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Contributors

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BOROUGH OF GLASTONBURY.

MEDICAL OFFICER'S REPORT FOR 1896.

To the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of the Borough of Glastonbury.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg leave to submit to you my report for the year ending 31st, Annual Report.
December, 1896.

AREA.—5000 Acres.

Area.

POPULATION.—4119 (Census 1891), 4319 (estimated to 1896).

Population.

GEOLOGY.—For the most part a clay soil. The higher parts of the Geology.
Borough are dry, the lower parts, bordering upon the peat, are damp.

OCCUPATION.—Partly Manufacturing, partly Agricultural.

Occupation.

BIRTH RATE.—25·24 per 1000 living. 1895, 24·7.

Birth Rate.

DEATH RATE.—9·95 „ „ „ „ 11·65.

Death Rate.

ZYMOTIC RATE.—0·23 „ „ „ „ 0·72.

Zymotic Rate.

INFANT MORTALITY.—76·09 per 1000 births. 1895, 98·03.

Infant Mortality.

DEATH RATE for the last 10 years :—

Death rate for the
last ten years.

1887. 1888. 1889. 1890. 1891. 1892. 1893. 1894. 1895. 1896.

15·3 13·9. 13·06. 17·74. 14·30. 12·1 17·72. 14·56. 11·65. 9·95.

Average for 10 years, 13·91.

WATER SUPPLY.—The quality of the town supply continues excellent, with the exception that at Havyatt I occasionally receive complaints as to the colour and smell, but this is due to the small draught, and can at all times be remedied by letting the main run to waste for a time. The supply up to the end of June was sufficient, but from that date until just before the end of the year, it had to be cut off for 16 out of the 24 hours, in order to make the supply hold out until the springs began to yield. The obligation of having recourse to this expedient is a source of great inconvenience to the inhabitants, and in the event of an outbreak of epidemic disease might be attended with great danger to the community. I would strongly urge upon the Council the necessity of either increasing the storage accommodation or of trying to find a further supply from some fresh source. The water from the new tank at the top of Bere Lane, which is used for watering the streets, has proved most useful, and has to some extent relieved the demand upon the town supply. I have examined samples of water from four private sources, two of which were unfit for drinking purposes.

Water Supply.

Drainage and
Sewerage.

SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE.—The disposal of the sewage on the farm at Cradle Bridge still continues to act in a satisfactory manner. During the last three months the sewage has been chemically treated with Alumino-Ferric, and the precipitated sludge removed from the ditches by pumping. Nothing of any importance has been done in the way of main drainage during the year, nor has the capacity of the sewers been over-taxed by heavy flooding. The ditch in Paradise, which at times contains sewage, is a source of annoyance to the inhabitants near, and still requires your attention.

Scavenging and
Disposal of Refuse.

SCAVENGING.—On the whole the scavenging has been carried out satisfactorily, although it would be a decided improvement if the refuse were removed from the streets earlier in the day. A metal mud cart for the removal of the more liquid refuse is much needed.

Prevalence of
disease.

PREVALENCE OF DISEASE.—The health of the town for the past year has been exceptionally good, as is shown by the remarkably low death rate of 9.95; the lowest ever recorded in the Borough. During the months of June, July and August there was an epidemic of sore throats, accompanied with symptoms of an Influenza type. In some severe cases the local lesions were almost indicative of Diphtheria, but none were sufficiently pronounced to make notification necessary. In the first two months of the year there were some few cases of Influenza, and in November and December a slight epidemic of Measles occurred. Owing to a fatal case of *Diarrhœa* during the last week in the year, I have to record a Zymotic Rate of 0.23, a decrease on that of the previous years. Two cases of *Typhoid Fever* and seven of *Scarlet Fever* were reported to me during the year. The *Typhoid* and three of the cases of *Scarlet Fever* I have brought to your notice in my quarterly reports. Four of the *Scarlet Fever* cases occurred during December, three at a house in the Wells Road and one in Benedicts' Buildings. I took what measures were available to stop the spread of the disease, and so far with satisfactory results, but complete isolation I found utterly impossible without proper Hospital accommodation. *The Infant Mortality* also shows a very marked decrease on the previous years, and is I hope indicative of a decided improvement in the dietetic and sanitary rearing of young children.

Notification Act.

NOTIFICATION ACT.—In force since 1890, has proved most useful, and has worked without the least friction. Besides the above cases of fever I have had reported to me three cases of *Erysipelas*.

Infectious Hospital.

ISOLATION HOSPITAL.—None. With the conjoint action of the Street District Council, plans for the erection of a permanent Isolation Hospital on the Southern side of Weary-all-Hill are being prepared, and thanks to the liberality of our Town Clerk, building operations will shortly be commenced. The work will I hope be complete and ready for use before the end of the present year. The accommodation will be for six beds and a caretakers house.

Disinfecting
Machine.

DISINFECTING MACHINE.—An apparatus of a suitable description will in all probability be provided.

Dairies, Milkshops,
and Cowsheds.

DAIRIES, MILKSHOPS, AND COWSHEDS.—12 Inspections. Three have been given up and one new one registered. All kept in a fairly clean condition, but more frequent whitewashing and the removal of manure accumulations would be a decided improvement. Owing to the last two winters being so mild, the cowsheds have been little used, so that I have not found it necessary to press the usual sanitary precautions.

Slaughter Houses.

SLAUGHTERHOUSES.—24 Inspections. I have again to complain that the bye-laws as to cleanliness, whitewashing, and the keeping of proper covered iron receptacles for the removal of offal, have not been satisfactorily complied with and that after the serving of numerous verbal and written notices. As the whole matter is now under your consideration further comment from me is unnecessary.

BAKEHOUSES.—10 Inspections. One new one since last report. With one exception all are kept in a clean and wholesome state and in compliance with the byelaws. The condition of the premises of the one exception was a disgrace to the proprietor, and if at my next visit I do not find a decided improvement, I shall report the matter to you.

Bakehouses.

**“Return of the Inspector of Nuisances for the year ending
31st December, 1896.**

Return of the In-
spector of Nuisances

“Formal and Informal complaints received	...	...	22 ”
“Houses and premises inspected, including house to house inspection	235 ”		
“Verbal and written notices given	...	...	126 ”
“Orders made by the Board	...	...	0 ”
“Legal proceedings	...	...	0 ”
“Legal proceedings under Notification Act	...	...	0 ”
“Houses cleaned, disinfected and whitelined	...	...	65 ”
(Note.—This was done voluntarily by the Cottagers with materials supplied by U. D. C.)			
“House drains and ejects repaired	...	...	35 ”
“New closets built and reconstructed from privies to earth closets	}	...	16 ”
and old w.c's. repaired		...	
“Piggeries cleansed, drained and repaired	...	...	15 ”
“Piggeries condemned	...	...	22 ”
“Houses overcrowded	...	...	8 ”
“Orders made to remove manure and rubbish accumulations	...	...	65 ”
“Cases of infectious diseases served with disinfectants under instructions	}	...	6 ”
of the Medical Officer of Health		...	
“Premises fumigated	...	...	4 ”
“Slaughterhouses, Dairy and Cowsheds, and Bakehouses inspections	...	...	46 ”

Note.—The foregoing includes but a small portion of the many inspections made, and verbal notices given by the Inspector in his periodical rounds and visits.

Signed,

“GEORGE ALVES,”

“Inspector of Nuisances.”

HOUSE TO HOUSE INSPECTION.—Under the Housing of the Working Classes Act, I have with the Inspector of Nuisances visited and made a careful examination of the houses in the following districts:—Old Wells Road, part of New Wells Road, Hartlake, Brindham, Splotts, Wick, Havyatt, Northover, Beckery Road, Orchard Terrace, King Street, Albert Buildings, Northload Terrace, and part of Northload Street. We visited 116 houses, four of which we found empty. The drainage was defective in eight cases, in most of these the defect was, as I pointed out in my last annual report, caused by the occupiers pulling up the ejects, a most dangerous practice as it leaves free vent for the escape of sewer gas. In seven cases the w.c.'s were defective but in only one was the defect of a serious nature. Two of the earth closets were out of repair and kept in a very filthy condition. At one house an earth closet has been substituted for a very filthy and dangerous privy. In one house there were structural defects which required attention. There were eight cases of overcrowding, two of which were included in my report, which I made of the same district three years ago and which have remained unabated. In 11 cases animals were kept within prescribed limits to a dwelling house, in one instance the wash-house was used as a pig sty, and in another, a live pig was kept in the w.c. which was also used as a larder. In all cases where we found a nuisance or sanitary defect, either a verbal or written notice has been given or served to abate,

House to House
Inspection, &c.

and with comparatively few exceptions have been complied with. I presume, as in former years, this report will be referred to the Sanitary Committee for consideration, and if by then I find any of the nuisances unabated I will ask you to deal with them in the usual way.

Market.

For 10 or 11 years I have brought my report to a close by asking you to take measures to remove the fortnightly market out of the streets and I feel it my duty once more to approach you on this most unsanitary subject. During the extreme heat and drought last summer nothing could exceed the filthy effluvia given off from the road and pavements in the Market Place and Magdalene Street for some 24 hours or more after the market had been held. I feel sure that by the abolition of this relic of the past from the public streets, you would confer a lasting boon upon the inhabitants of our otherwise clean and wholesome little Borough.

To the Inspector of Nuisances my best thanks are again due for the most valuable help he has at all times afforded me.

The usual tables accompany this report.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

A. A. BLAKISTON,

Medical Officer of Health.

Glastonbury, 23rd January 1897.