

**Ninth annual report, &c., of the Belfast District Asylum for the lunatic poor of the counties of Antrim, Down, and County of the town of Carrickfergus, being from 1st April, 1838, till 31st March, 1839 / submitted to the Board of Governors by the manager.**

### **Contributors**

Belfast District Lunatic Asylum.  
Stewart, Robert.

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Wellcome Collection  
183 Euston Road  
London NW1 2BE UK  
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NINTH  
ANNUAL REPORT, &c.,  
OF THE  
BELFAST DISTRICT ASYLUM,  
FOR  
THE LUNATIC POOR

OF THE COUNTIES OF  
ANTRIM, DOWN, AND COUNTY OF THE TOWN  
OF CARRICKFERGUS,

*Being from 1st April, 1838, to 31st March, 1839,*

SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS,

BY  
THE MANAGER.

ORDERED TO BE PRINTED.

BELFAST:

PRINTED BY FRANCIS D. FINLAY,  
CALENDER-STREET.

1839.

GOVERNORS  
OF  
THE BELFAST DISTRICT LUNATIC ASYLUM,

APPOINTED BY

THE LORD LIEUTENANT AND PRIVY COUNCIL.

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MARQUIS OF DOWNSHIRE,  
MARQUIS OF DONEGALL,  
EARL OF BELFAST,  
SIR A. CHICHESTER, BART.,  
BISHOP OF DOWN AND CONNOR,  
BISHOP OF DROMORE,  
SOVEREIGN OF BELFAST (FOR THE TIME BEING),  
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HON. MAJOR-GENERAL SIR H. R. PAKENHAM, K.C.B.,  
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REV. DR. EDGAR, D.D.,  
REV. DR. MONTGOMERY, LL.D.

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MANAGER—ROBERT STEWART, M.D.

PHYSICIAN—SAMUEL SMITH THOMSON, M.D.

SURGEON-APOTHECARY—J. S. MULHOLLAND.



# REPORT,

&c.

THE NINTH ANNUAL REPORT of the Belfast District Lunatic Asylum, for the year ending 31st March, 1839, is now respectfully submitted to the Board of Governors, by the Manager.

The new cases received, during the year, it will be found, by the accompanying Returns, amounted to 100 (being an excess of 14 above those of last year), of which 39 were of the class termed urgent.

The relapsed cases, re-admitted, were 7, being one more than the year preceding.

The following table will shew how the 100 new admissions have been disposed of:—

Discharged, recovered,	.	.	.	34
Do., by desire of friends, relieved and on trial,	.	.	.	2
Died,	.	.	.	6
Still under treatment,	.	.	.	58
Total,	.	.	.	100

The oldest patient in the above list was a female aged 72, (who is still in the house); and the youngest, a male, aged 16.

The other cases, amounting to 105, are thus to be accounted for:

Discharged recovered,	.	.	.	24
Do., by desire of friends, relieved, and on trial,	.	.	.	3
Died,	.	.	.	9
Remaining in the house,	.	.	.	69
Total,	.	.	.	105

The great majority of recoveries took place in periods varying from six weeks to four months; some, however, were under moral treatment for one, two, three, and four years, before recovery could be pronounced.

Included in the admissions of the year, are 12 criminal lunatics (6 males and 6 females), who were sent into the Institution, by orders, or warrants, of the Lord Lieutenant, by virtue of the Acts 1 and 2 Geo. 4, c. 33, and 1 Victoria, c. 27, from the respective Jails of the District. Seven of these were transmitted from County Down Jail, four from County Antrim Jail, and one from the Belfast House of Correction, all of whom are still in the Asylum; but the discharge of three has been applied for, within the last few weeks, that number having become convalescent.

Some of the individuals admitted agreeably to the provisions of 1 Victoria, c. 27 (an Act in operation since July last), had committed minor offences, such as throwing stones in the public streets, or perhaps attempting a trifling assault, the persons so offending having previously, or subsequently, manifested symptoms of insanity, and, thereupon, sent to Jail as dangerous lunatics, such being a necessary preliminary before coming to the Asylum; but, in cases of this kind, especially where injury has not been done, either to person or property, it would be a most desirable matter, were the committing Magistrates, in the first instance, to endeavour to ascertain if the ordinary form of admission could not be made available, thereby saving patients, thus circumstanced, and



who are, *bona fide, non compos mentis*, from that stain of criminality which almost invariably attaches to them, by reason of coming from a Jail, as well as enabling their discharge much more easily to be effected, when a recovery has taken place, than can be accomplished by the circuitous course made requisite, in acting conformably to the provisions of the statute last mentioned.

Allusion was made, in last year's Report, to the injury the moral character of the District Asylums of Ireland sustained, by being obliged to receive criminals *stated to be lunatics*, who, of necessity, must be allowed to associate with those who have committed no offence against the laws, and whose misfortune it is, but, in no respect, their fault, to be deprived of liberty, having been placed in the Asylum (according to the usual form) as a curative retreat; but who, when reason begins to assume her wonted sway, must feel that retreat a most disgraceful one, surrounded as they, comparatively are, by culprits, and those generally of the worst stamp, the major part of whom must contaminate the Asylum, during life, even though they should have become perfectly sane (had insanity ever been present): indeed, each year's experience makes it more and more convincing, that cases of this description are detrimental, in the highest degree, to the Asylums; and it is greatly to be feared, that the increased facility afforded by the provisions of 1 Victoria, in empowering criminals to be placed within their walls, will add, in no small degree, to the serious evils already in existence, and will ultimately prove most pernicious; and here, mention may be made, how much it is to be deplored, that, prior to the passing of this Act, opportunities were not permitted to the local authorities of the respective District Lunatic Asylums throughout Ireland, to state their views upon the increased powers about being vested in the Executive, through its provisions; had this been done, doubtless, many valuable and practical suggestions could have been obtained, and those from sources, of all others the best calculated to afford the same.—Much more might be said on this important subject; but, to pursue it further, in this Report, would not be convenient.

The average daily number of patients in the house, during the year now ended, was 194½, being an increase of 16 nearly, over and above last year's similar average.

The subjoined table, shewing the regular increase of patients which has taken place each year, with but one exception, since the Asylum was established, may not be uninteresting to bring under the notice of the Board, on the present occasion.

From the opening of the Asylum, in June, 1829, to

31st March, 1830, number of cases in the Asylum,	.	.	49
... 1831, ...	.	.	103
... 1832, ...	.	.	132
... 1833, ...	.	.	131
... 1834, ...	.	.	139
... 1835, ...	.	.	156
... 1836, ...	.	.	163
... 1837, ...	.	.	166
... 1838, ...	.	.	178
... 1839, ...	.	.	194

The Board is aware, that the Asylum is adapted to accommodate, since the additional building was erected, in 1836, 250 patients,—an accommodation which, according to the foregoing statement, will, in the course of time, be found by no means too large, if sufficiently so, for the reception of the insane poor of the district: when the Asylum was built, provision was made but for 104 cases.

Since last year's Report, the health of the inmates has been, as hitherto, most excellent: no illness, of a serious or epidemic nature, made its appearance;—even ordinary catarrhs, severe and changeable as the late Winter has been, were comparatively unknown. The total number of deaths amounted but to 15, being 7 less than the year preceding, though with an increased daily num-



ber of patients during the period included in this Report. The causes of death, so far as ascertainable, were as follow:—

General Debility,	.	.	.	.	.	6
Maniacal exhaustion,	.	.	.	.	.	3
General Paralysis,	.	.	.	.	.	2
Pulmonary Consumption,	.	.	.	.	.	1
Rheumatic affection,	.	.	.	.	.	1
Cause of death unknown, having died suddenly,	.	.	.	.	.	2
Total,	.	.	.	.	.	15

The average ages of the above were 42.

The alteration made in the mode of supplying medicine, and affording the requisite surgical assistance, has been now in operation 15 months, and upwards, and is found to answer, most satisfactorily, in every respect, as well as to be much more economical.—It is needless to observe, that Dr. Thomson's charge is attended to in a manner highly creditable to his professional skill.

The suggestion made, last year, by the Manager and Physician, to the Governors, as to the necessity and importance of warming the Asylum differently to that of ordinary fires, met with their prompt attention; and the Board, after much anxious deliberation, and after instituting the most particular inquiries as to the method in which similar Establishments were warmed throughout the kingdom, came to the unanimous determination of adopting Perkins' hot-water plan of procuring heat, and, accordingly, an apparatus of this description was, in January last, commenced putting up by Messrs. Turner and Walker, of Dublin, which, being recently erected and conducted through the principal portions of the Institution, is now in full operation; and, from the short experience had of its effects, there is no doubt, that the change will be productive of the happiest consequences, and found to answer all the expectations formed of it: in those day-rooms, particularly, which smoked, the apparatus in question will be invaluable, not only in doing away with this, but with many other equally unpleasant and constant sources of annoyance. Altogether, the advantages that will accrue are far from being problematical; and, so genial to the feelings of the poor patients is the equable temperature thus obtained, that several of them, during the last few weeks, when the apparatus was in working order, were heard congratulating themselves on the Summer season having appeared, this year, so much earlier than hitherto.

The method in operation, for some years past, in the Establishment, for drying clothes, being found quite inadequate, the same has accordingly been lately superseded, with the approval of the Board, and, instead thereof, a new one adopted, the necessary heat being now procured through the medium of hot-water tubes also. The drying-loft, thus remodelled, and otherwise newly fitted up, is giving every satisfaction; and will, it is confidently hoped, be found a most decided and important improvement, as compared with the old system of drying.

The gross expenditure, during the year now brought to a close, has been greater than last year's, by the sum of £863 1s 10d; this year's total discharge being £3,721 16s 10d; that of the preceding, £2,858 15s;—an increase which, in part, is to be accounted for, by the expense of erecting the hot-water apparatus above referred to, and in part by provisions, generally, being much higher in price—the article of potatoes, alone, being 1s and upwards per cwt. more this season than the last. It is also to be taken into consideration, that the number of Patients was increased, which necessarily added to all current expenses, excepting salaries and wages; but, on this head, the Manager feels, that the Board is fully cognizant, from its constant watchfulness and supervision over this, as well as every other matter of detail connected with the management of the Institution, that every economy that could consistently be effected, without trenching too much on those ordinary comforts which are indispensably necessary for the welfare of the inmates of such an Establishment,



has been practised. The average cost of each patient, this year, *every charge being included*, was £19 1s 6d, and, omitting the expense of the hot-water apparatus, the average would have been £16 8s 6d; last year's average of each was £15 19s 10d.

On referring to the Farm and Garden Account, it will be found, that a nett profit of £221 2s 7d has been the result of the year's operations in that department, being £111 18s 9d more than last year,—the nett profit then being £109 3s 10d. This difference is principally owing to an increase in the potato crop, which was remarkably good in every respect, being produced off the new ground; still, the quantity grown was only sufficient for about six months' consumption. No potatoes have been planted in the old ground, for the last two seasons, it being quite exhausted; and it is to be stated, that its produce in this root was never good, either as to quantity or quality, owing to the natural soil being disturbed, and clay unavoidably mixed largely through it, upon occasion of this portion of the land having to be elevated, it being originally almost a morass: it is now under meadow-grass, and will, it is expected, make a beneficial return. The new ground, this year, will be apportioned chiefly to potatoes; besides which, there will be crops of wheat, oats, and a general supply of vegetables.

A very important piece of work was executed, by the male patients, last year, on the new ground—that of raising an embankment parallel with the West boundary wall, with a view of preventing the low portion of the land being flooded, as was the case, from time to time, after long-continued heavy rains. Since the embankment was completed, this inconvenience has been effectually remedied.

For all further information, as to the details of the Establishment, the Manager begs to refer to the respective returns annexed to this Report; and, in now closing the cursory remarks he has deemed it advisable to make, he would desire to present his respectful thanks to the Board he has the honour of being officially connected with, for the able support it has at all times so liberally afforded him, in the discharge of the duties required at his hands, and without which, his own endeavours to be effective in the same would have been comparatively futile.

ROBERT STEWART.

*Belfast Asylum, 31st March, 1839.*

# GENERAL ANNUAL STATEMENT OF CASES

IN THE

## Belfast District Lunatic Asylum,

*Being from 1st April, 1838, to 31st March, 1839.*

	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.
In Asylum, 1st April, 1838, . . .	85	93	178			
Admitted, . . . . .	49	51	100			
Re-admitted, having relapsed, . . .	2	4	6			
Do., after escaping, . . . . .	1		1	137	148	285
Discharged, recovered, . . . . .	20	38	58			
Do. by desire of friends, relieved, and on trial, . . . . .	3	2	5			
Do., not being a fit case, . . . . .	1	—	1			
Escaped, . . . . .	1	—	1			
Died, . . . . .	5	10	15			
Remaining in Asylum, 31st March, 1839,	107	98	205	137	148	285

*Admitted from each County in same period.*

Antrim, . . . . .	28	30	58			
Down, . . . . .	23	25	48			
Carrickfergus, . . . . .	1	—	1	52	55	107

*Discharged to each County in same period.*

Antrim, . . . . .	14	28	42			
Down, . . . . .	16	21	37			
Carrickfergus, . . . . .	—	1	1	30	59	80



*Number remaining from each County, 31st March, 1839.*

	Males.	Females.	Total	Males.	Females.	Total.
Antrim, . . . . .	59	51	110			
Down, . . . . .	46	45	91			
Carrickfergus, . . . . .	2	2	4			
				107	98	205

*State of cases remaining, 31st March, 1839.*

Convalescent, . . . . .	13	15	28			
Considered curable, . . . . .	20	24	44			
Considered incurable, . . . . .	74	59	133			
				107	98	205

*Number of Patients generally employed.*

Cultivating the ground, . . . . .	50	—	—
Weaving Linen, Calico, &c., . . . . .	7	—	—
Winding for Weavers; . . . . .	3	—	—
Warping for do., . . . . .	1	—	—
Shoe-making and Mending, . . . . .	3	—	—
Pumping Water, . . . . .	8	—	—
Sweeping Yards, Carrying Coals, Breaking Freestone, &c., . . . . .	12	—	—
Spinning, . . . . .	—	29	—
Knitting, . . . . .	—	3	—
Making and Repairing Bedding, Clothing, &c., . . . . .	—	15	—
Quilting, . . . . .	—	4	—
Washing in Laundry, . . . . .	—	14	—
Assisting Servants, . . . . .	—	12	—
	84	77	161

*The following articles were manufactured and made by the patients, during the year :—*

2,768 Hanks Linen Yarn,	132 Shirts,
64 ... Thread,	126 Shifts,
1,364 Yards Linen,	91 Aprons,
300 ... Ticken,	58 Petticoats,
165 ... Druggett,	33 Wrappers,
1,131 ... Calico,	70 Day Caps,
70 ... Camlet,	16 Night do.,
177 Pairs Stockings,	34 Bed Ticks,
60 ... Leather Shoes,	42 Bolsters,
84 ... Listen do. (soaled.)	110 Handkerchiefs,
42½ ... Sheets,	8 Towels,
65 ... Suspenders,	9 Strait Waistcoats,
14 ... Linen Trousers,	1 Sofa Cover,
72 Vests,	1 Set Stair Linens.
26 Quilts,	

Average number of patients, daily, during the past year,	-	-	194½.
Average cost of each patient, per annum, including all charges,	-	£19	1s 6d.
Average cost of diet, per head, per diem,	-	-	4¾d.

# **Dr. Farm and Garden (from 1st April, 1838, to 31st March, 1839), Contra, &c.**

To Expenditure, viz.				By Produce, viz.			
" Seeds and Trees,	-	-	£7 5 2	" Potatoes, 1,300 cwt. (for use of Establishment), rated at 2s 6d	-	-	per cwt., - - - - - 162 10 0
" Tithe,	-	-	8 18 6	" do. small, sold for - - - - -	-	-	2 14 6
" Cart Harness, &c.,	-	-	2 16 1	" Oats, 36 cwt. (for use of Establishment), rated at 7s 6d per cwt.,	-	-	£165 4 6
" Utensils,	-	-	7 6 8	" Hay, 10 Tons (sold), at £2 2s per Ton,	-	21 0 0	13 10 0
" Horse Shoeing,	-	-	1 14 9	" do., 8 do. (for use of Establishment), rated at	-	-	2s 2d per cwt., - - - - - 17 6 8
" Lime,	-	-	4 6 8	" Straw, 50 cwt. (for use of Establishment), rated at 1s 6d per	-	-	cwt., - - - - - 3 15 0
" Seed Potatoes,	-	-	14 1 5	" Vegetables Do. do., rated at 30 0 0	-	-	8 7 8
To Balance,	-	-	46 9 3	" Cabbage Plants (sold), - - - - -	-	-	2 5 6
			221 2 7	" Grass (sold), - - - - -	-	-	6 2 6
				By Balance,	-	-	£221 2 7
							£267 11 10



*Number remaining from each County, 31st March, 1839.*

	Males.	Females.	Total	Males.	Females.	Total.
Antrim, . . . . .	59	51	110			
Down, . . . . .	46	45	91			
Carrickfergus, . . . . .	2	2	4			
				107	98	205

*State of cases remaining, 31st March, 1839.*

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Considered curable, . . . . .	20	24	44			
Considered incurable, . . . . .	74	59	133			
				107	98	205

*Number of Patients generally employed.*

Cultivating the ground, . . . . .	50	—	—
Weaving Linen, Calico, &c., . . . . .	7	—	—
Winding for Weavers; . . . . .	3	—	—
Warping for do., . . . . .	1	—	—
Shoe-making and Mending, . . . . .	3	—	—
Pumping Water, . . . . .	8	—	—
Sweeping Yards, Carrying Coals, Breaking Freestone, &c., . . . . .	12	—	—
Spinning, . . . . .	—	29	—
Knitting, . . . . .	—	3	—
Making and Repairing Bedding, Clothing, &c., . . . . .	—	15	—
Quilting, . . . . .	—	4	—
Washing in Laundry, . . . . .	—	14	—
Assisting Servants, . . . . .	—	12	—
	84	77	161

*The following articles were manufactured and made by the patients, during the year :—*

2,768 Hanks Linen Yarn,	132 Shirts,
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72 Vests,	1 Set Stair Linens.
26 Quilts,	

Average number of patients, daily, during the past year,	-	-	194½.
Average cost of each patient, per annum, including all charges,	-	£19	1s 6d.
Average cost of diet, per head, per diem,	-	-	4¾d.





*An Account of Receipts and Disbursements of the BELFAST DISTRICT LUNATIC ASYLUM, for one year—being from 1st April, 1838, to 31st March, 1839, inclusive.*

**The Charge.**

Received from the Lords Commissioners of her Majesty's Treasury,	£3,871	10	0
Do. for Hay Sold, ...	£21	0	0
Do. for Vegetables do., ...	8	7	8
Do. for Grass do., ...	6	2	6
Do. for Small Potatoes do., ...	2	14	6
Do. for Cabbage Plants do., ...	2	5	6
Do. Fines from Servants, ...	0	10	6
		41	0 8
<hr/>			
Total Charge, ...	£3,912	10	8
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Balance in favour of the Public, March 31, 1839,	£190	13	10

**The Discharge.**

Paid for Provisions, ...	£1,408	3	2
— Clothing, ...	267	1	9
— Bedding, ...	92	6	9
— Furniture, ...	83	5	6
— Stationary, Advertising, and Printing,	10	15	8
— Coals, Candles, Soap, &c.,	236	18	10
— Medicine, ...	20	3	1
— Repairs on Building, Alterations, &c.,	764	10	9
— Farm & Garden Expenses,	46	9	3
— Incidental Expenses,	69	7	11
— Insurance, ...	21	17	8
— Salaries, Servants' Wages, &c., ...	682	15	4
		3,703	15 8
— Balance against the Public on 1st April, 1838, ...			18 1 2
<hr/>			
Total Discharge, ...			3,721 16 10
Balance, ...			190 13 10
<hr/>			
			£3,912 10 8