

**[Report 1898] / Medical Officer of Health, Glastonbury Borough.**

**Contributors**

Glastonbury (England). Borough Council.

**Publication/Creation**

1898

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# BOROUGH OF GLASTONBURY.

## MEDICAL OFFICER'S REPORT FOR 1898.

*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 December, 1898. Annual Report.

AREA.—5000 Acres.

Area.

POPULATION.—4119 (Census 1891), 4377 (estimated to 1898).

Population.

GEOLOGY.—The higher and more populated parts of the Borough—Lower Lias, Clay, and Limestone; the lower and outlying districts—Alluvium Peat.

Geology.

OCCUPATION.—Partly Manufacturing, partly Agricultural.

Occupation.

	1898	1897	1896	1895	1894	1893	1892	1891	
BIRTH RATE— per 1000 living	22.16	20.2	25.24	24.7	23.30	26.2	30.8	31.	Birth Rate.
DEATH RATE— „ „	15.07	14.7	10.4	11.65	14.56	17.7	12.1	14.3	Death Rate.
ZYMOTIC RATE.— „ „	1.80	3.4	0.2	0.72	0.48	1.4	0.4	0.7	Zymotic Rate.
INFANT MORTALITY.— „ births	185.5	204.5	76.9	98.03	145.8	120.3	55.1	78.	Infant Mortality.

WATER SUPPLY.—The supply for the whole year has been insufficient for the needs of the town, and had it not been for the kindness of the Tor House authorities in allowing the Council to draw upon their spring, a water famine must have ensued. The quality of the water in the Edgarley reservoir was very unsatisfactory towards the end of the year, and analysis shewed it to be decidedly unwholesome to drink. In December what water remained was run off, and the reservoir thoroughly cleansed. At this date a good stream is running in, and there is eight feet of water in the reservoir. The means of improving the quality of the water from the catchment grounds at Edgarley, which I suggested in my annual report last year, will, I hope, be carried out, together with the large scheme for bringing a further supply from West Compton and Pilton, which is now under the immediate consideration of the Council. The water from the public well in Silver Street has been analysed and found quite unfit for dietetic purposes; the well has been closed. I have examined eight samples of drinking water, three of which were impure.

Water Supply.

SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE.—The disposal of the town sewage at Cradle Bridge Farm continues satisfactory both to the Town Authorities and the tenant. As I pointed out in my last annual report the time must soon arrive when the lower end of the main sewer must be considerably enlarged, as with the number of houses which are now being erected and the consequent increase in the population, a nine-inch outlet is not sufficient to remove the sewage as rapidly as should be. A new sewer with road ventilators has been laid in George Street and connected with the main system in Northload Street. I hope the Council will see their way this year to complete the system of pipe drainage in Northload Street. Nothing has yet been done with the open drain at the end of the Old Wells Road, to which I drew your attention in my last year's report. Several cases of w.c.'s. and soil pipes discharging into the surface water drains have been discovered and rectified.

Sewerage and Drainage.



Scavenging.

SCAVENGING.—I must again call your attention to the late hour in the day at which the scavenger removes the house refuse, it is frequently past mid-day before his work is completed. The destruction of the refuse by fire is not carried out in as satisfactory a manner as it was some three or four years ago.

Prevalence of disease.

PREVALENCE OF DISEASE, NOTIFICATION.—The death rate for the last 10 years shows an average of 14·01, so that this year's rate of 15·07 is not a large increase, and is a fraction lower than the death rate given for the whole County last year. The Infant mortality is again very high, out of the 18 deaths under one year, eight are due to Zymotic or preventable diseases. During the spring there was an epidemic of Whooping Cough which caused the death of four children under one year. In the third quarter of the year, during which period the heat was almost tropical, Diarrhœa was prevalent and accounted for four deaths in infants. There is no doubt some infant lives might be saved if mothers would be only more careful in feeding their children, and in cleanliness both as regards washing and the preparation of food. Some few cases of Influenza have occurred and, during November and December, German Measles was epidemic.

There have been eight deaths from Phthisis, an unusually high number, as the average during the past ten years of this disease is only 3·3. I wish publicly to point out how careful people should be who have cases of consumption in their houses, it being an infectious disease, the infection being contained in the expectoration, especially when allowed to get dry. The expectoration from consumptive cases should at once be burnt, or treated with some powerful germicide, and not allowed to get into a dry state. The same rule applies to the evacuations, and all soiled linen should be boiled. Milk ought always to be boiled, as it has been undoubtedly proved that Tuberculosis is spread by the milk of tuberculous cows, and this is especially the case in children.

I have received no certificates under the Notification Act during the year.

Isolation Hospital.

ISOLATION HOSPITAL.—The Hospital is furnished and ready for use when required. The Committee will shortly purchase a covered vehicle for the conveyance of infectious cases.

Disinfection Means.

Disinfection Means.—A fumigation chamber is provided at the Isolation Hospital, which might at any time be altered to take a steam fumigator.

Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops.

DAIRIES, COWSHEDS, AND MILKSHOPS.—13 Inspections have been made. In some instances a small quantity of milk is stored in the premises for retail use, but as a rule it is strained and taken direct from the cows to the consumers. As a rule the utensils are kept in a fairly clean state. The last three winters having been so mild the cowsheds have been very little used. Most of them want white liming, and none of them are kept in a too sanitary condition, very little being done in the matter of keeping the floors washed down, and manure is heaped up close outside and allowed to accumulate instead of being removed to a safe distance.

Slaughter Houses.

SLAUGHTER HOUSES.—21 Inspections have been made and verbal notices given as to cleansing and white liming the walls, etc., and repairing defective floors, which have been complied with. With one exception, there is no material improvement in them, and I most strongly urge on the Council that when the water scheme is completed the Slaughter Houses should next engage their



attention, and steps be taken to provide a public one. In the exception referred to above, the slaughter house has been thoroughly overhauled and a proper concrete floor provided, it is now the most sanitary one in the town.

There has been one case of prosecution and conviction, with heavy fine imposed, for exposing diseased meat for sale, and for slaughtering on unlicensed premises.

**BAKEHOUSES.—11 Inspections.** With one exception these are well cared for and kept in a sanitary condition. In the case to which I refer the bakehouse and surrounding premises were in a very filthy condition, and it was only by serving notices and threatening to report the occupier that the Inspector and I could get the necessary work carried out. Bakehouses.

**HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES.—**I have, with the Inspector of Nuisances, visited the following districts :—Silver Street, Somer's Square, Victoria Buildings, Chilkwell Street, Coursing Batch, Bove Town, part of Wells Road, Benedict Street, and Grope Lane. We made a careful examination of the drainage and sanitary surroundings of 179 houses, and enquired into the numbers living in each house. We found 21 houses empty. In 21 cases the w.c's or drainage was defective, and notices were served on the owners of the property to make good the defects. In nearly every instance the work has been done. In three cases the houses were structurally out of repair, two of these have been remedied, the other case I may have to report further upon. There were six cases of overcrowding, four have been abated, the other two I will bring before the notice of the Sanitary Committee when this report is considered. In two cases animals were kept within the limits given in the bye-laws. In one case the w.c. was used as a pig sty. The nuisance has been abated in these cases. Housing of the Working Classes.

**BYE-LAWS, SCHOOLS, AND MARKET.—**A complete code is in force. The drainage and surroundings of the Elementary Schools have been examined, and in the case of S. Benedict's a report has been sent to the Managers, who have acted on the suggestions made. The drainage of S. John's Schools is now under the consideration of the Managers. Bye-Laws, &c.

The fortnightly Market continues an abominable nuisance. I feel certain that by far the greater number of the inhabitants, and especially those who live in the Market Place and Magdalene Street, would be only too glad to see it removed from the streets.

To Mr. G. Alves, the Inspector of Nuisances, I am again greatly indebted for the kindly help he has at all times afforded me.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

A. A. BLAKISTON,

*Medical Officer of Health.*

*Glastonbury, January 20th, 1899.*



Inspector's Report of the Sanitary Work completed in the year 1898.

[illegible]

To A. A. BLAKISTON, Esq., M. O. H. Glastonbury.

January 18th, 1899.

SIR

Herewith I beg to hand you my returns on the form shown and recommended by Dr. Davies in his Summary of Reports for 1895. These take in but a very few of the visits paid in house-to-house inspections made with yourself, being only such cases as where notices had to be served. Several cases of overcrowding have been dealt with. Also many cases of petty nuisances occurring almost daily, of which no entry has been made, have received attention. The usual disinfectants and white lime have been regularly served out on two days in the week, and the periodical flushing and disinfecting of the gully grates, etc., in the public streets has been carried out.

Yours faithfully,

GEORGE ALVES, *Inspector.*