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Contributors

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BOROUGH OF GLASTONBURY.

Medical Officer's Report for 1903.

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, 1903.

Area.—5,000 Acres.

Area.

Population.—4,016 (Census 1901).

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.—Manufacturing, rugs, and gloves; Agricultural.

Occupation.

Birth Rate.— per 1,000 living—26·39.

Birth Rate.

Death Rate.— „ „ 14·44.

Death Rate.

Zymotic Rate.— „ „ 1·22.

Zymotic Rate.

Infant Mortality.— „ births—132.

Infant Mortality.

Water Supply.—The supply has been both good in quality and ample for every possible need. In my annual report last year and in a special one presented subsequently I drew the attention of the Council to the fact that over one hundred houses in the town were without an adequate supply. At the meeting which considered the latter report a resolution was passed that the owners of these houses should be compelled to lay on the water. Up to the present time only one group of houses has been so supplied. The occupiers of these houses have acknowledged the great benefit derived from a constant supply on their premises, and are only too glad to pay the small increase in their rent for the boon received. I would urge on the Council the necessity of compelling the other owners to comply with the resolution.

Water Supply.

Sewerage and Drainage.—The Sewage Farm at Cradle Bridge answers its purpose well in that the sewage is removed to a safe distance from the town. Whether or not the sewage could be treated in a more scientific manner is a question that might well be dealt with at some future date. Beyond the connecting up drains to the sewers from several new houses no work of importance has been carried out during the year. Owing to the heavy rainfall the flushing of the surface drains and street gullies by hand has not been required.

Sewerage and
Drainage.

Scavenging.

Scavenging.—The work of scavenging as carried out by the Corporation workmen is satisfactory. I should like to call the attention of those who put out their refuse for collection in the streets, how much more satisfactory it would be if they used covered receptacles. The contents of boxes and pails that are generally used are often blown about the streets by the wind or scattered about by children and dogs. The refuse is satisfactorily disposed of by cremation in the yard along the Meare road.

Prevalence of
Disease.

Prevalence of Disease.—The year on the whole has been a healthy one and free from any great amount of sickness. The death-rate is higher than in 1902—14·44 as compared with 12·6; but by taking an average of ten years the increase is very slight—only 14·44 as compared with 14·43. Then again the rate is lower as compared with the ten years' average of the 22 Urban districts in the county, as 14·43 is to 16, the County rate. The birth-rate, on the other hand, has increased over that of 1902, being 26·39, as compared with 22·41, and is also above the average county rate of 25·6. The infantile death-rate is decidedly high, being 3 above the last ten years' average and 10 above that of the county average. A zymotic death-rate of 1·22 has to be recorded, due to two deaths from Whooping-cough and one each from Measles, Diphtheria, and Diarrhoea. Scattered about in various parts of the town, occurring during irregular intervals and without any traceable cause of its origin, 8 cases of Diphtheria were notified. In two doubtful cases swabs from the throat were sent to the Clinical Research Association for examination, and in both the "specific organism" was pronounced to be present. Whooping-cough and Measles were present during the first quarter, and the former disease broke out again in November. An outbreak of Scarlet Fever appeared in June, and as nearly all the cases occurred in St. John's Infant Schools the Council ordered their closure. 17 cases were removed to the Isolation Hospital.

Isolation Hospital.

Isolation Hospital.—This institution has again proved a great boon in the prevention of the spread of Scarlet-fever. In June two cases of Small-pox were admitted from Street, which put a stop to the admittance of any other infectious disease from this district. This was an unfortunate occurrence, as, soon after the cases were admitted, Scarlet-fever appeared in the Borough. A resolution was passed at both Councils that for the future the Hospital Committee were not to admit cases of Small-pox. This instruction has been embodied in a new set of rules which have recently been drawn up. During the year a Threshie's Disinfectant has been provided, and proved very useful. The cesspool has been provided with an overflow, which carries the effluent across the road to a field, where it is treated by sub-irrigation. The Hospital premises are now being enclosed by a corrugated-iron fence. Tenders will shortly be invited for the building of a "discharge block," to contain undressing-room, bath-room, and discharge dressing-room.

Dairies and
Cowsheds.

Dairies and Cowsheds.—21 inspections. 3 of the registered owners have given up selling. 1 new name has been placed on the register. The remainder I find in the same condition from year to year. The premises and utensils, are, as a rule, kept fairly clean, but more attention to white-liming, and especially to the removal of accumulation of manure, would tend to lessen the chances of contamination of this most important article of diet. The newly registered premises are unsatisfactory; I shall have to report on their condition at a future date.

Slaughter-houses.—15 inspections. Two of the premises have been given up. An application for a license was made, but refused on account of the unsuitable condition of the premises. There now remain 7 licensed premises in occupation, which, in my opinion, are 7 too many. The more I see of these filthy blots jotted down, between houses, in the most populous parts of the town, the more convinced I feel that before long measures ought to be taken for their removal, and a public slaughter-house erected, where absolute cleanliness would be enforced, and where systematic inspection of meat killed would be possible. The general condition of the slaughter-houses are such as I usually find; sometimes they are fairly clean, at others great carelessness is shown as to cleanliness, the removal of offal, and efficient white-liming.

Slaughter-houses.

Bake-houses.—14 inspections. As a rule they are kept clean and well looked after.

Bake-houses.

Common Lodging-house.—Inspected, and found very clean. The sanitary offices are in a satisfactory condition.

Common Lodging-house.

Housing of the Working Classes.—In company with the Inspector of Nuisances I have made a systematic inspection of the following districts: The Wall, Northload Bridge, Landmead, parts of Northload Street (including Hunts and Marchants Buildings), The Men's and Women's Almshouses, part of Magdalene Street, Hill Head, and Bere Lane. 8 of the houses were empty. We made careful inspection of the sanitary surroundings of each house, and, when necessary, gave orders for the removal of nuisances and repairs to drains, w.-c.s, etc. In nearly every case these orders were complied with. Five of the houses were over-crowded. It is most difficult to deal with these cases, as the occupiers are very poor, and cannot, with the small wages earned, afford to rent a larger house. Houses with more sleeping accommodation and at a small rent are badly needed. Of the 8 houses which are empty, 5 are so dilapidated as to be unfit for human occupation, and were the subject of a report I made to you during the year, but of which no notice has as yet been taken. New washout w.-c.s, with flushing cisterns, have been substituted at the Men's Almshouses for the unsanitary system formerly in use.

Housing of the Working Classes.

Bye-Laws.—A complete code in force.

Bye-laws.

Elementary Schools.—Frequent visits have been paid to the schools, especially during the outbreaks of scarlet-fever, measles, and whooping-cough. The Managers will, before long, have to substitute some more sanitary form of w.c., etc., for the antiquated system now in use at St. Benedict's Schools.

Elementary Schools.

Factory and Workshops Act, 1901.—Two workshops have been given up and three added to the list, making a total of 29. These have been regularly inspected during the year, and, with one exception, the various nuisances found and repairs required were readily rectified on notice being given. The one exception was a case of overcrowding in a dressmaker's workroom, and which was not abated after repeated warnings. The Council ordered a prosecution, and a conviction, with fine, was obtained. The Inspector of Nuisances' report is annexed, and to him I give my best thanks for the help afforded me during the year.

Factory and Workshops Act, 1901.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

A. ALEX. BLAKISTON,

Glastonbury, 15th January, 1904.

Medical Officer of Health.

PARISH.	1		No. of complaints received during the year.	2	78	Glastonbury
			No. of inspections of houses, premises, etc.	3	158	
			No. of re-inspections of houses, premises, etc.	4	186	
Results of Inspection.			Orders issued for sanitary amendments of houses and premises, etc.	5	54	
			Houses, premises, etc., cleansed, repaired, whitewashed, etc.	6	59	
			Houses disinfected after illness of an infectious character.	7	25	
House Drains.			Repaired, cleansed, trapped, etc.	8	85	
			Ventilated.	9	13	
			Repaired, etc.	10	38	
Privies and W.C.s.			Supplied with water.	11	16	
			New provided.	12	16	
			New provided.	13	—	
Dust Bins.			Repaired, covered, etc.	14	—	
			Cisterns (new) erected.	15	—	
Water Supply.			Cisterns cleansed, repaired and covered.	16	—	
			Waste pipes connected with drains, etc., abolished.	17	18	
			No. of Lodging houses registered.	18	1	
MISCELLANEOUS.			Dust removal. No. of communications received and attended to.	19	14	
			Removal of accumulations of dung, stagnant water, animal and other refuse.	20	86	
			Animals removed, being improperly kept.	21	13	
	Regularly Inspected.		Bakehouses.	22	—	
			Licensed cowsheds.	23	—	
			Licensed slaughter-houses.	24	—	
			Overcrowded.	25	9	
		Legal proceedings e.g., Summonses.	26		1 under Factory and Workshops Act, 1 Throwing Slops on the road.	

SIR,—

Some seven cases of overcrowding have been dealt with, though, I am pleased to report that this form of nuisance is not nearly so prevalent as formerly. My remarks of last year, as to columns 13, 14, 15, and 16, still hold good.

My remarks of last year, as to columns 12, 17, 19, and 20, are now gone. There is only one registered Lodging House in the Borough, and this I have periodically inspected and found clean and well kept.

Yours truly,

GEORGE ALVES, *Sanitary Inspector.*