

The special report of the Committee of Visitors of the County Lunatic Asylum, at Hanwell : October quarter session, 1846 / [Middlesex County Lunatic Asylum].

Contributors

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Tulk, Charles Augustus, 1786-1849.
Allen, C.
Allen, J.

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Middlesex.

THE
SPECIAL REPORT
OF THE
COMMITTEE OF VISITORS

OF THE
County Lunatic Asylum, at Hanwell.

OCTOBER QUARTER SESSION, 1846.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY JOHN THOMAS NORRIS, ALDERSGATE STREET.

1846.

LIST OF
THE COMMITTEE OF VISITORS
OF THE
HANWELL LUNATIC ASYLUM,

Appointed at the January Quarter Sessions, 1846.

CHAIRMAN,

CHARLES AUGUSTUS TULK, Esq., Totteridge Park, Herts.

HENRY POWNALL, Esq., Spring Grove, Hounslow.

CHARLES ELLIOTT, Esq., 47, Portland Place.

MARLBOROUGH PRYOR, Esq., 42, Westbourne Terrace, Paddington.

GEORGE BAILLIE, Esq., Hanwell Grove.

THOMAS RUSSELL, Esq., Park Terrace, Camden Town.

BENJAMIN J. ARMSTRONG, Esq., Southall.

FRANCIS CURWEN SMITH, Esq., Fregnal Hall, Hampstead.

HECTOR ROSE, Esq., 30, Nottingham Place, New Road.

HENRY MORRIS KEMSHEAD, Esq., Westbourne, Paddington.

JOHN WILKS, Esq., Finsbury Square.

WALTER BUCHANAN, Esq., Sussex Place, Hyde Park Gardens.

JOHN TOWNEND, Esq., Hanger Lane, Stamford Hill.

THOMAS BECKETT, Esq., Russell Place, Fitzroy Square.

JAMES WILLIAM FRESHFIELD, Esq., Moor Place, Betchworth.

Middlesex.

TO HER MAJESTY'S JUSTICES OF THE PEACE
FOR THE COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX, IN GENERAL QUARTER
SESSION ASSEMBLED.

*The SPECIAL REPORT of the COMMITTEE
of VISITORS appointed to superintend the
Building, Erection, and management of the County
Lunatic Asylum at Hanwell,*

THE Committee of Visitors of the County Pauper Lunatic Asylum beg to report, that on the 17th of September last they had the honour of an interview with Secretary Sir George Grey on the subject of the new Asylum. On that occasion, they enlarged on the several reasons which had been briefly stated in the Special Report presented to the Court on the 28th of last May. They urged upon Sir George Grey the importance of building it in the neighbourhood of the present Asylum, not only on account of the great saving in the cost of erection, and the annual expenditure, which they were bound to urge in justice to the ratepayers, but upon considerations of a far higher nature as respected the patients. To all the reasons urged by the Committee, speaking as they did in the name and with the authority of the Court, Sir George Grey listened with the greatest attention, and gave them his assur-

ance on their leaving him, that he would not decide without due deliberation, and, moreover, promised to transmit a document which he had received in July last from the Commissioners in reply to the former observations of the Committee ; and to which he invited their attention, and any remarks they might think it proper to make thereon. This document (hereto appended, marked B.) was accordingly transmitted by him to the Committee on the following day, accompanied by the annexed letter (marked A) dated the 18th September, from which the Committee perceived with surprise and disappointment that Sir George Grey appeared inclined to a conclusion more favourable to the views of the Commissioners in Lunacy than from the interview the Committee had been led to expect.

After a deliberate consideration of this communication from the Home Office, and the wish expressed by Sir George Grey that the magistrates would feel it right to accede to the recommendation of the Commissioners in Lunacy, the Committee of Visitors thought it would no longer be expedient hopelessly to persevere in endeavouring to carry out the measures proposed, and they have accordingly notified to the Secretary of State the decision at which they have, with great regret arrived.

In intimating this decision to the Court, the Committee desire to state distinctly that their views, as to building the new Asylum in the neighbourhood of the present, remain unchanged. They had conceived that the reasons which they formerly assigned for their preference afforded proofs so strong and accumulative of the superiority of Hanwell over any other place that could be chosen, that want of accurate

information and experience could alone account for the opposition which has been offered to the measures proposed by them. The Commissioners in Lunacy, it appears, are not to be so convinced, but have recommended the Secretary of State not to yield to the recorded wishes of the Court deliberately expressed on several occasions. Under these circumstances the Committee of Visitors have felt reluctant longer to deprive the pauper Lunatics of the County of the benefits of another public Asylum ; and having, therefore, yielded to the authority of the law, they submit this communication to the Court, awaiting their further suggestions.

CHARLES AUGUSTUS TULK, *Chairman.*

Hanwell, Oct. 20, 1846.

(APPENDIX A.)

Whitehall, 18th September, 1846.

GENTLEMEN,

I am directed by Secretary Sir George Grey to inform you, that having referred to the Commissioners in Lunacy your observations, dated the 21st May last, on their Report, he has received from them a letter in reply, of which a copy is herewith enclosed.

The reasons urged by the Commissioners in Lunacy in support of their views, appear to Sir George Grey to have much force; and he especially attaches importance to the fact stated at the close of the letter as to the objections entertained by Drs. Conolly and Begley to the erection of another Asylum near to the existing one at Hanwell. Sir George Grey would therefore be happy to find that, on reconsideration, the magistrates had felt it right to accede to the recommendation of the Commissioners.

With reference to the legal objection stated by you in your observations to the nomination of two Committees of Visitors, Sir George Grey desires me to state, that by the recent Act 9 & 10 Vict. c. 84, s. 7, an alteration in the law has been made, by which this objection is removed.

I have the honour to be,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

WM. M. SOMERVILLE.

The Visiting Justices of the Lunatic Asylum
for the county of Middlesex.

(APPENDIX B.)

HANWELL ASYLUM.

*Office of Commissioners in Lunacy,
19, New Street, Spring Gardens, 15th July, 1846.*

We, the Commissioners in Lunacy, beg to state that we have read the observations of the Visiting Justices of the Hanwell Asylum (and which purport to bear date the 21st day of May last), on the Report made by us (on the 26th February last) relative to the proposal to build an additional Asylum for the county of Middlesex at Hanwell.

The propositions contained in our Report (to which it may be convenient to refer) are substantially as follows, viz.—

1. That the site ought to be equally convenient for all the ratepayers of the county—that Hanwell is at an inconvenient distance from the eastern division of the county, containing the main part of the population, and that in its present state it is sufficiently large to contain all the Lunatics of the western division in which it is situate.

2. That the early removal of Lunatics to an Asylum is indispensable to their cure, and that no unnecessary impediments (such as a want of proximity of situation) should exist to retard their removal.

3. That the Hanwell Asylum, according to the best medical authorities (including that of the visiting physician of Hanwell himself) is already too large for a Curative Asylum, which should not comprehend more than from 200 to 300 patients; and that it is better that a separate establishment should be erected in the eastern part of the county (at a convenient distance from London, but as near as may be to the mass of the population therein) and placed under other medical officers and visitors. And further, that a Chronic Asylum (when it shall become necessary) should be erected in the eastern division of the county at a moderate expense, in order to receive Chronic Lunatics (pursuant to the Act 8 & 9 Vict. c. 126, s. 27), when the principal or Curative Asylum shall have become insufficient to accommodate those Lunatics who may be curable or dangerous.

4. That the expense (£85,000) appeared to us to be too great for the objects proposed to be accomplished by the New Asylum.

A copy of the Report comprising these propositions was transmitted to the Visiting Justices, accompanied by a letter, stating that “the Commissioners in giving their opinion that, as a general rule, there should be a separation of the harmless and incurable cases from those which are curable and dangerous, were not desirous that the discretion of the medical officer should be so limited as to prevent him from making a judicious selection of chronic patients, for the purpose of associating them with the recent and curable cases.”

To this Report the Visiting Justices have replied at great length. We have read these replies carefully, and have given them all the consideration due to them ; but we cannot discover any sufficient reason for inducing us to depart from the opinions expressed in our former Report.

There can be no doubt, we apprehend, that the parishes constituting the eastern (and by far the most populous) division of the county of Middlesex, are entitled to have their convenience consulted in the erection of an Asylum for which they are to be rated : the more especially as they have at present no Asylum, and as there is already an extensive and costly Asylum in the western division, to the expense of which the eastern parishes have been compelled largely to contribute. That the expense and trouble of conveying patients from the eastern division of the county to Hanwell (which lies towards the extremity of the western part), must be greater than if the Asylum were near at hand ; that such expense and trouble will materially interfere with, and will sometimes altogether, prevent the removal of patients to a place of cure ; and that it will in many cases, deprive a poor Lunatic of the visits of his friends and relatives, appear to us to be almost self-evident. What precise difficulties there may be in obtaining land nearer to the eastern parishes, at a reasonable cost, we cannot undertake to say, but we have reason to believe that they are by no means insuperable. And whatever facilities may exist for conveying patients to Hanwell from the terminus of the Great Western Railway (an argument urged by the Justices) will be more than compensated if an Asylum be erected nearer to the eastern parishes than the terminus itself.

The preliminary objection that has been taken by us, is simply to the locality or situation of the proposed Asylum, and upon this point it appears to us unnecessary to make any further comment or answer.

We cannot conclude, however, without adverting to a fact (which has lately come to our knowledge), namely, that the question of affording additional accommodation for the pauper Lunatics of the county of Middlesex, was referred to Doctors Conolly, Begley, and Davey ; and they were unanimously of opinion, that an enlargement of the present Asylum for this purpose would be objectionable. Doctors Conolly and Begley

further report, that to build another Asylum close to the existing one at Hanwell, would be attended with many inconveniences; and Doctor Begley entirely concurs with us in thinking, that for the purpose of accommodating the Pauper Lunatics of the county, a situation at a distance from Hanwell would be preferable to one in its immediate vicinity.

(Signed) SEYMOUR,

Chairman, pro temp.

The Rt. Hon. Sir George Grey, Bart., M.P.

&c. &c. &c.

Middlesex.

TO HER MAJESTY'S JUSTICES OF THE PEACE
FOR THE COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX IN QUARTER SESSION
ASSEMBLED.

THE TWENTY-SEVENTH REPORT of Messrs.
ALLEN, of Carlisle-street, Soho-square, Attor-
nies at Law.

MESSRS. ALLEN have to Report that since the County-day of the last Quarter Session, they have, in consequence of notices given to the Clerk of the Peace and to them, attended at the Metropolitan Police Courts—at Petty Sessions—and on parish officers, in 15 cases of pauper lunatics, in all of which cases the magistrates decided that the paupers were chargeable to the county, and made orders accordingly. These paupers, with the exception of 4 of them, were natives of Ireland, Scotland or America.

Messrs. Allen have also traced out the settlements of 2 prisoners confined in the House of Correction at Westminster, who were about to be removed under warrants of Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Home Department, to the County Lunatic Asylum—and they have been required to

interfere and correspond in 3 other cases, with the view of protecting the interests of the county.

The expences incurred in the 20 cases amount to the sum of £47 2s.

All which Messrs. Allen submit, &c.

C. & J. ALLEN.

22nd October, 1846.

interests and correspond in 3 other cases, with the view of
protecting the interests of the county.

The expenses incurred in the 20 cases amount to the sum
of £17 2s.

All which I beg to certify as correct.

G. S. J. ALLEN.

22nd October, 1848.

COMMITTEE OF VISITORS

of the

County of Kent

to the

General Assembly of the

County of Kent

at the

County of Kent

at the

County of Kent

at the

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