

Report to the General Board of Health on a second inquiry to extend the boundaries of the the district of the town of Eton in Buckinghamshire / by Edward Cresy, Superintending Inspector.

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Cresy, Edward, 1792-1858.
Great Britain. General Board of Health.

Publication/Creation

London : Printed by W. Clowes & Sons ... for Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1851.

Persistent URL

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PUBLIC HEALTH ACT

(11 & 12 Vict., cap. 63).

REPORT
TO THE
GENERAL BOARD OF HEALTH,

ON A
SECOND INQUIRY
TO EXTEND THE BOUNDARIES OF THE DISTRICT
OF THE TOWN OF
ETON,
IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

BY EDWARD CRESY, Esq.,

SUPERINTENDING INSPECTOR.



LONDON:

PRINTED BY W. CLOWES & SONS, STAMFORD STREET,

FOR HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.

1851.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACT (11 and 12 Vict., Cap. 63)

Report to the General Board of Health, on a Second Inquiry, to extend the Boundaries of the District of the Town of Eton in Buckinghamshire. By EDWARD CRESY, Superintending Inspector.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

A MEMORIAL of the chairman and members of the Eton Local Board of Health, having been presented to the General Board of Health, showing—

“That Her Majesty by and with the advice of her Privy Council, on the 6th day of October, 1849, ordered and directed that the Public Health Act, 1848, should be applied, and put in full force and operation, within and throughout the entire area, places, and parts of places comprised within such part or district of the parish of Eton, in the county of Bucks, as is bounded on the north by Barnes Pool and Cottrell's Close; on the east and south-east by the Tangreo mill-stream and part of the River Thames; on the south by other part of the said river; and on the west by the Brocas, the Little South Meadow and the Great South Meadow respectively; and that such area, places and parts of places, should be and constitute a district for the purposes of the said Public Health Act, accordingly.

“That the district named in such order as aforesaid is only a portion of the said parish of Eton, and consists of 420 houses, or thereabouts, and a population of 2,688, or thereabouts, and contains the poorest part of such parish; the whole rateable value of such property being 4,500*l.* or thereabouts.

“That by the above order the whole of the houses and property denominated Eton College, all of which is in the said parish of Eton, is excluded from the powers, clauses, and operation of the said Public Health Act, and as evidence that such excluded part of the said parish is the most valuable and influential, your Memorialists beg to call the attention of your Honourable Board to the part of such excluded district, containing 175 houses only, or thereabouts, with a population only; but the rateable value of such property is 5,600*l.*, or thereabouts, being considerably more than the value of the property within the district of your Memorialists' Board.

“That the owners, occupiers, and students of Eton College aforesaid, which is excluded from your Memorialists' district, participate in all the benefits, advantages, and accommodation arising from the sanitary and other measures carried out in your Memorialists' district, but do not in any manner contribute to the expenses thereof.

“That your Memorialists' Board presume that the said college district was excluded in consequence of such district having ample, good, and effectual drainage, but that it is not the wish of your Memorialists' Board to seek to make the said college to contribute towards the drainage of the town, but merely for general purposes.

“ Your Memorialists, therefore, earnestly request that your Honourable Board will be pleased to make a provisional order for the extension of the district of your Memorialists’ Board, and for including therein such part of the said parish of Eton as is at present excluded from the powers, clauses, and operations of the said Public Health Act.

“ And your Memorialists, &c. &c.”

I was instructed to give the general notices for a meeting of the inhabitants, which took place at Tiernock’s rooms, Wednesday, the 5th February, 1851, and several subsequent days were employed in hearing evidence for and against any extension of boundary. There were generally present Messrs. Batcheldor, Hickman, Webber, Cleave, Henry Ingalton, Devereux, Bacon, Wigginton, Thomas Besborough, Griffin, Fields, Charles Barton, Tiernock, Gray, Hyde, Charles Vaughan, W. Stephenson, Alfred Atkins, Knowles, Needham, Harrison, Denham, Stacey, Lewis, and several other of the most respectable inhabitants. Also the Rev. Dr. Hawtrey, the Rev. E. Coleridge, the Rev. T. Carter, the Rev. E. H. Pickering, the Rev. H. Dupins, the Rev. E. O. Goodford, the Rev. W. L. Elliott.

Mr. Carrington and Mr. Skinner, of the Oxford circuit, appeared for the Local Board, and Mr. Creasy, of the Home circuit, for Eton College.

The parish of Eton, throughout almost a level plane, contains about 782 acres. Thirty may be given to each of the three portions of the parish on which houses have been erected, namely, the town of Eton, the college and its precincts, and the cluster of fifty cottages at the western extremity of the parish; the rest is devoted to agriculture. The town of Eton, and the college are separated only by Barnes Pool, and apparently form one continued mass of buildings.

The parish of Eton I inspected by order of your Honourable Board, on the 15th January, 1849, and following days, and my report was issued the 16th June. The General Board of Health made its report to Her Majesty on the 26th September; on the 6th October an order in council was made, which was gazetted on the 19th October, and on the 13th November, 1849, the first general election of a Local Board was appointed, consisting of the following nine inhabitants and owners:—

Mr. John Cleave, chairman.

The Rev. S. T. Marshall.

Mr. John Wigginton.

Mr. Henry Ingalton.

Mr. William Goddard.

Mr. William Stephenson.

Mr. William Vaughan.

Mr. Charles Vaughan.

Mr. William Stacey.

The Local Board having jurisdiction over the town of Eton,

as described in the first part of the memorial to the General Board of Health, immediately upon its appointment, directed Mr. John Roe, of London, the eminent hydraulic engineer, to prepare plans and specifications for constructing the necessary brick and pipe sewers to drain the town. After advertising for tenders, a contract was made with Thomas James Besborough of New Windsor, to execute the works in 20 weeks. The date of the contract was 16th April, 1850, and the amount 1,190*l*.

The sewers which surround the town are on a dead level, and brought as near to the backs of the houses as possible, their total length being about 4,000 feet, and the average depth of the foundations about 11 feet. They are proportioned to the duty they have to perform, and consequently vary in dimensions. The brick sewers are 5 feet 6 inches by 3 feet, 4 feet by 2 feet, and 18 inches in diameter in the clear, the glazed pipes 12 inches in diameter. They are so laid that they can be flushed throughout in 20 minutes or half an hour.

Opposite each house has been fixed in the side of the sewer a proper glazed stone-ware junction-pipe, 6 inches in diameter; flushing-apparatus, ventilating grates, and safety gratings having been sufficiently provided. Provision has also been made to utilize the sewage water for agricultural purposes, and for the prevention of any discharge into the Thames of matters which might materially affect its purity. About 100 houses have already made their junction with the sewer, and the remainder will shortly be attached and have their drainage complete.

These sewers, being laid level, are constantly charged with water, by which an accumulation of the gases is prevented. Twice in 24 hours their contents are entirely discharged by letting in water from the Thames and Barnes Pool, which has force and velocity of current sufficient at all times to remove obstructions of any kind that might enter either the sewers or pipes. Water has been in most cases provided to cleanse the drains and pipes which connect the houses with the main sewers. Where the water company has not been applied to, the inhabitants have elevated their common lift-pump three or four feet, to enable them to fill a cistern containing about 50 gallons, which can be emptied through the pipe attached to the flushing portion of the water-closet pan at pleasure by simply turning a cock. There being abundance of water at a depth within a few feet of the ground floor, each householder can effect this arrangement at a cost not exceeding 6*l*. or 7*l*., including 50 feet of inch lead-pipe to lead from the cistern or pump in the kitchen to the water-closet; and it is preferred apparently to the having water from the company, who would levy an annual rate probably of 5*s*. or 10*s*. per house. The cost of laying down the private drains and fixing the water-closet pan has varied from 30*s*. to 80*s*. per house, according to the quantity of work performed.

The cesspools, the uncleansed open ditches, the superficies of which exceeded 10,000 feet, and which it was my duty to notice in my first report, are now done away with, and the area of pollution no longer exists; the expense also of cleansing the privies is saved to the owners and occupiers, and the town of Eton may now be pronounced as effectually drained, well supplied with water, and the nuisances which so materially affected the health of the inhabitants greatly abated. The town and the college, with its precincts, are in the same condition as to drainage, and it may fairly be presumed, that no additional works will be needed, the only expense will be that of maintaining the drains and sewers in good order, and attending to the flushing.

The houses at Eton Wick have undergone no change in their condition since my first report, the roads leading thereto and throughout the parish are in a worse condition; in places they are under water and impassable. No arrangements have been made to improve the ditches, water-courses, and stagnant pools that abound near the two commons and in other parts of the parish, and their drainage has been totally neglected.

Upon the condition of the roads, Mr Samuel Webber, the town surveyor and inspector, stated, "that the pavements from Barnes Pool Bridge to Windsor Bridge were very bad; that to relay them and others in the bye streets, would cost the Local Board from 500*l.* to 600*l.*, after which 10*l.* would annually keep them in repair for some time; that the roadway, which is under the Local Board, is in tolerable good condition; that the roads out of the district, particularly that towards Eton Wick, required considerable repairs; and that several other roads are under water during a part of the year, and are now impassable."

Mr. Hickman, the surveyor of the Slough turnpike roads, gave evidence that he knew the condition of the thoroughfares throughout the parish, and that he had superintended for 17 years the road which leads from Eton chapel to the bridge near Willow Brook. He also stated that he had been called upon to examine the roads which were under the management of the Local Board of Health, which he designated the in-districts, and the others in the parish, the out-districts; in the first the length was about 539 yards; in the out-districts, and coming under parish management, about 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ miles.

To maintain the roads in the in-district would require a rate of from 4*d.* to 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* in the pound, and in the out-district 8*d.* in the pound.

The pavements in the district, according to Mr. Thomas James Besborough, amounted to 15,795 superfical feet, two-thirds of which was in a bad state, and required renewing; the other third might be relaid. The cost he had estimated at 645*l.*

In the out-district the pavements were all in most excellent

order, and 10*l.* would only be required to put them in proper repair for the next six months.

Mr. Cleave, the Chairman of the Local Board of Health, stated, that if the pavements of the town were repaired and renewed, according to the above estimate, the rate upon the town people for the next half-year would amount to 3*s.* 3½*d.* in the pound, whilst in the out-district only 4*d.* would be required.

Mr. George Cartland, jun., had been employed to collect the rates due to the Local Board of Health for the last 12 months. These had been a shilling and a sixpenny rate. The first produce 196*l.*, the other 100*l.*; but the two amounts were not sufficient to cover the expenditure.

The amount expended upon the roads by the Local Board was 136*l.*, whilst the amount collected for the out-district was 138*l.*

The first half-year rate expended by the Local Board, terminating at Midsummer, was the 196*l.*, and was as follows:—

				Second half-year, terminating Christmas.		
	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.
Lighting	14	10	0	34	0	0
Salaries	27	10	0	22	10	0
Rent	8	10	0	6	10	0
Stationery	7	0	0	5	0	0
Barrett	10	0	0			
Labour on roads .	15	0	0	15	0	0
Materials for ditto	50	0	0	10	0	0
Pavements	25	0	0	10	0	0
Scavenger	2	10	0	2	10	0
Watering	5	0	0	1	10	0
Incidental	5	0	0	7	10	0
Total	170	0	0	122	0	0

The Rev. T. Carter stated that Eton College, and the fifty houses around it, were, with the exception of three, all connected with the sewers, which last year cost the college for management, &c., 114*l.* 5*s.* 8½*d.*: that the college also pays 80*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.* annually, for the lighting of this particular district, over which the Local Board have at present no control.

That the college had already expended 4000*l.* in carrying on its system of sewers, &c., the interest of which added to the annual expense, amounted last year, to 216*l.* 16*s.* 0*d.*, the rate being paid by the inhabitants, who participated in its advantages. The college also paid for its own watching, and had expended at times considerable sums on the improvement of the pavement.

The number of inhabitants who benefited by the college sewerage, amounted to about four hundred and fifty, in addition to the six hundred scholars.

The water supply cost them 58*l.* per annum, and nearly every house had its pump, with an abundant quantity of water at all times.

The college had given two acres of land for a cemetery, and had expended 1300*l.* in erecting buildings adjoining it, and that the burial-ground adjoining the chapel, was rarely opened.

Mr. Holderness, the surgeon of Windsor, spoke very highly of the sanitary condition of the college and its precincts: he stated that since the construction of the sewers, and the filling up of the cesspools, that the site was perfectly healthy, that the proportion of deaths was considerably below the average, and that during the 25 years he had known the school, he had never seen a case of typhus, and only occasional instances of scarlet fever.

SUMMARY.—The Local Board of Health having performed a most efficient duty in the town of Eton, are desirous of having their powers extended, that they may improve the condition of the houses at Belle Vue and Eton Wick, where they have at present no jurisdiction; and also have the entire management of the public roads, the rating and expenditure of the parish for lighting, watching, sewerage, and road-water supply.

All the inhabitants of the parish are equally interested in preventing the spread of contagious or infectious diseases, consequently the more healthy the dwellings of every class are rendered, the less will be the burthen of the poor rate. The public roads, the water courses, ditches, ponds, and standing pools of water, out of the town, require more than ordinary attention; and, if neglected, pestilence may prevail and spread its baneful influence around and within those districts on which considerable sums of money have been expended to render them healthy.

Lodging houses and buildings of objectionable character, slaughter houses, and ill-constructed tenements may now be carried up, immediately out of control of the present Local Board, and in spite of all endeavours to lessen the rates occasioned by sickness, they may be increased so greatly as to render the outlay already incurred both by the town and by the college productive of little good; whilst both are endeavouring to maintain the air and water in a comparative state of purity, the suburbs are rendering them pestilential.

The state of the college, particularly at Eton Wick and Belle Vue, require the provision of the 49th section of the Public Health Act to be applied to them, there being no provision whatever for their drainage; these detached dwellings at a distance from the public sewers, constructed by the college and by the Local Board, need covered cesspools for the reception of their sewage, so constructed as to prevent the contamination of either air or water. They also require constant inspection by officers of the Local Board, that they may be maintained in such a condition as shall ensure an equal state of salubrity with that enjoyed by the thoroughly drained districts; if some attention be not paid to this description of dwellings, disease and sickness will continue to in-

crease the amount of poor rate, and the burthen will be thrown upon those inhabitants who have already attended to sanitary measures, and put their premises in a condition to lessen this item of expenditure.

Should the entire parish be placed under the Public Health Act, no owner or occupier will be called upon to contribute to a rate from which he has not received benefit or advantage.

The special district rate only extends to that portion of the parish that has been the occasion of the outlay that has produced it.

The general district rate applies to property assessable to poor rate, made only as occasion may require.

The private improvement rates can only be demanded from premises benefited by the outlay for which the rate is made; the water rate is only demanded of houses actually supplied.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—I would therefore recommend that the powers of the Local Board should extend over the whole parish in all matters that regard public works of a permanent kind, the filling up of offensive pools, ditches, and stagnant ponds, maintaining the roads, the pavements, and constructing of proper drains, sewers, reservoirs, &c.

That the college and its precincts, having already drained, lighted, and supplied water at its own cost, should be still permitted to regulate all appertaining thereto, and constitute a separate rate district, exempted from any payment to the Local Board in these accounts, but that the Local Board may receive the benefit arising from the wealth and intelligence of the inhabitants of the college and its precincts, it would be advisable to increase the number to twelve, six of whom might be elected by the rate payers of the town, and six by the other rate payers of the parish.

I have the honour to be,

My Lords and Gentlemen,

Yours most obediently,

EDWARD CRESWELL