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# BOROUGH OF GLASTONBURY.

## Medical Officer's Report for 1905.

To the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses  
of the Borough of G'astonbury.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg leave to submit to you my Report for the year ending 31st December, 1905.

**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: 22·41.

Birth Rate.

**Death Rate**.— „ „ 11·45.

Death Rate.

**Zymotic Rate**.— „ „ 0·74.

Zymotic Rate.

**Infant Mortality**.—Per 1,000 births: 44·4.

Infant Mortality.

**Water Supply**.—The town has had an abundant and constant supply during the year, drawn almost entirely from the Compton source, a comparatively small quantity coming from the Edgarley reservoir. The quality has been excellent, and I have heard of no complaints as to its purity. Most of the houses in the town have now a separate supply, a few only being supplied in groups of not more than three to one tap. This, in time, should be altered, and every house have its own supply. When this is the case, every w.-c. could, and should, have a constant supply for flushing—a need that is sadly wanted in many cases.

Water Supply.

**Sewerage and Drainage**.—The farm at Cradle Bridge continues to dispose of the Sewage in a satisfactory manner. The coke screens placed in the ditches last year have proved useful in filtering the sewage, and no serious complaints have been made of the effluent causing pollution of other waters. Beyond the connecting-up of the drains from new houses to the main sewers, no work of any magnitude has been carried out.

Sewerage and Drainage.

**Scavenging**.—The streets during the year have been kept in a cleanly condition, in spite of their being constantly broken up for laying gas connections, etc. The substitution of cement for stone paving, in various parts of the town, is a great improvement, being much more cleanly and not so dangerous to walk on in wet weather. The house refuse is regularly removed and taken to the yard along the Meare Road, and there destroyed by fire. The surface-water drains and gullies were kept well flushed and disinfected during the dry summer weather.

Scavenging.



**Prevalence of Disease.**—After a period of fifteen years (fifty-five cases notified in 1890), a prolonged epidemic of Scarlet Fever visited the town. Appearing towards the end of January, the disease soon assumed an epidemic character, spreading rapidly among the children at S. Benedict's Schools, and after a time finding its way to S. John's Schools, and then attacking a private school in the town. The epidemic, continuing until July, apparently wore itself out; but a recrudescence occurred again at S. John's Schools in September, and continued until the end of the year. A few cases kept cropping up at intervals of about a fortnight, only one case occurring at S. Benedict's Schools, and that in December. It is somewhat difficult to fix the actual cause of the outbreak. At any rate, towards the end of January three children attending S. Benedict's Schools were found disquamating, and, although they were immediately sent home, in all probability communicated the disease to others in the school. These three children may have contracted the disease from outside the borough, as several cases occurred in districts around and communication was constantly kept up between the various districts and this town. In the beginning of February a lad from another district was found in the town in a state of disquamation. The fact was reported to the Council, who ordered a prosecution, and a conviction, with fine, was obtained. The disease, as a rule, was of a very mild type, and owing to this fact I feel sure many cases went unrecognised and were a means of spreading infection. Some few cases assumed a more virulent type, and of these three died in the Isolation Hospital, being the first fatal cases of any disease in this institution since its opening seven years ago. Isolation was carried out as far as possible in the cases treated at home, but in many cases this was quite a farce, as the infected person was often allowed to run about the house and premises and mix with other children. Mothers, too, were most careless and callous about isolating themselves, but wandered about to other houses; in this way the epidemic was kept alive. Unfortunately, although I knew this was going on, I was unable, through want of sufficient evidence, to bring any of these offenders to justice. The law with regard to the prosecution of those who have the care and nursing of infectious cases seems to me to be very ambiguous. Until some alteration is made, little can be done to prevent unscrupulous women from mixing with their neighbours, and so helping to spread the disease. Disinfection was carried out at every house where there was an outbreak; but even this precaution was in many cases of little use, on account of the carelessness mentioned above. Four cases of Erysipelas were notified. A number of cases of Measles occurred during the first quarter of the year. An outburst of Influenza occurred during the spring and autumn, accounting for one death during the former period. There were four deaths from Cancer and three from Phthisis registered. A case of Phthisis, the first from this town, was sent to the Winsley Sanatorium. The patient has only been there a month, so that the result of the treatment will not be known for some time. At the end of May a serious outbreak of Small-pox took place among navvies working on the new line at Charlton. Considerable anxiety was felt lest the Infection should spread to this town. Precautions, such as re-vaccination and those mentioned in the Inspector's report, were at once taken; fortunately no case occurred. The deaths from Scarlet Fever give a Zymotic rate of



0·74, as compared with *nil* last year. The infantile death-rate is absurdly low—only 44·4 per 1,000 births—being far below the ten years' Urban average, which amounts to 129·6. On the whole the year has been a healthy one, as indicated by a somewhat lower death-rate than last year—11·45, as compared with 11·70—and these figures compare favourably with the County Urban rate of 14, and still more favourably with the Urban death-rate throughout England and Wales of 16·2 per 1,000 living.

**Isolation Hospital.**—In spite of a few grumblers, the hospital has again proved of much value, not only in combating the spread of infection, but to many and especially to small tradesmen and those workers in factories and workshops, who, by sending away their children, are enabled to continue their employment instead of having to go to the expense of finding lodgings when their children are treated at home. I have no doubt the second outbreak of Fever in September was kept well in hand by having the hospital to turn to. Owing to the desire of many to send their children in, the hospital has on several occasions been full almost to over-crowding, and additional nursing help had to be obtained. The caretaker and nurse, who had been in charge for over three years, resigned in September, and a fresh couple were appointed.

Isolation Hospital.

**Disinfection.**—The only means of real disinfection is a small Threshes disinfectant at the hospital; but this is only sufficient for the requirements of that institution. It has, however, been used once for infected clothes from outside. Fumigation with Formalin and Sulphur Dioxide has been plentifully used where an outbreak of fever has taken place.

Disinfection.

**Housing of the Working Classes.**—The following parts of the town have been visited and houses inspected, viz.:—Old Wells Road, Hartlake, Part of Wells Road, Wick, Edgarley, Havyatt, Orchard Terrace, King Street, Albert and Northload Terraces, Avalon Buildings, Part of Northload Street, Northover, and Beckery. 134 houses were examined. Thirteen were empty. Sanitary defects were found in fifteen, and ordered to be remedied. There were two cases of over-crowding, neither of which are yet abated. The system of e.c.s at Havyatt is in a more satisfactory condition than was the case at my last visit in this district. The want of good cottage accommodation at a small rental for the working-classes is a need that, before long, must engage the attention of the Council.

Housing of the Working Classes.

**Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops.**—Fourteen on the register. Twenty-two inspections. On the whole, the sheds, dairies, and utensils were found clean and well kept. Some minor defects were ordered to be remedied, and these were carried out. I still have to complain of the heap of manure that is allowed to accumulate outside some of the sheds, and which should be removed more frequently. This must be a source of danger to the milk supply.

Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops.

**Slaughter-houses.**—Seven now only on the register, many of the old ones having been given up and fallen into disuse. Fourteen inspections. I have but little complaint to make against any of them. I am still of opinion that, situated as many of them are in the midst of dwelling-houses, they constitute a genuine nuisance, which should be done away with and a public slaughter-house erected. An inspection was made of a shop where Colonial meat is sold, and found in a clean condition.

Slaughter-houses.



Bake-houses.

**Bake-houses.**—Eight in number. Fifteen inspections. One has been given up during the year. On the whole they are kept clean. A more frequent use of the white-wash brush in some cases would be beneficial. Structural additions have been made to two of them.

Common Lodging-house.

**Common Lodging-house.**—Kept clean and in an orderly condition. Was constantly inspected during the small-pox epidemic at Charlton, as many navvies lodged here on their way to and from the railway works.

Bye-laws.

**Bye-laws.**—Same code in force. Some alteration might, with benefit, be made in them.

Elementary Schools.

**Elementary Schools.**—Frequent visits were made, especially during the scarlet fever epidemic. Three times the children were individually examined; on one occasion a child was found in the disquamating stage. On two occasions the schools were closed for a few days, during which time they were fumigated and the sanitary offices and lobbies white-limed and disinfected. The unsanitary condition of the offices at S. Benedict's Schools, to which I have drawn attention in two former reports, will in all probability be looked into during the coming year.

Factories and Workshops Act.

**Factories and Workshops Act.**—Twenty-nine on register, as against twenty-six last year. Thirty-seven inspections made. Beyond some defects in the sanitary accommodation of three premises, which have been attended to, I have no complaint to make. Disinfection was carried out, of premises and work, in the houses of out-workers where a case of scarlet fever occurred. Notices, either written or verbal, were given to employers not to issue work until the chance of infection had gone.

I cannot close my report without thanking the Inspector of Nuisances for the help he has given me during the year, and especially for the able manner in which he has carried out the numerous disinfections, both at houses and schools, which the epidemic of scarlet fever entailed.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

**A. ALEX. BLAKISTON,**

Glastonbury, 11th January, 1906.

Medical Officer of Health.





Inspector's Report of the Sanitary Work completed in the year 1905.

PARISH.	No. of complaints received during the year.	No. of inspections of houses, premises, etc.	No. of re-inspections of houses, premises, etc.	Results of Inspection.				House Drains.		Privies and W.C.s.			Dust Bins		Water Supply.			MISCELLANEOUS.							Overcrowded.	Notification to Employers re Sanitation.
				Orders issued for sanitary amendments of houses and premises, etc.	Houses, premises, etc., repaired, cleansed, etc.	Houses disinfected after illness of an infectious character.	Repaired, cleansed, trapped, etc.	Ventilated.	Repaired, etc.	Supplied with water.	New provided.	New provided.	Cisterns (new) erected.	Cisterns cleansed, repaired and covered.	Waste pipes connected with drains, etc., abolished.	No. of lodging houses registered.	Dust removal.	No. of communications received and attended to.	Removal of accumulations of dung, stagnant water, animal and other refuse.	Animals removed being improperly kept.	Bakehouses.	Licensed cowsheds.	Licensed slaughter-houses.	Legal proceedings e.g., Summonses.		
Glastonbury	55	143	103	72	24	143	44	7	22	5	8	—	—	9	—	17	52	13	8	14	7	1	5	37	18	

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

SIR,—Herewith I beg to hand you my report for the year ended December 31st, 1905. As usual, this does not include the house-to-house inspections under the Housing of the Working Classes Act, or the periodical inspections of the Slaughter-houses, Milk-shops and Dairies, Cow-stalls, Bake-houses, and Workshops and Factories within the Borough, made in company with yourself, and registered by you.

During the year, we have been troubled more or less with *Scarlatina* of a mild form, in connection with which I have made 143 fumigations of bedrooms and premises. Inspections of the sanitary arrangements of these premises and surroundings were also made, and, where necessary, orders were given for repairs and cleansing, &c., and removal of rubbish and other accumulations. The whole of the School-rooms at the St. John's and St. Benignus' Schools have been fumigated on two separate occasions, and the latrines, &c., periodically white-washed and disinfected.

During the prevalence of small-pox at the new railway works at Charlton an oversight was kept on all possible sources of infection, and a site and emergency tent, &c., secured in case of an out-break, which fortunately we escaped.

A few cases of over-crowding have been dealt with, but this does not prevail to any extent within the borough.

Yours truly, GEORGE ALVES, *Sanitary Inspector.*