

SANITARY CONDITIONS AND INFECTIOUS DISEASE IN BASINGSTOKE PARISHES, 1866

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Minutes of 12 September 1866

District No. 2

Church Oakley, Dean, Steventon, North Waltham, Popham, Woodmancut, Dummer, Preston Candover, Bradley, Nutley and Kempshott.

In giving a report of the sanitary conditions of the No. 2 District, I have given a short notice of each Parish and I have made certain remarks concerning the conditions of each which relate to matters which may have very great influence on the future sanitary state of the entire district. It will be seen from this report that the No.2 District is at the present time very free from disease and this has also been the case during the past year. I believe however that this immunity from diseases especially of the epidemic class, such as Diarrhoea, Fever, and the like must in no way be attributed to anything inherently good in the state of the parishes themselves but rather to the fact of their being considerably isolated from and holding little or no intercourse with the great centres of disease. In many parts of the No.2 District matters are in such a state that in the event of the infestation either of cholera or fever we may expect a rapid and fatal course especially of the former disease. I make this statement on these grounds. The overcrowded state of most of the houses, the bad accommodations as regards Privies, numbers of families using the same, and these mostly in a wretched condition. The close contiguity of these Privies to the Houses, and to wells from which water is obtained, and again to the very defective state of the surface drainage which in numberless instances allows of free interchanges of refuse water etc. etc. between the houses.

Church Oakley. Has been very healthy during the past year, there is almost always a good deal of strenuous disease here much aggravated I believe by the bad conditions and unhealthy situation of many of the houses together with their overcrowded state in many. There is serious deficiency of light and the ventilation is bad; many of the cottages are damp and the sleeping rooms on the ground floor. The water supply is good. The privies are in many instances in bad condition and much too near the houses.

Dean. This parish is generally healthy. The cottages are mostly good, in some instances overcrowded. Privies in many instances in bad condition and too near the houses.

Steventon. All the Cottages here are good with plenty of area in the bedrooms. The supply of water is tolerably good. The wells are in many cases too near the privies, and these latter too near the houses. In many cases there are heaps of vegetables and other refuse matter in a state of decomposition close to the backs or sides of the houses. This ought to be remedied at once. This parish is healthy now no Diarrhoea. Near some of the cottages are pigs in a very dirty state.

North Waltham. This parish is very healthy at the present time (no diarrhoea etc.). There is frequently a great deal of intractable illness here. The houses are mostly in very bad condition and damp and cold and often overcrowded. The privies are in a wretched condition almost close to the houses, and there are quantities of refuse matter near the cottages in all stages of decomposition. The water

supply is tolerably good. In many instances there are pigs kept in this parish in a dirty state giving off very offensive effluvia.

Popham. This parish is healthy at present, formerly there was a good deal of intractable diarrhoea here, dependent I believe on the impurity of the water, the only source of supply being from the pond. A well was opened at my suggestion by the late Lord Ashburton and since then there has been no Diarrhoea. I again find that the people are compelled to drink the pond water there being no rope to the well bucket, this ought to be remedied at once. The houses are tolerably good here, privies bad. At Popham Barracks the houses are badly situated in a bottom, the privies are bad and close to the houses. Diarrhoea and fever have prevailed here at times.

Woodmancut. Healthy at present time. Houses fairly good. Privies too near.

Dummer. This parish is healthy now. No Diarrhoea. There has occasionally been severe cases of Diarrhoea here, and last year almost like Cholera. I believe the water is good in the wells which supply the parish. The houses are in many cases too small and overcrowded; privies too near the houses, and in many cases in a bad condition. There is a privy at the back of Lambdens House in Dummer close to the back wall, it is quite open and very offensive. There are often severe cases of Diarrhoea in this house.

Preston Candover. Very healthy at present and has been so during past two years. Many of the cottages are in very bad condition almost without light in some bedrooms; in many cases very overcrowded. Some years since typhoid fever was very fatal in some cottages at Axford, these cottages are still very cold and damp with bedrooms on ground floor. The privies are few in very bad condition and in many cases close to the houses.

Nutley. Healthy just now. Often diarrhoea and fever in some cottages, at lower end of parish adjoining Axford, many of the privies are in bad condition and close to the cottages, too many persons use the same. Close to many of the houses are heaps of decomposing refuse, vegetable and other matter. In many cases the cottages are very much out of repair and overcrowded, some steps ought to be taken at once to remedy the present condition of the cottages I have mentioned above. At the six cottages close to Axford the space behind is very small and consequently dirty. I believe the Rector of the parish would give a portion of ground behind so as to allow the spaces to be increased; another privy may then be put up.

Bradley. Always extremely healthy.

Kempshott. Generally healthy. There are only three or four cottages here.

I have not taken pains to point out every particular nuisance in the No 2 District as I believe this will be done by the regular Inspector. I trust however I have written enough to show how little the No.2 District is prepared to meet the advent of Diarrhoea or Cholera with any hope of staying their progress, and hence how necessary it is at this time that immediate steps should be taken to remedy as far as possible existing evils.

The bad condition of the privies ought to be at once remedied, and in many cases they ought to be removed as far as possible from the cottages and at as great distance as possible from the wells. All refuse matter should be removed as far as possible from the houses, and the drains near the houses looked to and where possible disinfected. Overcrowding should be prevented and too many persons

ought not to use the same privies. In cases of severe diarrhoea or cholera persons ought to be directed to mix the evacuations immediately after being passed with chloride of lime, wood ashes or anything which may be at hand at the time and then to bury them at a distance from any dwelling and cover them well with earth as dry as possible; all refuse water in which linen soiled by the cholera patients has been washed ought to be mixed with some disinfecting fluid and also buried.

Rob't Bray Sweeting

14th August 1866