

VICTORIAN BRITAIN

A Caring Nation?

Did the treatment of the poor improve after the 1834 Poor Law?





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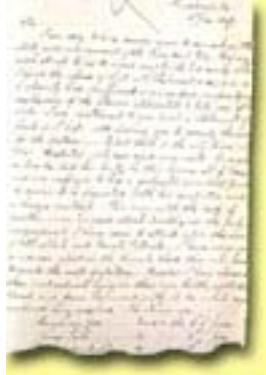
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Source 1:
**Huddersfield
workhouse
report**

More than 6,000,000 people visited the Great Exhibition in 1851. But what about the people who did not come? Among those who did not visit would have been poor people without means to support themselves. Had life improved for them since the introduction of the Poor law of 1834?

Before 1834 there was no one way of providing help for the poor. The local parish could build a workhouse if it wanted to and make the poor work for their keep. The parish could decide to give the poor money when they needed it.



Source 2:
**Huddersfield
workhouse letter**



Source 3:
**Huddersfield
workhouse
diet**

Some used the Speenhamland System; this linked the amount of money handed out to the price of bread and the number of people in the family. But in 1834 all the different methods of helping the poor were abolished and replaced by a new one, the New Poor Law.

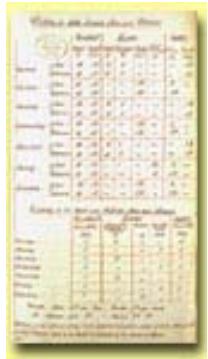
The New Poor Law was introduced by the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, which was based upon a report published in 1832. This report had been written by Edwin Chadwick. He wanted the poor to be helped to support themselves. He wanted children to be educated and taught a trade, but many of his ideas were forgotten when the Act was put into force.



Source 4:
**Huddersfield
workhouse, 1848**

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The Poor Law Amendment Act set up the Poor Law Commission in London, which was responsible for the organisation of Poor Relief throughout England and Wales. Parishes were grouped into 'Unions' and each Union had to build a workhouse.

Plans for the construction of Workhouses were provided by the Commission, which also sent out rules and regulations. Unions were told how Workhouses were to be run and how paupers, the term used for people who entered the Workhouse, were to be treated.

Source 5:
Reigate
workhouse
diet



After 1834, anybody who wanted help had to go into the Workhouse. Outdoor relief, giving money to people living in their own homes, was banned, unless the people were old or sick. In the Workhouse, the conditions were to be worse than anything that people might find outside; this was the idea of 'less eligibility'.

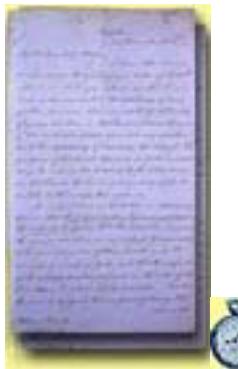
Source 7:
Reigate
workhouse
report

To make sure that Unions kept to the regulations, the Commission sent inspectors to every Workhouse at least once a year. These inspectors were called Assistant Commissioners. They wrote reports on all the Workhouses and sent them to the Commission in London.

The New Poor Law was supposed to be more efficient, but did the care of the poor really improve after the Poor Law Amendment Act?



Source 6:
Helping the poor
in Reigate



Source 8:
Poor Law letter



Edwin Chadwick

Edwin Chadwick was the man behind the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834. He wanted to create a new system of poor relief, where people were trained to help themselves. He believed that the existing systems encouraged laziness by simply handing out money every week.

Chadwick intended that workhouses should offer education and training for young and old, but unfortunately his aims were misunderstood by many people, including some assistant Poor Law Commissioners; these were the men who were given the task of inspecting workhouses and making sure that they obeyed the regulations. They often believed that the main aim of the New Poor Law was simply to save money and punish the poor. Consequently, there were many examples of early workhouses being run as cheaply as possible. The result was that the poor were very badly treated. The most famous example of this was the Andover Scandal of 1846 where inmates fought over bones and gristle.

It was the fact that many of the poor in workhouses were so unhealthy, that encouraged Chadwick to investigate the public health in towns. This led him to publish his report in 1842.

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This is a statement given by a 13 yr old boy to a commission about child workers which includes information about Halifax workhouse. It illustrates the role of the workhouse in a young orphan's life.

HALIFAX UNION HOUSE.

No. 64. *William Hollingsworth*, aged 13. June 9 :

I have no father or mother; my father was a shoemaker and has been dead five years, and my mother eleven; I lived with my sister at Crossfield six months after and rather better, and then went to the old workhouse; I was then apprenticed by the overseers of the parish of Halifax to Joseph Morton, the brickmaker, in the township of Southowram, where I remained two years, when he died, and I came here for a little while. Jonathan Oldfield, a collier, living at Bradshaw-lane, made application to the Board of Guardians for an apprentice; I was willing to work for him or anybody else, and went with him by consent of the Board on trial for a month; if I had remained with him I should have been bound until I was 21; I stayed with him five days; he gave me porridge for breakfast at half-past five, and then I went with his other *two* apprentices, with whom I slept, to the pit; each of us took a cake and a half for our dinners; we had no time to stop to eat it, but took it as we hurried; the first night I worked in the pit, which was last Thursday [the 3rd inst.], we remained until ten o'clock at night, and then all three came away together; the second night [Friday] we stopped until nine, third night until half-past eight, and on the Monday until a quarter to eight; we had nothing during the whole of those days but the cake and half each, and nothing to drink; there was no water that we could get in the pit's bottom, and they would not allow us to go up to drink; I was very thirsty at times; my master never beat me, but he cursed enough at me because I was not sharp enough with the corves. I hurried without shoes one day, but was obliged to put them on again because the ground hurt my feet; the other apprentices told me that they worked until 10 and 11 o'clock at night regular. It was Mr. Joseph Stocks's Royd Pit that I worked in; I ran away from him Tuesday [yesterday] morning because he worked me so late; I was so tired when I got home to his house that I did not think I could stand it; after I left him I made application to come into the workhouse again; I would rather work if I had a good master; I have been to day-school and Sunday-school, and can read and write very well; I heard my master say last Sunday to another man who looks after his cow, that the four getters and three hurriers that he employs earns every day 14s.; one of his apprentices is a getter, the other is a hurrier; besides them he has three other getters.

(Signed)

WILLIAM HOLLINGSWORTH.

I have heard the foregoing evidence of William Hollingsworth read over, and from my knowledge of the lad believe it to be strictly true.

(Signed)

W. DYER,

Master of Union House.



Source 1

Task

- 1a** Why did the Overseers make this report?
- 1b** What did the Overseers find was wrong with the Workhouse?
- 1c** Why do you think conditions like this existed?



Source 1

This is the report of the Overseers of Huddersfield in May 1847, after they received a letter from Thomas Tatham, the Medical Officer for the northern district of Huddersfield.

HUDDERSFIELD WORKHOUSE ABOMINATIONS.—ANDOVER IN THE SHADE.

Medical relief and general treatment of the sick poor.—To the ratepayers of the township of Huddersfield.—The undersigned, being overseers of the poor, having had it in charge by the ratepayers in vestry assembled, to institute a searching inquiry into the manner in which the sick poor are, and have been, treated in the Huddersfield workhouse, and having ascertained that charges have been duly made to the poor-law authorities, which in cruelty and disgrace surpass even the facts that earned for Andover such an unenviable notoriety; and having, moreover, learned the facts connected with the question of medical relief for the township, as exemplified in the extremely hard case of Mr. T. R. Tatham, who for the last four years has been fighting the battle of the poor against niggardliness and parsimony, and standing up for the true interest of the ratepayers against real extravagance and shortsightedness, deem it incumbent on them to call the ratepayers together, in open vestry, that the facts of the whole case may be made known, and such steps taken as may be deemed most fitting to wipe away the disgrace that will otherwise indelibly attach to the township.

OVERSEERS' REPORT.

The overseers of the poor of the township of Huddersfield, having received it in instruction from a vestry meeting of the township (assembled on the 23rd day of March last, to nominate fit and proper persons to fill the said office of overseers), to institute an inquiry into certain allegations then and there made, as to the general treatment the sick poor had received in the Huddersfield workhouse, beg to say that they have complied with the request contained in the resolution of the said vestry meeting, and have thereupon to report as follows:—

The overseers have had before them the medical officer of the northern division of the township, (in which district the workhouse is situate), and also several of the parties who have acted as nurses to the sick poor, both in the workhouse and in the temporary fever hospital. They have also made it their business to prosecute certain inquiries at the workhouse itself: and the result of all is, that they are forced to the conclusion that the sick poor have been most shamefully neglected; that they have been and still are devoid of the necessary articles of clothing and bedding; that they have been suffered to remain for weeks at a time in the most filthy and disgusting state; that patients have been allowed to remain *for nine weeks together* without a change of linen or of bed clothing; that beds in which patients suffering in typhus have died, one after another, have been again and again and repeatedly used for fresh patients, without any change or attempt at purification; that the said beds were only bags of straw and shavings, for the most part laid on the floor, and that the whole swarmed with lice; that two patients suffering in infectious fever, were almost constantly put together in one bed; that it not unfrequently happened that one would be ragingly delirious, when the other was dying; and that it is a fact that a living patient has occupied the same bed with a corpse for a considerable period after death; that the patients have been for months together without properly appointed nurses to attend to them; that there has been for a considerable time none but male paupers to attend on female patients; that when the ~~poor~~ sick creatures were laid in the most abject and helpless state—so debilitated as to pass their dejections as they lay, they have been suffered to remain in the most besmirched state possible, besmeared in their own excrement, for days together, and not even washed; that the necessary stimulants ordered by the medical officer have been withheld; that when patients' lives even depended on the free administration of wine, the fever hospital has been left without for more than forty-eight hours at a time; that death occurred amongst the patients from which such stimulant was withheld, which the medical officer attributes to this very cause; that the party whose duty it was to have provided such wine, was repeatedly applied to for it, both by the nurses at the hospital and the medical officer.

(PRO ref: MH12/15070)



Source 2

Task

2a Why did Thomas Tatham write the letter?

2b List all the things that he claimed were wrong with the Huddersfield Workhouse?

2c Was Thomas Tatham qualified to make comments on the workhouse?

Look back at source 1

2d Is Thomas Tatham complaining about the same things that were mentioned in the Overseers' Report?

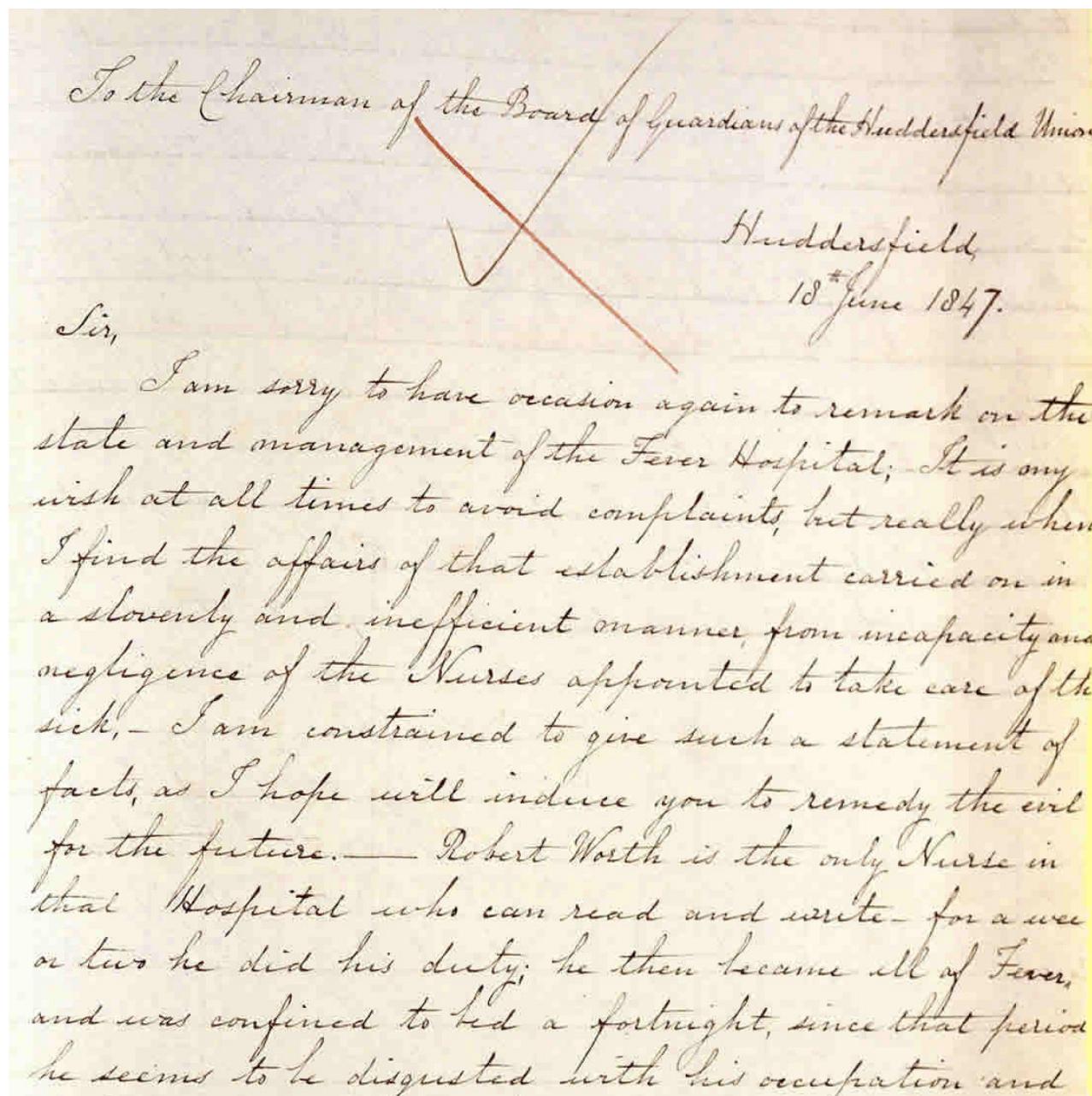
2e Had the conditions in the workhouse improved after the Overseers' Report in May 1847?

Look back at source 1

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Source 2

This is another letter, which was sent in June 1847 by Thomas Tatham to the Chairman of the Board of Guardians in Huddersfield. Thomas Tatham was the Medical Officer for the north of Huddersfield who had already complained about the workhouse a number of times.



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is become reckless. This man with the help of another man, named Mark Bradley, are the only individuals I have seen to attend upon the want of both Male and Female Patients, — I have never seen a woman assist in the Female Wards those who have to make the calls of Nature. — Besides I have observed three individuals lying in their own Filth, with the hands and faces smeared with it too whole days without being washed. The Names are

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Benjamin Farr | Died on the 6 th of June |
| James Till | - 15 th June |
| Bridget Mac Loughlin | - 18 th June |

The regular administration of Medicine prescribed

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T ^{to those}
and ~~those~~ and attention, Patients who are too weak
to feed or help themselves are very much neglected.
I will here remark that, when a Patient arrives at
a certain state of weakness and debility, as much
depends upon good nursing as Medicine. It therefore
becomes extremely painful to me as Medical Officer to
find my efforts frustrated by the omission of other
adjutants I have had so much experience in the early
and present period of my Professional career as Medical
Officer to Parish Hospitals as to be fully convinced of the
utter worthlessness of Pauper Nurses, unless superintended
and controlled by a proper paid Nurse.
Hoping that due attention will be paid to these remarks

I am Sir

Yours obedient Servant
Thomas Robt Tatlam.



Source 3

Task

3a How many inmates were in the workhouse?

3b Choose one day and work out what food was consumed in the workhouse?

3c Were the inmates of the workhouse getting a healthy diet? What was wrong with the diet?

Are there any signs that the matron realised that the diet was not good enough?

Look back at sources 1 and 2 and think about what you have learnt from source 3.

3d Do these sources suggest that the Overseers had made a serious attempt to reform the workhouse after Thomas Tatham's letters?

3e If you were in charge of the workhouse, what changes would you make to improve the conditions?

Source 4

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Source 3

This is the dietary for the Huddersfield Workhouse. This was the list of meals that were supplied to the inmates of the workhouse.

| Day | T Week's Dietary for 150 Inmates.— Huddersfield Workhouse, April 24th, 1848. | | |
|-----------|---|--|---|
| | Breakfast | Dinner | Supper |
| Sunday | 6 lbs of Flour & Oatmeal boiled in 6½ gallons Old Milk. 7 lbs Wheaten Bread each | 24 lbs Rice boiled—served with Sauce sweetened with Treacle, seasoned with Sweet Pepper—5 lbs Turnips for sauce | 4½ lbs Flour boiled with 6½ gallons Old Milk—No Bread. |
| Monday | 4½ lbs of Flour boiled with 6½ gallons Old Milk. No Bread | Four Sillings Worth Ounces of Beef, or leg of Ox allowed with 12 lbs Potatoes. Three Pints Gravy served out with ¼ of an Oaten Cake. | 6 lbs of Flour & Oatmeal boiled in 6½ gallons Old Milk. Half an Oaten Cake. |
| Tuesday | 3½ lbs Oatmeal boiled in 6½ gallons Old Milk. | 4½ lbs Oatmeal boiled into Porridge served with 20 gds Butterworth 22 " Oldmilk | 6 lbs Flour & Oatmeal boiled in 6½ gallons Old Milk. Half an Oaten Cake. |
| Wednesday | 4½ lbs Flour boiled with 6½ gal. lbs Old Milk—No Bread. | 2½ lbs Beef & 2½ lbs Bacon, boiled. 1½ lbs Potatoes, served with quarter of an Oaten Cake. | 6 lbs Flour & Oatmeal boiled in 6½ gallons Old Milk. Half an Oaten Cake. |
| Thursday | 4½ lbs Flour boiled with 6½ gallons Old Milk. No Bread | 5 Stone Flour & 5 lbs Sugar, made into Pudding. 6 lbs Flour & Four lbs Sugar used for sauce | 4½ lbs Flour boiled with six gallons Old Milk. No Bread. |
| Friday | 4½ lbs Flour boiled with 6½ gallons Old Milk. No Bread | 1½ gallons Milk served with Half of an Oaten Cake. | 6 lbs Flour & Oatmeal boiled in 6½ gallons Old Milk. Half an Oaten Cake. |
| Saturday | 4½ lbs Flour boiled with 6½ gallons Old Milk. No Bread | 19 lbs Beef, 2½ lbs Bacon, 1½ lbs Potatoes. | 3½ lbs Oatmeal boiled in seven gallons Milk. |

*The Matron, when she detailed what the Dietary had been, said that she could not find time to make soup with so little fat, and the fact that week used 6½ worth instead of 4½." The Old Women have a quarter of a Pound of Sugar, and half an Oz of Tea allowed for a week's consumption in addition to their share of the foregoing diet. They were formerly served from the grocers, weighed up.

For the Establishment two lbs Butter is got per week. This has to serve for the master and Matron, the Old Women and sick Children.

(PRO ref: MH12/15070)



Source 4

Task

4a In what ways are the complaints the same as those made in:

- i) the letter from Thomas Tatham
- ii) the first report
- iii) the dietary?

4b Look back at the first four sources, and write an account of what happened in the Huddersfield workhouse from 1847-8.

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Source 4

This is part of a second report made by the Overseers of the Workhouse in June 1848.

**SUPPLEMENT
TO THE LEEDS MERCURY.**

JUNE 10, 1848.

THE HUDDERSFIELD WORKHOUSE INQUIRY.

OFFICIAL INVESTIGATION.

The following extract from the Overseers' report, will show the principal charges upon which the inquiry was instituted :—

With regard to the present condition of the sick poor at the workhouse, the Overseers have to report, that in the new hospital they have been but little better attended to than they were in the temporary fever hospital, as before detailed. They are now almost without clothing and bedding; beds for them have to be made up on the floor; their beds are but bags of straw, which when laid on bed stocks, do not keep the cords from cutting their bodies; on these bags of straw both male and female patients have to lie through all the rackings of fever and other painful diseases, from week end to week end, their persons sore and whaled with the hardness of their lying. That their covering is but old rags may be judged from the fact, that for twenty-three beds in that hospital, on the 27th of last April, there were but seven blankets, thirty sheets, twenty-one pillow-cases, and fifteen rugs. From the opening of that hospital to the present time, there have been none but pauper nurses to attend on the sick; at the present time there is but a male pauper to attend on both male and female patients; but still the practice obtains of placing two fever patients in one bed; that from the want of needful changes, the bed clothing, among which fever patients have died, is obliged to be used for other patients, without being washed.

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Of the general treatment of the poor in the workhouse, the Overseers have to report that the house is, and has been for a considerable period, crowded out with inmates; that there are forty children occupying one room eight yards by five; that these children sleep four, five, six, seven, and even ten, in one bed; that thirty females live in another room of similar size; and that fifty adult males have to cram into a room seven and a half yards long by six yards wide; that the diet of the establishment has been and still is, insufficient; that four shillings worth of shin of beef, or leg offal, with forty-two pounds of potatoes, have been made to serve for "soup" for 150 inmates; that the quantity, in gallons, required of this wash, for the household, is 27; that three gills of this "soup," with one fourth of an oaten cake, forms one of the dinners of the establishment; that ten gallons of old milk per day have been made to serve for two meals for an average number of 130 individuals, for a quarter of a year together,—being little more than one gill per head per day; that the old women are allowed $\frac{1}{2}$ of a lb. of sugar and $\frac{1}{2}$ an oz. of tea each, for a week's consumption; that the clothing of the establishment is miserably deficient; that there is no clothing in stock; that a great proportion of the inmates are obliged to wear their own clothes; that others have little better than rags to cover them; that instances have been known where the nakedness of even females has not been covered; that there are at present but 65 blankets fit for use in the establishment, to fit up 79 beds; that there are but 108 sheets for these 79 beds, being 50 short of a pair each; that there is in consequence *no change of bed linen whatever*; that when cleansed the beds have to be stripped, and the linen hurried through the wash-tub, dried, and on to the beds again for the same night; and that there are throughout the entire establishment the most unmistakable signs of bad arrangement, shortsightedness, real extravagance, waste of the rate-payers' money, and want of comfort, cleanliness, health, and satisfaction amongst the poor.

(PRO ref:MH 12/15070)



Source 5

Task

Look back at source 3

5a In what ways is this dietary different from Huddersfield's?

5b What evidence is there that some people received special treatment?

5c Which dietary is better, Reigate or Huddersfield? List five reasons why you have made your choice.

Source 5

This is the dietary for the Reigate Workhouse in Surrey.

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259

Dietary for Able-bodied Men and Women.



| | | <u>Breakfast</u> | | <u>Dinner</u> | | | <u>Supper</u> | |
|---------------|-----------|------------------|-----------------|---------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| | | Bread oz. | Gruel Pints. | Meat oz. | Vegetables lb. | Soup Pints. | Pudding oz. | Cheese oz. |
| Sunday . . | Men . . | 16. | 1½ | 6. | 1. | - | - | - 1½ |
| | Women . . | 14. | 1½ | 5. | 1. | - | - | - 1½ |
| Monday . . | Men . . | 16. | 1½ | - | - | 1½ | - | 2 - |
| | Women . . | 14. | 1½ | - | - | 1½ | - | 1½ |
| Tuesday . . | Men . . | 16. | 1½ | 6 | 1. | - | - | - 1½ |
| | Women . . | 14. | 1½ | 5. | 1. | - | - | - 1½ |
| Wednesday . . | Men . . | 16. | 1½ | - | - | 1½ | - | 2. - |
| | Women . . | 14. | 1½ | - | - | 1½ | - | 1½ - |
| Thursday . . | Men . . | 16. | 1½ | 6 | 1. | - | - | - 1½ |
| | Women . . | 14. | 1½ | 5. | 1. | - | - | - 1½ |
| Friday . . | Men . . | 16. | 1½ | - | - | - | 14. | 2. - |
| | Women . . | 14. | 1½ | - | - | - | 12. | 1½ - |
| Saturday . . | Men . . | 16. | 1½ | - | - | 1½ | - | 2. - |
| | Women . . | 14. | 1½ | - | - | 1½ | - | 1½ - |

Dietary for the Aged and Infirm Men and Women.

| | | <u>Breakfast</u> | | <u>Dinner</u> | | | <u>Supper</u> | |
|---------------|--|-------------------------|--|----------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|----|
| | | Tea or Coffee Pints. | Meat with vegetables & potatoes oz. | Pudding oz. | Rice milk or soup Pints. | Tea or Coffee Pints. | | |
| Sunday . . | | 1. | 4. | - | - | 1. | | 1. |
| Monday . . | | 1. | - | - | 1. | 1. | | 1. |
| Tuesday . . | | 1. | 4. | - | - | 1. | | 1. |
| Wednesday . . | | 1. | - | - | 1. | 1. | | 1. |
| Thursday . . | | 1. | 4. | - | - | 1. | | 1. |
| Friday . . | | 1. | - | - | 1. | 1. | | 1. |
| Saturday . . | | 1. | - | 12. | - | 1. | | 1. |

Bread - Men 16 oz per Day - Butter 7½ oz per week.

Bo. Women - 12 oz Bo. - Sugar 8 oz Bo.

Children under 9 years of age to be dieted at discretion; above 9 to be allowed the quantity as Women. Sick to be dieted as directed by the medical Officer.



Source 6

Task

6a Write down the names of the people on the list and how much relief they had been allowed by the Board of Guardians.

6b How does the Board explain each payment?

6c Why do you think the Assistant Commissioner wanted the payments explained?

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Source 6

This is part of a letter sent from the Reigate Union to an Assistant Poor Law Commissioner. His job was to inspect the Unions in his area and make sure that they were obeying the rules laid down by the 1834 Act. The letter explains why the Union paid outdoor relief to people living outside the workhouse which was not encouraged. Wages are given in pounds and shillings.

| | |
|--|--|
| 7. Jas Harman 27. wife 29. 3 children. wages 12 ⁰ £ week. allowed a pair of ... - shoes. | Both the Man and his Wife are frequently out of Health altho' not returned as disabled they were known to the Guardians to have been much distressed at the time. |
| 8. John Brown aged 36. wife 33. six children under 15. wages 15 ⁰ £ week. James 2 ⁰ and has also ... half an acre of Land. allowed 10 ⁰ for a ... Nurse for wife. | This Man had been unwell for sometime before and had been out of Work and lost his by. - removing from one Residence to another. |
| 9. Amey Harman. Aged 19. allowed 2 ⁰ £ week for her Bastard child. | This Allowance was merely made a few Weeks before the Sessions to enable the Guardians to apply for an Order on the reputed Father and which Order was made at the last March Session. The ... allowance will therefore be received back under the Order. |

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10 Thomas King aged 49 living at Nutfield.

Bill for £3 for medical attendance - this is allowed if the medical officer of the union had attended to this case no expense would have been incurred.

In this Case the Man broke his Leg and was taken to the public House at Nutfield. The Bill for £3 was not for medical Relief he having been attended by the medical officer of the Union but it was the Bill of the Landlord at the Public House for Board and Lodging and which Bill was submitted to the Board at their Weekly meeting and allowed. He was removed from the Public House to the union Workhouse the first Morning the Medical officer could certify that he might be removed.

11 Thomas Warren aged 48. wife 44. Six children all at Home. Eldest 11.

This Man's Wages 18/- per week - allowed 10/- per week.

This Allowance was made in consequence of the Illness of the Man who had thereby been deprived of part of his usual earnings.

12 Ambrose Knight 44. wife 40. Six children under 12.

Wages 12/- per week altho' only sometimes unable to work. He is allowed regularly 3/- per week.

The permanent Relief is ordered to be taken off and his Case will in future be brought forward when he may be unable to work.

(PRO ref: MH 12/12575)



Source 7

Task

7a When did the Assistant Poor Law Commissioner visit the workhouse? When had he made his last visit? Did he make a mistake over the date?

7b What did the Assistant Commissioner report about medical treatment and education in the workhouse? What do you think the Assistant Commissioner meant by 'industrial instruction'?

7c Why did the Assistant Commissioner attend a special meeting of the Guardians?

7d According to the Guardians, who was to blame for the regulations being broken?

7e Did the Assistant Commissioner agree with the Guardians?

Look back at sources 5 and 6

7f What evidence is there that the Board of Guardians of the Reigate Workhouse were taking their responsibilities seriously?

7g What evidence is there that the Reigate Board of Guardians were not observing all the regulations?

Source 7

This is an extract from a report by the Assistant Poor Law Commissioner on the Reigate Workhouse on 12th February 1851. (PRO ref: MH 12/12577)

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Reigate

UNION.

164
2



8952

Mr Right

INSPECTOR

day

Poor Laws on the above Union, after a Visit on the

February 1851

Wright

1. Date of last previous visit.

22nd August 1851

2. Is the Workhouse generally adequate to the Wants of the Union, in respect of size and internal arrangements?

yes in both respects

3. Is the provision for the sick and infectious cases sufficient? Are the receiving wards in a proper state?

yes. There is a distinct Hospital and Fever wards

The receiving wards are now in process
of alteration

4. Is the Workhouse School well managed?

yes. There are but few children
of either sex as compared with the population
of the Union and much attention is given
to their industrial instruction

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13. Has any marked change taken place in the state of the Workhouse, the number of the inmates, or the general condition of the Union, since your last visit?

There is generally full employment
for agricultural labourers at this time

at good wages from 10/- to 12/- per week - But

There does notwithstanding an unusual number of
men of the able class in the WTT - almost all however
single men of loose character. This has arisen in
great measure from the abolition of the practice which
prevailed in all previous winters of giving ableness
certified on the condition of coming to the WTT to perform a
selected task of work & via: former correspondence

14. Observations not falling under any of the preceding heads.

Attended a special meeting of the Board of Governors called to consider the report of a Committee appointed to enquire into certifying charges made against the Master & Dietors of the W.H. - viz - that the master had been in the habit of certifying the quantities of bread allowed to adults & children without affixing the signature of the Dietors.

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12/11/1855, we have upon
 That the Master had neglected to make the Visits
 to the Inmates required by the Regulations of P.
 I had not sufficiently attended to the regular Supply
 of clean clothing - further that the overbearing conduct
 & violent temper of the Master & matron (more than one
 before brought before the Bd. of gen) is so intolerable to the Office
 that without imminent changes resulted thereby
 But contented imminent changes resulted therefore
 after a full consideration of these matters it was resolved
 that the Master & matron shall be called onto resign, &
 signify his reslts at the next meeting of the Bd. of gen. When
 this resolution is sent to Grenville Rifth

Poor Law Inspector.

The P.L.B. is desirous to

make some remarks

Whereas - There is no Dated the day of 1855
 suspicion or imputation of fraud on the part of the Master
 who is in many respects an excellent officer. The infamy
 of Master is chiefly attributable to the Matron
 Attributed to as far as legends - No 14



Source 8

Task

- 8a.** What recommendations did the Assistant Commissioner make?
- 8b.** What evidence is there that he was concerned about the ways that children were being treated?

Look back at **Source 7**, which was written by the same man who wrote Source 8.

- 8c** The Poor law Commissioners were sometimes accused of only being concerned with saving money. Do these sources suggest that this was the case?

Source 8

This is part of a letter written by an Assistant Poor Law Commissioner to the Poor Law Commissioners.

VICTORIAN BRITAIN

A Caring Nation?

48, 858
55

Mr. Pigott
2

London,

22 December 1855.—

My Lords and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 20th instant, in which you inform me that having had under consideration the expediency of some farther provision than now exists for the Dietary of young Children in Workhouses, between the ages of two and nine years, you ask my opinion as to the expediency of dividing this Class for the purposes of Diet, into two; and as to what measures may be adviseable to secure to the Children in Workhouses the kind and quality of food suited to their respective ages. —

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In reply, I have no hesitation in stating my opinion that the present system by no means secures this important object; that the discretion, as regards the younger Children, is very imperfectly exercised; to the great prejudice of their health and to unnecessary waste of food; and that the modification of the existing practice, proposed in the letter of the Poor Law Board, is highly desirable. I venture however to suggest that in place of leaving the preparation

Poor Law Board
Whitehall. —

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preparation of the Dietaries for Children between 2 and 9 years of age to the guardians conjointly with the Workhouse Medical Officer, the latter should be required to submit such Dietary as he thinks proper to the Board of Guardians, and that they should transmit the same to the Poor Law Board, with such observations as they may desire to make thereon. —

I take this opportunity of adding my opinion of the desirableness (whilst establishing this additional Classification) of insisting in every Workhouse on the formation of a District Nursery Class, under the charge of a competent Female, for the custody and care throughout the day of all

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Children under 6 years of age; in a wood floored room, well warmed and ventilated, where they may have their meals under the new regulation. This practice prevails in some Workhouses with the most beneficial result to the health of the Children, and to the discipline and order of the Workhouse. Mothers having Children at the breast are allowed to resort to them at all times, and have them with them also in their

Dormitories

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Dormitories at night. The Children are thus kept clean and out of harm's way during the day, and have their meals as regulated by the Medical Officer. —

In the Workhouses where Nurseries are not provided (which compose by far the greater number) the Children are constantly with their mothers, often young single women, who make them a pretext for evading their due share of the labours of the house; preventing due cleanliness; and especially at meal time, having them upon their laps, and supplying them

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with portions of their own food, unsuited to the digestive functions of infants, whereby the mortality amongst this class becomes often very formidable, this mortality being increased also in many instances by the cold brick or stone floors of the Able women's Day Wards.

A further evil consequence of the absence of regular Nurseries is the practice of putting young Infant Bastards in charge of young Girls

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girls of 15 and 16 years old, whilst the mothers are at work, who having continual resort to the children are thus brought into the ~~closest~~ and most continual communication with those from whom they ought to be the most carefully separated. —

Lastly for want of these Nurseries, Children of 4 or 5 years of age are often placed in the Female School, to the prejudice of the older Children, by undue diversion of the attention of the Teacher, and often to the

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permanent injury of their own health by a premature exertion of their nervous system. —

I have the honour to be,

My Lords and Gentlemen
Your very obedient Servt,

Grenville Piggott

Poor Law Inspector. —

Please with the
other answers

b
26 Decr

(PRO ref: MH 32/62)