectory's library one evening in January 1868, over a crackling fire, an important ruling was also decided upon. Women and children would be admitted to join as members, something that was quite unheard of at the time with many sharing clubs and friendly societies excluding women members.



Albury Rectory, in the library of which in 1868 the N.D.F.S. was born. The house is now known as the Old Rectory

How much did all this cost back in 1868? A typical premium was two shillings (10p) per month. This would then provide the member two shillings a day in sick pay, based on a six-day week. 10p in 1868 would be equivalent to around £10.30 today.

Just three years later, the popularity of the deposit scheme had caught on and by 1871 there was talk of a 'United Friendly Society' as interest spread to other counties. In 1872 it was resolved that the Society should hereafter be known as the National Friendly Deposit Society.

In 1889, Rev Portal died and was buried in his own and favourite county of Hampshire. He had seen his modest venture in the small village of Albury grow into a national friendly society in twenty years with the original principles as resolute in 1889 as they were in 1868. From an initial membership of 12 men and women, it had grown to around 7,000 members. This figure shot up to over 35,000 members in the 10 years following his passing, He would have been delighted!

In 2018, the society has overcome many hurdles and is proud to reach this monumental anniversary. We have a diverse product portfolio and are always looking to benefit our members in everything we do. We have relaunched our private medical insurance offering and have seen steady growth alongside our most recent product launch, the Guaranteed Life Assurance Plan. We are excited to see what the future holds and are ready for the next 150 years!



A Friendly Society Meeting—1687