

[Report 1904] / Medical Officer of Health, Glastonbury Borough.

Contributors

Glastonbury (England). Borough Council.

Publication/Creation

1904

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BOROUGH OF GLASTONBURY.

Medical Officer's Report for 1904.

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, 1904.

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 : 27·88.

Birth Rate.

Death Rate. „ „ 11·70.

Death Rate.

Zymotic Rate.— „ „ Nil.

Zymotic Rate.

Infant Mortality.—Per 1,000 births : 133.

Infant Mortality.

Water Supply.—The supply has been abundant and ample for every possible need, and the quality excellent. In 1903 I called the attention of the Council to the fact that 163 houses in the town were not furnished with a proper water supply; that is to say, that each house had not a separate supply—in some cases there was only one tap to some 14 or 15 houses. A resolution was passed that all through the town, where it was practicable, in no case were more than three houses allowed to be supplied from one tap. In most instances the work has been carried out, but there are still some few houses which have not complied with the order. One sample of water from a well has been analysed, and found quite fit for dietetic purposes.

Water Supply.

Sewerage and Drainage.—The Sewage Farm at Cradle Bridge continues to answer its purpose as far as the town is concerned by the removal of the Sewage a mile and half away from the town. During the year, complaints have been received that the effluent from the farm was contaminating other waters. This nuisance has been abated by the throwing of the main ditches and the adoption of several filter beds. The old stone sewer that ran down Benedict-street and was exposed for some distance during the re-making of the pavement has been filled in. The drains from the many new houses which have been built during the year have been properly connected up with the main sewer, under the supervision of the Surveyor.

Sewerage and
Drainage.

Scavenging.

Scavenging.—The removal of the town refuse to the yard along the Meare Road, where it is destroyed by fire, continues to answer its purpose effectually. During the summer months the surface-water drains and gullies were kept flushed with disinfectant solution.

Prevalence of Disease.

Prevalence of Disease.—The year has not only been a healthy but a prolific one. The births (112) have not been exceeded for the last fifteen years, and this number gives the satisfactory rate of 27·88, being rather over five in excess of all the Urban Districts in the County, according to last year's statistics. The death-rate has declined from 14·4 to 11·70, and this is nearly two below the County Urban Districts' average. Cancer, with six deaths, is answerable for the highest number of any one disease. Only one death from Pulmonary Phthisis has been registered. Tubercular disease among children has accounted for four deaths. I have the satisfaction to report that no death has occurred from Zymotic disease. The Infant mortality is high, and above the County Urban Districts' average, as 133 compared to 100·1. The four deaths from tubercular, together with four deaths from gastro-enteritis in children under one year, may in a great measure be accounted for by the ignorance of mothers in feeding their infants with food which is hardly fit for adults, and by the abominable habit of allowing their infants the constant use of the dummy teat, which at one moment is in the child's mouth and next on the dirty floor, or even in the gutter outside the house, where all sorts of poisonous germs are picked up. It seems to me a thousand pities that hygiene, especially the subjects of personal cleanliness and the preparing and cooking of wholesome food both for children and adults, is not more often taught in our Elementary Schools than it is at the present time. Only three cases of Zymotic disease have been reported—one of Diphtheria and two of Scarlet Fever. The case of Diphtheria was verified by a swab being sent to and examined by the Clinical Research Association. One of the cases of Scarlet Fever was isolated and treated at the patient's house; the other was removed to the Isolation Hospital. There have been some few cases of measles during the year, but the disease has never assumed an epidemic character. During the first three months, diseases of the respiratory system were prevalent, and during December there was a slight epidemic of Follicular Tonsillitis.

Isolation Hospital.

Isolation Hospital.—On only one occasion, and that for the case of Scarlet Fever referred to above, has the Hospital been used. During the year a discharge block has been built, furnished with undressing-room, bath-room, and discharge-room. The drainage of the Hospital, which in 1903 gave a good deal of trouble, was then thoroughly overhauled, and last year worked in perfect order. Where disinfection has been required at patients' homes, Formalin has been substituted for Sulphur Dioxide.

Dairies, Milk Shops, and Cowsheds.

Dairies, Milk Shops, and Cowsheds.—Seventeen inspections. At the present time there are thirteen purveyors of milk, ten of whom keep their own cows, and the remainder buy milk and hawk it round. One person has given up selling, and three names have been added to the register. Very few store any quantity of milk, and those that do keep their premises clean. In some few cases the utensils have not been as cleanly as they should be; a verbal notice has had the desired effect, and an improvement has taken place at subsequent inspections. The sheds are, as a rule, kept clean, and white-liming has been carried out more systematically. Manure is allowed to accumulate in large quantities outside the sheds before removal; a verbal notice has had the desired effect to abate the nuisance.

Slaughter-houses.—Seventeen inspections. There are at the present time seven in constant use, and one is used occasionally. On the whole I have less to complain of in the way in which they are kept than in former years. Owners have readily complied, when requested, to abate nuisances and make good defects. For many years I have brought to your notice the absolute necessity of doing away with the obsolete and unsanitary private slaughter-houses. When the finances of the town will allow, the erection of a public slaughter-house should be the first item on the programme of reform. Slaughter-houses.

Bake-houses.—Thirteen inspections. These are kept clean and well looked after, and white-washing has been systematically carried out. Bake-houses.

Common Lodging-house.—Inspected. It is kept clean and in an orderly condition, the sanitary offices being well attended to. Common Lodging-house.

Housing of the Working Classes.—With the Inspector of Nuisances, I have visited the following districts:—Benedict Street, Grope Lane, part of Magdalene Street, Silver Street, Chilkwell Street, Coursing Batch, Bove Town, (with Orchard and Coombe Terraces), and part of the Wells Road. We visited 163 houses, and examined the premises as to over-crowding and the way in which the sanitary offices were kept. In fifteen cases repairs were required, and with two exceptions the necessary work has been carried out. There were four cases of over-crowding. I am at a loss to know how to deal with these cases; if an order is given for their ejection the inmates only move to some other part of the town, and the same nuisance is committed. We came across eleven empty houses, but they are all very small and quite unfit to take in large families. There is a dearth of houses at a low rental where the very poor with large families can be housed. Since our last visit to these districts, eight old houses have been demolished. Housing of the Working Classes.

Bye-Laws.—The former code still in force. Bye-laws.

Elementary Schools.—Frequent visits have been paid to both Schools, especially when I received notice of any infectious or contagious disease among the children. The ventilation at St. John's Boys' and Girls' School has been improved by placing a large sash-window in each room. The obsolete sanitary offices at St. Benedict's School still exist. I hope before long the Managers will see their way to make the needed improvement, which is necessary. Elementary Schools.

Factory and Workshops Act.—These have been regularly inspected, and where defects were found notice was given for their abatement, which in all cases were complied with. The Home Office has sent a form with regard to Workshops for me to fill in, and which, together with the tables of statistics, accompanies my written report. Factory and Workshops Act.

My best thanks are again due to the Inspector of Nuisances for the valuable help he has given me during the year.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

A. ALEX. BLAKISTON,

Glastonbury, January 23rd, 1905.

Medical Officer of Health.

Inspector's Report of the Sanitary Work completed in the year 1904.

PARISH.	Results of Inspection.										House Drain.		Privies and W.C.s.		Dust Bins.		Water Supply.			MISCELLANEOUS.					Legal proceedings e.g., Sanctions.	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24		25
Glastonbury	45	182	164	109	51	5	95	21	36	14	12	—	—	—	—	—	26	1	24	67	13	13	17	17	4	—

To A. A. BLAKISTON, Esq., Medical Officer of Health.

Sir,—Herewith I beg to hand you my report for the year ended 31st December, 1904. This does not include the house-to-house inspections under the Working Classes Act, or the periodical inspections of the Slaughter-houses, Milk-shops, Dairies, Cow-stalls, Bake-houses, and the Workshops and Factories within the Borough made in company with yourself during the year, and registered by you.

There is still a marked diminution in the cases of overcrowding formerly so prevalent in the Borough, thanks to the better class of dwelling provided and the constant visitations under the Housing of the Working Classes Act.

Yours truly,

GEORGE ALVES, Sanitary Inspector.