

## **Report of the Committee of Visitors for 1848 / Littlemore Asylum.**

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LITTLEMORE ASYLUM.

REPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE OF VISITORS

FOR

1848.





# LITTLEMORE ASYLUM.

*[comprising an union of the Counties of Oxford and Berks, the City of Oxford, and the Boroughs of Abingdon and Reading, for the maintenance of their Pauper Lunatics.]*

At the Monthly Meeting of the Committee of Visitors of the PAUPER LUNATIC ASYLUM at LITTLEMORE, OXFORDSHIRE, held at the Asylum on Wednesday the 27th day of December 1848

## PRESENT

JOSEPH WARNER HENLEY Esquire, M.P. Chairman,

GEORGE GRANVILLE HARCOURT Esquire M.P.

The Reverend PHILIP WYNTER D.D.

The Reverend RICHARD HARINGTON D.D.

HUGH HAMERSLEY Esquire

EDMUND CURRIE Esquire

JOSEPH ARNOULD Esquire M.D.

The MAYOR of OXFORD (WILLIAM THORP Esquire,) and

THOMAS MALLAM Esquire ;

The Committee agreed to the following

## REPORT

to be presented respectively to the ensuing Courts of Quarter Sessions of the Counties of Oxford and Berks, to the next Meetings of the Councils of the City of Oxford and Borough of



Reading, and to the ensuing Quarter Sessions of the Borough of Abingdon.

The variations in the constitution of the Asylum, and the additions made to the Establishment since the commencement of the year 1848, may be thus succinctly stated: An Agreement for uniting the Borough of Reading was completed in April last; thus effecting the entire junction of the two Counties of Oxford and Berks and the several Corporate Places within them. And the additions to the Asylum consist in a Residence for the Chaplain, and the building of a new Wing at either end of the original House for the reception of the Berkshire Patients; also the enlargement of the Chapel, Kitchen and Laundry respectively, and additional Fittings and appointments in the two latter Offices; also Rooms for the Head Laundress; and the building of a large Oven in a Room adjacent to the Kitchen. And, in addition to these Works, it is in contemplation to build a Pantry in a recess at the back of the Kitchen; to inclose for a Drying Yard a space of Ground about a hundred feet deep behind the Wash-house; and to build some Workshops for Artificers, to be turned to the account of the Asylum; and also to build the Pigsties on a new spot,—it being necessary to take down the present ones in inclosing the Drying Yard.

The Chaplain's Residence is a detached House, on a piece of Land of an acre and a quarter, adjoining the Grounds of the Asylum, and was purchased by the Committee for the purpose;



and it has cost, with the improvements and inclusive of the Land, (about four fifths of which is added to the Grounds of the Asylum,) the sum of £1057. Then the sum paid since the beginning of this year in respect of the other new Buildings and Works has amounted to £7865 2s. 2d. There has been expended up to this time in building and furnishing the Asylum the sum of £38,208 2s. 2d. [exclusive, of course, of interest on the money borrowed.]

The several Bodies in union have this year repaid a thirtieth annual Quota of the Capital expenditure.

In the month of February last certain disclosures were made with respect to the Architects, the Clerk of the Works, and the Builders of the new South or Female Wing; which (after consulting a disinterested Architect from London,) resulted in the retirement of the Architects, and the dismissal of the Clerk of the Works. And, the Builders having been suspended till the appointment of a new Architect, the Works were resumed under the same Contract and have ever since been conducted satisfactorily. This Inquiry too, led to information of imperfect Work in portions of the original Buildings by the same Parties as Contractors, whose behaviour was now being impugned in their character of Architects of the new Buildings. And the dispute thus occasioned is still unsettled: Whilst the propriety of the Architects' Bill of Charges for Business up to the time of their retirement, is about to be referred to arbitration.



The total number of Patients now in the Asylum is 234 (namely, 117 Males and 117 Females.)

The number admitted since the commencement of this year has been 159\* (of which number 88 were Males and 71 were Females.)

And during the present year 7 Males and 21 Females have been discharged cured, and 18 Males and 12 Females have died. The age of the oldest of the deceased Persons was 79, and the youngest 18 years; and the average age of the whole was 46 years.

The weekly charge for the maintenance of Patients has hitherto been 11s.; but it is about to be reduced to 10s. from the 1st of January 1849.

The Asylum was visited so recently as on the 22nd instant by two of the Metropolitan Commissioners in Lunacy (MR. MYLNE and DR. TURNER;) and we extract the following from the Minutes they recorded on the occasion:

“The Patients were, with very few exceptions, in a composed and comfortable state.—No one was under instrumental coercion or in seclusion; and the former

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\* Namely—

Oxfordshire Patients .. .. .	54
Berkshire ditto .. .. .	86
Oxford City ditto .. .. .	9
Abingdon ditto .. .. .	5
Reading ditto .. .. .	4
And one Out-County Patient (Bucks) ..	1
	<hr/>
	159



“ appears to be never, the latter to be sparingly used. The condition of the House is at present not unhealthy ; although a considerable number of the Patients are suffering under ailments of long standing, or otherwise in a feeble state of body and are therefore placed in the Infirmarys. The Medical Officer informs us also that many of the Patients when received are labouring under Fever, Consumption, &c. ; or that other severe bodily disease accompanies the mental disorder and frequently proves fatal.

“ Since the visit of the Commissioners not quite a year ago, 156 new Patients have been admitted, of whom upwards of 50 were Berkshire Patients transferred from Private Asylums. During the same period 26 Patients have been discharged recovered ; one is now out with friends on trial, and 29 have died. The more prominent causes of death have been in these cases Phthisis, Disease of the Brain, and Heart-disease.

“ As many as one half of the Patients of each Sex are pretty regularly employed in various occupations suited to their strength and previous habits ;—the Males chiefly in gardening and field-labour ;—the Females in household-work and at their needle.

“ The clothing and bedding of the Patients are clean, warm, and in all respects good.



“ The different galleries and sleeping rooms are well aired, clean and perfectly sweet; and they are also comfortably warm. Several of the Galleries and one of the Dormitories (in which not less than forty-two beds are now placed) are at present very inconveniently crowded. It is to be hoped that the new Buildings, which we have seen and which are now nearly ready for occupation, will relieve this pressure and enable the Superintendent to dispense with the use of the Galleries as Dormitories.

“ No change has recently been made in the Dietary. The quality of the provisions (which we have examined) is very good, and the allowance seems to be ample; and upon that point we heard no complaint.

“ Altogether the Asylum is in a very satisfactory and creditable condition.”

To this testimony of the Commissioners the Visitors feel it to be due to add that the management and conduct of the several Officers, Attendants, and Servants of the Establishment have been entirely satisfactory; and that, owing to the attention bestowed, the Patients have not suffered inconvenience from the fact of building works being for many months in hand on three sides of the House.

The Annual Report of the Chaplain is appended to this.

On behalf of the Committee of Visitors.

J. W. HENLEY, Chairman.

*Littlemore, December 27th 1848.*

## APPENDIX.

*To the Committee of Visitors of the Littlemore Asylum.*

GENTLEMEN,

During the past year I have continued to discharge the duties which have been described by me in my former Reports.—In addition to the performance of the Sunday and Weekday Services, I have visited the wards daily, and I find as a general thing, that the Patients like to see me among them, the greater part of them always treating me with affectionate respect.—In conversing with them, I always avoid saying anything likely to excite; endeavouring to promote cheerful conversation, occasionally giving it a religious turn.

There are at present in the Asylum, 234 Patients, (117 Males and 117 Females). Out of this number about 50 or 60 Males, and 70 or 80 Females are in the habit of attending Chapel when sufficiently well.

The Patients attend the Services with such regularity, and are so well conducted during the time they are present, that the Chapel affords the delightful sight of an attentive, worshipping congregation.

It is of very rare occurrence that any interruption of the Service takes place, except now and then occasioned by the removal of the epileptic patients in fits, and then they are removed so quickly, and quietly, as scarcely to cause any disturbance.

I entertain no doubt that very many of the Patients join with unfeigned sincerity in the Church Prayers; and the observations which are very frequently made by them to me in the week, prove that they listen to the Prayers and Sermon, with serious attention, as well as with profit.

With reference to my addresses to them, I may remark, that my Sermons rarely exceed a quarter of an hour in length, and they are such



as I should preach to an ordinary village congregation, only carefully avoiding, as far as possible, the use of any expression which might be calculated to excite my hearers.

The Chapel was closed for two months during the Summer, in order to be enlarged for the accommodation of the additional number of Patients, consequent on the union of the two Counties, and I could only have Prayers in the Male and Female Wards respectively, on Sundays. And it affords me much pleasure to be able to say, how frequent were the inquiries made by the Patients, as to the time of the Chapel being again opened; stating, as many of them did, how much they missed going to Chapel every morning.

It is a melancholy reflection to think, that out of the number of those who attend the Services, how few, in all probability, will ever again have their reasoning faculties restored; but still I trust that their constant attendance at the Sunday Services and daily Prayers, will be productive of an eternal benefit to them; so that my ministry among these my afflicted fellow-creatures may not be altogether in vain.

The reading classes which I have established, most certainly have been of benefit to those who felt disposed to join them; as many who at first were but imperfect readers, have improved after a few times.

During the year I have not been prohibited by the Superintendent from conversing with any of the Patients, but have had access to every part of the Asylum, and to every Patient to whom there was any prospect of my being able to afford spiritual consolation.

As an Officer of the Establishment, I feel it a pleasing duty to be able to state, that so far as I have been capable of observing, the Attendants and Servants have conducted themselves in a very satis-

factory manner, treating those patients entrusted to their care with great kindness.

The several Patients who have been discharged as cured, were all very attentive to their religious duties, being regular in their attendance at Chapel, except when prevented by occasional indisposition; and no doubt the habit formed of thus attending Divine Service regularly, has tended very materially to the recovery of their lost reason, and (I most heartily pray,) may prove a blessing to them through life, and be the means of their obtaining eternal life in the World to come.

I have the honor to remain,

Gentlemen,

Your most obedient Servant,

EDWIN W. R. PULLING,

*Littlemore, December 27, 1848.*

Chaplain.

*Oxfordshire Epiphany Quarter Sessions 1849. Resolved that the REPORT of the Committee of Visitors of the LITTLEMORE ASYLUM be printed and circulated.*

*County Hall,  
1st January 1849.*



