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Contributors

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Borough of Glastonbury.

MEDICAL OFFICER'S REPORT FOR 1911.

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, 1911.

Area.—5,000 Acres.

Area.

Population.—4,251 (Census 1911).

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; Agriculture. A very large number of workers find employment at the Boot and Shoe Factories at Street.

Occupation.

Birth Rate.—Per 1,000 living: 22.81.

Birth Rate.

Death Rate.— „ „ 12.4.

Nett Death Rate.

Infant Mortality.— „ „ 123.7.

Infant Mortality.

Death Rate of Nett Deaths belonging to the District.—15.5.

Death Rate.

Water Supply.—A full supply from the springs for every need was maintained until the end of June, when the reserve had to be drawn upon.

Water Supply.

On account of the prolonged drought, the supply from the springs decreased to a very great extent, and the reserve had to be still further drawn upon for the next four months.

The public was warned by placard that they must curtail their use of the water, especially for garden purposes; in October a notice was issued to say that the supply would be cut off during certain hours of the day. These precautions and other means, such as house-to-house inspections of all taps, the stopping of street-watering, and the cutting off of the water for some trade purposes tided the town over what might have been a serious state of affairs until the springs began to yield again.

The thanks of the whole town are due to the Surveyor for the unceasing trouble he took in the matter.

When the Reservoir was at its lowest the opportunity was taken to cleanse and repair its sides.

During October specimens of water from the inlet at Edgarley were chemically and bacteriologically examined at the County Laboratory, and pronounced: “both chemically and bacteriologically the water is quite satisfactory, and suitable for drinking purposes.”

Specimens from two wells in the town were examined and found unfit for drinking purposes.

Sewerage and Drainage.—Loans for an improved system of sewage disposal and for the connection of certain low-lying districts with the sewage system, have been approved by the Local Government Board, and it is anticipated that the work will be proceeded with during the ensuing year.

Sewerage and
Drainage.

A considerable amount of work in removing faulty old drains, substituting new ones, and connecting them up with the main sewer has been done during the year.

Scavenging.

Scavenging.—This is systematically done by the Corporation men, the refuse being removed to Cradle Bridge, where it is, to a great extent, destroyed by fire.

During the summer drought the street-watering had to be in abeyance. The tar-spraying did much to abate the dust nuisance caused by the motor traffic. The further extension of the spraying is, I believe, under the consideration of the County Council, and will be a decided benefit to the town from a sanitary point of view.

The street gullies and gutters were kept flushed with disinfectants during the hot summer months.

Prevalence of Disease.

Prevalence of Disease.—The Birth Rate this year is slightly lower than last—22.81 as compared with 23.4—although there were three more births this year, the difference being accounted for by the increase of population as taken at this year's Census, and on which my figures are based. The figures compare favourably with the total Urban rate of 20.1. The Death Rate—53 Deaths were registered, as compared with 55 last year, giving a rate of 12.4 per 1,000 living as compared with 13.69 the previous year. The total Urban rate for the year being 12.30, whilst that for England and Wales is 13.4.

The Death rate of children under one year has gone up very considerably from 74.46 to 103. The Administrative County rate was 68.1. Six of the deaths were due to what might be termed "preventable diseases," two from phthisis, two from enteritis, one from measles, one from whooping-cough. Eight deaths have been registered as due to pulmonary phthisis—a much larger number than has been recorded for many years. On January 1st pulmonary phthisis will become a notifiable disease, and every medical man will have to send me notice when he comes across a case. I shall have to visit and make certain inquiries into each case.

The first quarter of the year was very unhealthy, measles, whooping-cough, influenza, pneumonia, and other diseases of the respiratory organs were prevalent. The second and third quarters were free from any abnormal amount of sickness. Four cases of scarlet-fever occurred during these periods, and the patients were promptly removed to the Isolation Hospital, and anything like an epidemic was averted. During the last quarter there was an outbreak of diphtheria, confined to the children of St. John's Schools. I am unable to definitely account for the outbreak, but I think the first case was brought into the town and "missed," until another patient became infected.

Six of the cases were treated at the Isolation Hospital. A constant inspection was made of the children at school, and swabs taken from any suspicious case and sent to the County Laboratory for examination. All children from houses of the suspicious cases were rigidly excluded from school until the result of the bacteriological examination was known. A case of scarlet-fever occurred in December, the result of infection from a "return" case from an isolation hospital in a neighbouring town. This is the first time two diseases have been treated simultaneously in the Hospital, and so far without any bad result.

Isolation Hospital.

Isolation Hospital.—Joint between here and Street. Eleven cases have been admitted during the year. A Theshes disinfectant is in use. The wards, etc., are fumigated after use with sulphur dioxide, and the walls sprayed with a solution of Izal. The old Ambulance has been replaced by a much lighter and better one. The urgent need of telephonic communication between the Hospital and medical men of the town was very evident during a most serious case of diphtheria. During any sudden outbreak of infectious disease it would be most useful between the Medical Officer of Health, the Hospital, and Sanitary Officer.

Housing & Town-Planning Act.

Housing and Town-Planning Act.—In company with the Borough Surveyor I have made a thorough inspection of all the houses in the Old Wells Road, Hartlake, Wick, Edgarley, Havyatt, and part of Chilkwell Street, and taken the particulars suggested by the forms recommended by the County Medical Officer of Health. These particulars have been considered by a special sub-committee of the Council, who were of opinion that many of the defects noted were of a minor nature, and would be readily attended to by the owners if their attention was called to such defects. The sub-committee accordingly

directed preliminary notices to be given and reported to the Council, and that the Committee's report should stand over to await the effect of these notices. This was directed to be done. Twenty-three notices have been served, thirteen of which have been satisfactorily complied with. The remainder will in due course come before the sub-committee for report.

Housing & Town-
Planning Act
continued.

Dairies, Milkshops, and Cowsheds.—Sixteen retailers of milk on the register. Thirty-six inspections. The dairies and milkshops are, as a rule, kept clean. Verbal notices to whitewash, and in the case of cowsheds to cleanse, whitewash, repair defective drains, and to remove accumulations of manure, were given, and in most cases complied with.

Dairies, Milkshops,
and Cowsheds.

A case of diphtheria occurred at the premises of one dairy, and the most stringent measures were immediately taken to prevent contamination of the milk, and with satisfactory results.

Seven cowkeepers have been placed on the register. Twelve inspections were made. Verbal notices to provide efficient drainage, to repair what was already in use, to cleanse, whitewash, and remove accumulations of manure were given, and complied with. Cases of diphtheria occurred at two of the premises, and the same rigid precautions were taken to prevent contamination of the milk, and faithfully carried out by the owners.

During the ensuing year every cowkeeper and farmer who sells milk wholesale will be compelled to register and have his premises duly inspected, and brought into compliance with the Order.

Slaughter-Houses.—Six either licensed or registered. Fourteen inspections. Kept fairly clean, any complaints made as to repairs, cleansing and whitewashing have had attention. For many years I have urged the necessity of providing a public abattoir, and so doing away with existing slaughter-houses, which are a disgrace to the town. Almost unsurmountable difficulties seem to be in the way of their abolition, so that it is useless to press the matter further.

Slaughter-Houses.

Bakehouses.—Six. Fifteen inspections. There is a want of cleanliness and order about several of them. Verbal notices to repair and whitewash have been attended to.

Bakehouses.

Workshops Act.—Twenty-seven on the register. Thirty-five inspections. These have been systematically visited, and where defects were found either written or verbal notices were given to comply with the Act. On re-inspection these were found to have been complied with.

Workshops Act.

Elementary Schools.—A new system of drainage has been laid at St. John's Schools, discharging into the main sewer which the Council brought up to the end of the school premises in Norbins Road, and provided with a series of manholes, inspecting chambers, and ventilators. The girls play-ground has been relaid with asphalt, and the boys' playground sprayed with tar and gritted. A practically daily inspection was made of these schools during the outbreak of diphtheria, and the precautions taken as mentioned above.

Elementary
Schools.

Some suspicious cases of diphtheria were reported by the head Teacher at St. Benedict's Schools, but swabs taken from the children's throats were pronounced negative. These schools were kept closed for a fortnight after the Christmas holidays on account of the epidemic of measles and whooping-cough during December, 1910.

Common Lodging House.—Inspected and found clean, tidy, and all the sanitary offices well looked after.

Common Lodging
House.

I cannot conclude without thanking the Sanitary Officer for the valuable help he has so readily given in the large amount of work we have done together during the year.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

A. Alex. Blakiston,

Glastonbury, 15th January, 1912.

Medical Officer of Health.

