

PUBLIC HEALTH AND PUBLIC SERVICES

The Middle Ages and Early Modern Period

In medieval and early modern Basingstoke, as elsewhere, the role of local government was extremely limited. The governing courts carried out a variety of roles, mainly concerned with regulating anti-social activities. Many were concerned with the smooth running of commerce, on which the everyday life of a town depended, dealing with small-scale debts, regulating the times and context of sales, the alehouse drinking hours, or dealing with violence.¹

There were times when the court intervened in the condition of the roads, but not to take up general maintenance. Periodically, someone was presented for blocking the road with timber, refuse or even with a dead horse, or for having an adjacent ditch that was blocked and overflowing. Occasionally the state of a road meant that the whole tithing was ordered to repair it as with the road from Coppid bridge to the market in 1550.² The steep slope up Church Street to the market place frequently became muddy during wet spells. When a causeway was built (probably for pedestrians), it was financed by a wealthy merchant, Sir James Deane, rather than the burgesses.³

Various people were given responsibility for the maintenance of the two bridges over the Loddon. Occasionally the tithing, the bailiffs, or an individual was required to repair one of the bridges as in 1560 and 1561.⁴

The river was both a natural source of water and used for drainage and refuse disposal. This led to regulations limiting the time in which dyers and leather workers could dump their effluent, restricting its use to the evening or the night time.⁵ In 1547, it resulted in the demand for the vicar to remove his latrine, which he built over the stream, 'which is a great nuisance to all those who washed there'.⁶ Again this involved regulation rather than investment.

¹ See in general for this section F.J. Baigent and J.E. Millard, *A history of the ancient town and manor of Basingstoke*, (1889) 247-357 and John Hare, *Basingstoke a medieval town, c.1000-c.1600*, (2017) 18-21, 71-6.

² Baigent & Millard, *Basingstoke*, 339.

³ HRO, 5M52/C1; 148M71/8/5/2.

⁴ Baigent & Millard, *Basingstoke*, 344-5.

⁵ Hare, *Basingstoke*, 71.

⁶ Baigent & Millard, *Basingstoke*, 337.

The limited work of the citizens acting together was complemented by acts of individual charity. Mercantile investment and charity were seen in various areas. Sir James Deane founded and endowed the almshouses in London Street in 1607.⁷ Education was another matter which essentially depended upon the gifts of individuals, as with the bequest of Sir Richard Aldworth in 1646 which founded the Blue Coat school.⁸ While the incentive frequently came from individuals, they might require the court or the Corporation to carry out their wishes, whether in terms of religious provision, as with Sir James Lancaster's lectureship, education or the running of the almshouses.⁹

Paving Commissioners and Street Scavenging

The Basingstoke Paving Act of 1815 was the first local initiative to organise the urban environment of the town under the descriptive title 'an Act for paving the footways and crosspaths, and lighting, watching, cleaning, widening and otherwise improving the streets, lanes and other public passages and places in the town of Basingstoke ... and for removing incroachments, obstructions and annoyances therefrom'.¹⁰ The Act only applied to an area within one half mile radius from the Town Hall. Map 1 shows the development of the town between 1762 and 1850 with the area to the north of the station being outside the scope of the Act.

The Act named 85 paving commissioners hoping to avoid protests from ratepayers about the cost. The commissioners had to own or rent substantial properties within the town or have a personal estate of over £1,000. Ten commissioners were from the local gentry but the others were local business and professional men who were opinion formers in the community. The commissioners were independent of the unreformed Corporation although most of this body's resident members were commissioners. The Act authorised the levying of rates on property to fund activities on a sliding scale, where properties of an annual value of £20 or more paid up to 1s. 6d. in the pound down to 6d. in the pound for properties valued under £5. For the first 20 years to 1836 the average income from rates was £186, from 1837 to 1861 it rose to £314. In 1860 a committee belatedly reviewed the rating arrangements, rating new buildings and increasing the assessment of the LSW railway from £120 to £240 (1860). The income from

⁷ Baigent & Millard, *Basingstoke*, 708-9.

⁸ Baigent & Millard, *Basingstoke*, 706.

⁹ Baigent & Millard, *Basingstoke*, 404, 672-3, 705-6, 710.

¹⁰ HRO, 148M71/1/5/7/1.

the rates rose from £300 in 1860/1 to £655 the following year and it remained at this level until the demise of the commissioners in 1872.¹¹

In 1834/5 a third of the expenditure of £261 was spent in paying interest on loans and annuities, 15 per cent on gas for lighting, nine per cent on watchman's wages and only 18 per cent on contractors' building work. A frequent term used in the minutes was 'as resources allow' and many projects were delayed through lack of funds. In 1869/70 with an income of £778 only 20 per cent was spent on servicing debt, 13 per cent on building work, 19 per cent on gas lighting and two new items were recorded, nine per cent on a scavenging contract and 16 per cent on watering roads (including a new water cart). The watchman's cost had disappeared and the balance was 12 per cent.

The Act allowed the commissioners to borrow money against the rates and to raise Annuities up to a total of £3,000 to fund activities. All money raised in this way came from local people. The largest was for £600 taken out in 1839 from Samuel Attwood; this was not redeemed by his successors until 1908.¹²

A voluntary subscription list was established and raised £1,196 by September 1816 with the Corporation showing the level of its support by donating £315. The leading individuals were the Dowager Lady Bolton £50, Mrs Sheppard the widow of the late Vicar £110 and William Chute of the Vyne £50.¹³ This funding enabled the commissioners to make a brisk start.

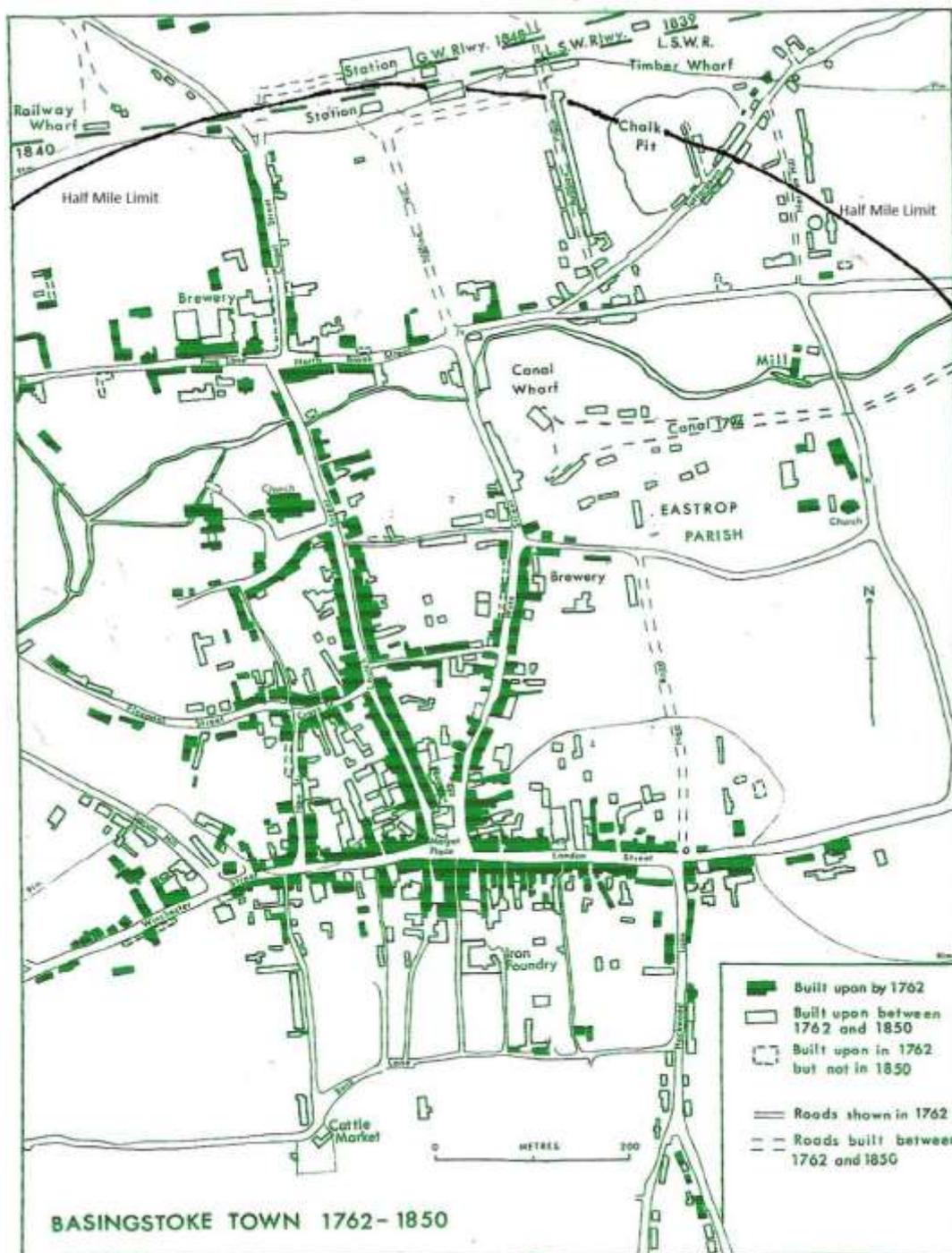
The Commission appointed a treasurer, clerk, assessors and a collector of rates. The commissioners also employed a surveyor. The governing body was the meeting of the commissioners convened by the clerk. It met a minimum of twice a year and each meeting elected its own chairman. In the first decade the Revd Blatch chaired 23 of the 34 meetings. Although there were over 80 commissioners only rarely did attendances go into double figures¹⁴. Five members made a quorum and were sufficient to set a rate although seven were required to pass by-laws.

¹¹ HRO, 8M62/111.

¹² HRO, 8M62/111.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ HRO, 148M71/1/5/7/1-2.



Map 1 *Basingstoke Town 1762-1850.*

Paving. Within the first two years the market place was paved followed by Oat Street, Winchester Street and then Church Street. Later the cross passages such as Potters Walk and

Caston's Alley were paved. In later years pavements were extended as housing extended for example along Railway Hill, Chapel Street and Hackwood Road as income increased.¹⁵

Removal of obstructions. The commissioners initially required the removal of bow windows and projecting signs had to be fitted flush to the walls. Townspeople were prosecuted if they did not comply.

Thatched Roofs. This roofing material was banned from new buildings within the area covered by the Act. Figure one shows that many cottages were thatched in c.1830 but as they were rebuilt, tiles or slates had to be used.



Figure 1. *Basingstoke c. 1830 from an old print. The London South-Western Railway occupied the foreground by 1840. Note the thatched roofs, St Michael's church and the old Town Hall turret.*

Rainwater disposal and pollution. Residents were also pressed to improve the drainage of water from their roofs via gutters, downpipes and spouts into gutters.¹⁶ From the 1820s there were concerns about the adequacy of drainage from Winchester and London streets down to the River Loddon culminating in the building of an 18-inch barrel drain for 385 yards down Church Street.¹⁷ There was also a drain down Oat Street that was diverted to improve the

¹⁵ HRO, 148M71/1/5/7/2, Minute 7 Apr. 1861.

¹⁶ HRO, 148M71/1/5/7/1 Minutes 30 Aug. 1824 and 11 Nov. 1827.

¹⁷ Ibid, Minute 31 Aug. 1837.

water flow in the top pound of the canal. Originally this was intended only to take surface water but in later years effluent from water closets found its way into the drain. This action bequeathed a problem to the successor authority, for when the canal was blocked in 1872 a health hazard had to be tackled.¹⁸

Watchman. See section on police.

Scavenging. Householders were required to sweep the pavement in front of their houses each morning and in March 1821 a contract was approved for cleaning the streets of refuse for one year. A more systematic system of rounds was in place by the 1860s¹⁹.

Lighting. A few oil lamps were erected in the early years but in 1834 the Basingstoke Gas Company was given permission to lay pipes in the streets and £120 was set aside to fund public lights for seven months of the year but five nights around the full moon were excluded.²⁰

Legacy. On 10 January 1850 a motion was put to the commissioners that the town should seek to put itself under the 1848 Public Health Act but this was heavily defeated. The Public Health Act of 1848 gave local authorities the power to set up local boards to deal with matters affecting drainage, housing and health. Central government was empowered to force any local authority with a death rate of 23 per 1000 or higher to set up a local board of health. The paving commissioners ceased work on 20 December 1872 when they were told that they could no longer set rates²¹ and their responsibilities passed to the Basingstoke Urban Sanitary authority, who had to cope with the problem of sewage making its way into the canal.²²

Water Supply

Basingstoke is located on the watershed of the River Loddon, a tributary of the Thames, and the northern groundwater catchments of the Rivers Test and Itchen. In 2017 water was drawn

¹⁸ HRO, 148M71/1/5/55/8 Chancery Papers, Attorney General v Mayor of Basingstoke, Proof by William Glover.

¹⁹ HRO, 23M72/BO9.

²⁰ HRO, 148M71/1/5/7/1 Minute 7 Aug. 1834.

²¹ Ibid Minute 20 Dec. 1872.

²² HRO, 148M71/1/7/1-2 Basingstoke Urban Sanitary Authority minute Book 1872 – 82 Rosenthal, L, *Owners of the Basingstoke Canal 1870 – 1880*, Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society Newsletter July 2009; HRO 148M71/1/5/58/8 Chancery Papers.

via boreholes in the chalk aquifer and sewage treatment was handled at Chineham where the effluent was discharged into the River Loddon.²³

In the early 19th century the majority of Basingstoke was built on the southern side of the valley descending to the River Loddon. The River Loddon rose from two springs in the west and merged below the town. At its widest part, where it crossed Wote Street it was about 12ft. (3.6m.) wide, shallow and with a muddy bottom.²⁴ The water supply came from numerous wells around the town.²⁵ There were additional houses on the northern slope of the valley and others on the level land where the river flowed across chalk overlain by gravel and peat.²⁶ Houses for the poor tended to be in the low-lying area.

In 1852 the population of Basingstoke was c.4,200²⁷ living in 700 to 800 houses.²⁸ In April of that year, a petition to the General Board of Health was signed by 64 of the town's ratepayers requesting a preliminary inspection of the sanitary conditions, sewerage, drainage and water supply, state of the burial grounds and general nuisances.²⁹ In response to the petition, William Ranger, Superintending Officer of the General Board of Health, inspected the town in 1853³⁰ and reported that Basingstoke was 'plentifully furnished' with water for a town dependent on pumps and wells.³¹ Many of these, some for public use and others attached to private premises, were of more or less hard waters and some so contaminated as to be unfit for domestic use.³² In spite of these observations he concluded:

'the business of Basingstoke is of an exclusively agricultural character; the town being limited in extent and population and presenting but few of those features of discomfort and unhealthiness so generally to be found in places of greater trade or of more commercial importance.'³³

²³ <http://www3.hants.gov/thameswater.pdf> (accessed 2 Feb. 2015).

²⁴ TNA, MH 12/10688 Ballard's Report.

²⁵ TNA, MH 12/10683 Ballard's Report.

²⁶ TNA, MH 12/10688 Ballard's Report.

²⁷ TNA, MH 12/10688 Ranger's Report.

²⁸ TNA, MH 13/17/220, 831/52.

²⁹ TNA, MH 13/17/220, f.523.

³⁰ TNA, MH 13/17/220, f.523, 585.

³¹ TNA, MH 12/10688 Ranger's Report.

³² TNA, MH 12/10688 Ranger's Report.

³³ TNA, MH 13/17/220, f.585; TNA, MH 12/10688 Ranger's Report.

He did however state that the inhabitants would greatly benefit from some waterworks but doubted whether this would be sanctioned owing to the cost for a town of 'limited pecuniary resources'.³⁴ He estimated the mortality of Basingstoke as 17 per 1,000 for the year ending June 1852, the three preceding years averaged 16 per 1,000,³⁵ well below the level of 23 deaths per 1,000, set by the Public Health Act of 1848 for the compulsory provision of clean water.³⁶ A public meeting was held on 20 December 1853 to consider Ranger's report after which the Corporation wrote to the General Board of Health in Whitehall stating that they were fully aware of the necessity of attending to the sanitary wants of the inhabitants, but guided by Ranger they 'most earnestly prayed that the Honourable Board would take no further steps in the matter'.³⁷

By 1866, reports by the District Medical Officers on behalf of the Basingstoke Union stated that the water was very impure and, particularly in the central and lower areas of the town, often polluted with sewage.³⁸ They also calculated that since 1853 the mortality rate had increased greatly to 22 per 1,000, almost to the level when central government could have intervened and reported that:³⁹

'In many places we found the wells out of repair, the curbs broken, covers absent, slugs, snails and worms in the water. Some were below the level of the surface drain, others in dangerous proximity to a sewer or a dead well. We have had frequent complaints made of the water not being fit for use, of its smelling badly, of its looking like soapsuds, of its being muddy after rain, etc. We have made a careful, chemical and microscopical analysis of the water used for drinking purposes in our district. In many instances we have found that the water is totally unfit for use.'⁴⁰

Strong resistance from the town's ratepayers for increased rates to cover the cost of waterworks, together with reluctance of the Corporation to act meant that no improvements were made⁴¹ until 1870 when the Basingstoke and Eastrop Waterworks Company Ltd was

³⁴ TNA, MH 12/10688 Ranger's Report.

³⁵ TNA, MH 12/10688 Ranger's Report.

³⁶ *Public Health Act* <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Vict/11-12/63/enacted>.

³⁷ TNA, MH 13/17/220, f.585.

³⁸ TNA, MH 12/10683.

³⁹ TNA, MH 12/10683.

⁴⁰ TNA, MH 12/10683; <http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/explore/items/basingstoke-town-sanitary-conditions-and-infectious-disease-1866> (accessed 29 Sept. 2015).

⁴¹ TNA, MH 13/17/220, f.603.

formed to supply the town and parish of Eastrop with pure water.⁴² The company offered 700 shares at £5 each and by December of that year, 318 shares had been taken up mostly by local tradesmen but also by investors from Wiltshire, Reading, Colchester and Andover.⁴³ By March 1871 tenders had been approved amounting to £2,015 for the construction of a brick reservoir and provision of iron pipes, sluices, cocks and hydrants in the town for use in case of fire and for watering the sewers and flushing down drains.⁴⁴ Work began in the area of Totterdown in a former chalk pit south of the railway at a site occupied by the Corn Company making use of a natural well to operate a steam mill, engine and sack hoist. A 30ft. (9m.) shaft had originally been sunk in 1860 by Richard Wallis for a flour mill.⁴⁵ They agreed to grant an under lease for the right of drawing excess water from the well and also to use their surplus steam power to raise water to a proposed reservoir.⁴⁶ During the summer months, the Corn Company pumped 120,000 gallons of water daily to the reservoir for 11 hours on Mondays to Fridays, and nine hours on Saturdays in the summer but only on weekdays in winter. For this they received an annual payment of £150.⁴⁷

For the construction of a reservoir, the water company purchased a field from John Burgess Soper⁴⁸ in Darlington Road situated in the highest part of town on the South View estate to the north of the railway station. Access was via Soper's Road later renamed Vyne Road.⁴⁹ On completion, the Darlington Road reservoir had two tanks of 150,000 and 165,000 gallons and delivered an average daily supply of 360,000 gallons of which the London and South West Railway Co took approximately a third. Domestic and trade consumption was estimated at 22 gallons per head daily. Outlying and higher houses often ran out of water between the hours of 2a.m. and 6a.m. when the pump was turned off.⁵⁰

⁴² TNA BT 31/1570/5130.

⁴³ TNA, BT 31/1570/5130.

⁴⁴ HRO, 148M71/1/5/61/1; engineers were Messrs Russ & Minns, the contractor was William Sibsey of Southampton.

⁴⁵ HRO, 148M71/1/5/32/15; The Corn Company was more correctly known as Raynbird, Caldecott, Bawtree, Dowling & Co Ltd, listed in trade directories at the time as corn, seed, manure and oil cake merchants.

⁴⁶ HRO, 148M71/1/5/61/1.

⁴⁷ HRO, 148M71/1/5/61/1.

⁴⁸ http://www.bas-herit-soc.org/A_short_History_of_South_View.pdf (accessed 12 Nov. 2015).

⁴⁹ HRO, 148M71/1/5/61/1.

⁵⁰ HRO, 148M71/1/5/32/15.

During the construction of the reservoir yet another inspection of the town was made in October 1871 by Dr Ballard, Basingstoke's Medical Officer of Health,⁵¹ who revealed that:

'The pollution of the wells in some places is so manifest that the use of the water for domestic purposes has had to be abandoned. Some of the inhabitants at the lower part of the town finding the well water polluted, have had recourse to the water of the Loddon as preferable to it. Even in the upper part of the town the use of the well water has occasionally had to be given up on account of its unmistakable pollution of cesspool soakage.'⁵²

By 1875 the annual rate paid to the Corn Company increased to £195 to cover the cost of getting up steam for occasional Sunday pumping. A second well was sunk in 1877 which was 4ft. (1.2m) higher than the first but during heavy rain was contaminated with animal matter and foundry refuse. This was blocked off in 1894.⁵³ The water company installed more pumps in 1878 and by 1880 had installed a stand pipe to supply the houses in South View on the same elevation as the reservoir.⁵⁴

In August 1882 the Basingstoke and Eastrop Waterworks Company Ltd agreed to supply the station, station buildings, houses, signal boxes, tanks, yards, sidings and hydrants with 500,000 gallons a week for a term of 14 years at a rate of 100 gallons a minute and a charge of 3d. per 1,000 gallons.⁵⁵ The quality and quantity of the water in the reservoir was regularly questioned and the water company was criticised for its management. In 1882 the Corporation assumed control of the undertaking under the umbrella of the Urban Sanitary Authority funded by a water rate.⁵⁶ They were empowered to compulsorily purchase four parcels of land and erect wells and pumps at Brook Street, Springfield (later renamed Southend), Essex and Flaxfield Roads.⁵⁷

⁵¹ TNA, MH 12/10688 Ballard's report.

⁵² TNA, MH 12/10688 Ballard's report.

⁵³ HRO, 148M71/1/5/32/15.

⁵⁴ HRO, 148M71/1/5/61/1.

⁵⁵ HRO, 148M71/1/5/61/7.

⁵⁶ E. Stokes, *The Making of Basingstoke* (2008), 98; *Hants. Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle*, 22 Nov. 1882.

⁵⁷ *Hants. Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle*, 22 Nov. 1882.

The growing population and newly installed sewerage system (1879),⁵⁸ led to the connection of more houses demanding more water. In 1886 the provision of a new reservoir was first considered, but again the ratepayers opposed the expenditure of £1,200 as it was not immediately necessary.⁵⁹

An epidemic of pustular tonsillitis was blamed on the water in 1894-5 and Dr Farrar, Medical Inspector of the Local Government Board, said that ‘the town well can never be trusted again’.⁶⁰ A severe outbreak of typhoid in the town in 1905 was caused by pollution of the town water supply.⁶¹ Residents were advised to boil all water (Fig. 9) and milk and the water supply was cut off for two days in October while the reservoir was disinfected.⁶² Analysis of the water showed it to be ‘full of most dangerous ingredients, dangerous alike to life and health’.⁶³ The council were forced to pay £1,676 in settlement to 50 claimants for damages and it became evident that a new supply of water was essential.⁶⁴

Frederick Prance (solicitor) and Edwin White (timber merchant) of the Ratepayers’ Association were elected by comfortable majorities in the municipal election of 1905 after campaigning for clean water and an efficient sewage system rather than investing in electric lighting.⁶⁵ At their meeting on 12 October, the council agreed to authorise its water committee to supply the town with water from the new well at West Ham and to disinfect the reservoir and mains.⁶⁶ The well at West Ham, between the Alton Light Railway and the London & South West Railway lines (Figs. 1 & 2.),⁶⁷ was capable of yielding over 900,000 gallons a day and was of a high degree of purity.⁶⁸ At the beginning of November the Local Government Board agreed that the council could borrow the £16,000 needed to proceed with the work in connecting the town and the outlying rural areas with the water supply from West Ham.⁶⁹ The land was purchased from Winchester College for a pumping station in an area

⁵⁸ HRO, 148M71/1/5/32/15; *Sewerage* below.

⁵⁹ E. Stokes, *The Making of Basingstoke* (2008), 99.

⁶⁰ HRO, 148M71/1/5/32/15.

⁶¹ *The Times*, 17 Sept. 1906; HRO 148M71/1/5/32.

⁶² HRO 148M71/1/5/32/15.

⁶³ HRO, 148M71/1/5/32/15.

⁶⁴ *The Times*, 17 Sept. 1906; HRO 148M71/1/5/32.

⁶⁵ HRO, 19A02/3/10.

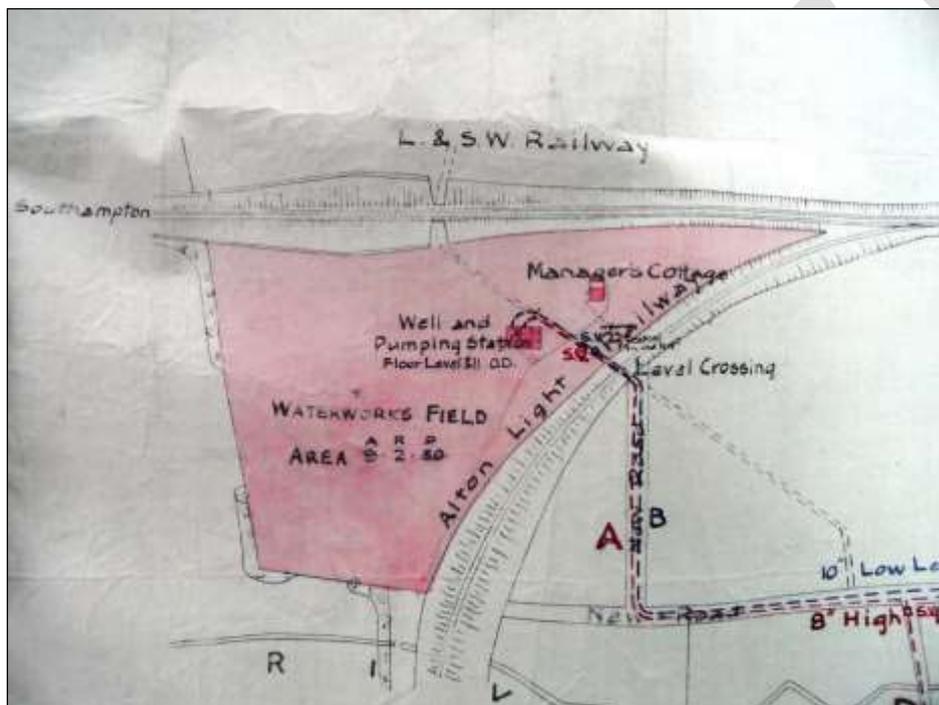
⁶⁶ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 14 Oct. 1905.

⁶⁷ HRO, 58M74/BP2112; TNA, HLG 6/991.

⁶⁸ HRO, 148M71/1/5/32/2.

⁶⁹ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 4 Nov. 1905.

away from houses (unlike the Totterdown well which was near a number of old cottages and thus vulnerable to pollution).⁷⁰ Two 60ft. (18m.) wells were sunk into the chalk (Fig. 4),⁷¹ yielding ample water for the town and the railway station which continued to take a third of the total supply. The machinery, supplied by Messrs Tangye & Co of Birmingham, consisted of two 14-inch diameter, three-throw type pumps with a capacity of 40,000 gallons an hour. These were driven by a suction gas plant. The pumping station (Fig. 3) was opened in 1906, at a cost of nearly £20,000 overseen by Mr Phipps the borough engineer and surveyor.⁷²



Map 2 Location of the West Ham pumping station between the railway lines.

⁷⁰ *The Times*, 22 Apr. 1907; HRO 148M71/1/5/32/15.

⁷¹ HRO, 58M74/BP2112.

⁷² *The Times*, 22 Apr. 1907; HRO, 148M71/1/5/32/15. *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 9 Dec. 1905.



Map 3 The proposed West Ham pumping station and new pipelines (A), Darlington Road reservoir (C) and existing well and pump (D).



Figure 2 West Ham pumping station.

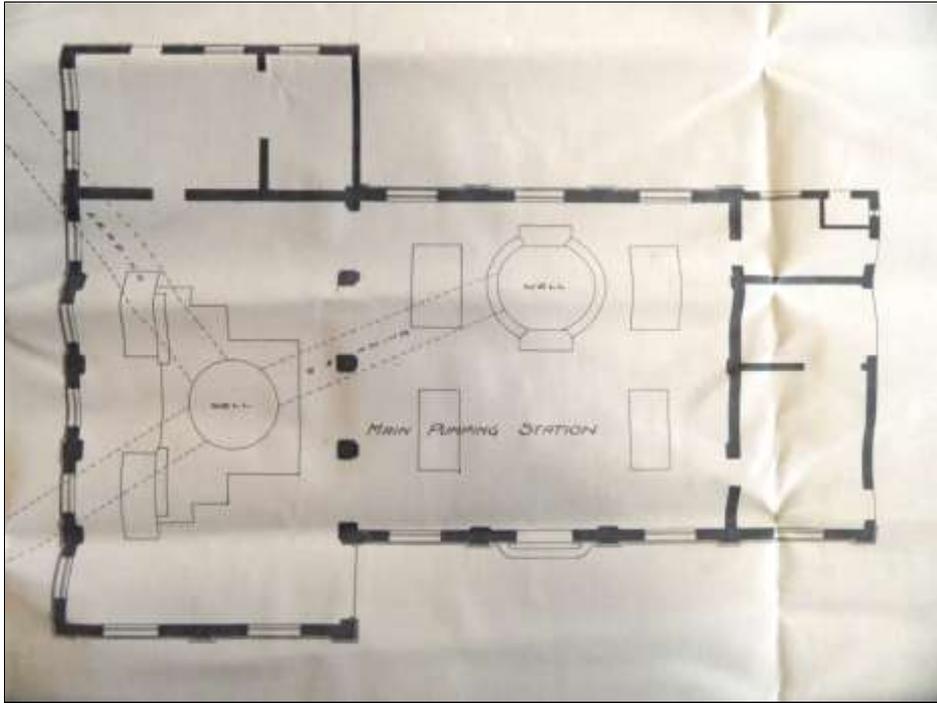


Figure 3 *Plan of pumping station interior.*

As part of the works, new piping was laid to the Darlington Road reservoir and a new 240,000-gallon reservoir constructed on higher ground in Cliddesden which was operational by 1907⁷³ (Fig. 5).⁷⁴ The water from Cliddesden flowed to the town through gravity to hydrants.⁷⁵

⁷³ *The Times*, 22 Apr. 1907.

⁷⁴ TNA, HLG 6/991.

⁷⁵ *Kelly's Dir. Hants. & IOW* (1907), 52.



Figure 4 Section through Cliddesden reservoir showing water chambers. The surface outline can still be seen in the landscape (below).



Figure 5 Woods Lane reservoir, Cliddesden.

The Times reported that 'the death rate in Basingstoke in 1906 was only 10.8 per 1,000 and last week there was not a single case of infectious disease either in the town or in the 36 parishes of the Basingstoke rural district'.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ *The Times*, 22 Apr. 1907; HRO, 58M74/BP2112.

An agreement was made in 1914 with the Rural District Council to supply water to the Union workhouse and infirmary in Old Basing.⁷⁷ In 1920 the eastern block of the workhouse had been converted into six tenements which required a water supply so the pumping station was extended.⁷⁸ At the first meeting of the town council held in Goldings House, June 1922, it was reported that the town now had a water supply second to none with not only a good supply but also ample reserve and the health of the town was good.⁷⁹ However, in 1934 an additional pump, emergency pump plant and borehole were erected at the West Ham site.⁸⁰

The 1906 boreholes continued to supply the town in 2017. The borough council sold the water undertaking to the Mid-Wessex and Thames Valley Water Company in 1960.⁸¹ With town development post 1961 and a population predicted to grow from 26,000 to 90,400 by 1989⁸² the water supply had to be re-routed.⁸³ Where the River Loddon went through the centre of the town it was piped into an open channel in Eastrop Park where it joined a land drain. Where springs contribute to the Loddon at Black Dam, a boating lake and model yacht pond were created as a balancing pond to avoid sharp peaks of flow in the stream.⁸⁴ Urban development altered the rate at which the surface water reached the Loddon and to avoid problems downstream the flow was restricted as it continued towards Old Basing. Landscaping at the eastern end of Eastrop Park and the land within the town centre east junction ensured that excess water drained back into the river at peak times. To avoid pollution, a large grease and oil trap was built in.⁸⁵

In the 1970s the Mid-Southern Water Company took responsibility for water supply in an area stretching from Maidenhead to Petersfield and Basingstoke to Aldershot.⁸⁶ Two more reservoirs were constructed, one at Whitedown, to the east of Upper Wootton on the

⁷⁷ HRO, 68M72A/DDC114.

⁷⁸ HRO, 148M71/1/5/61/30/1.

⁷⁹ *Hants & Berks Gazette*, 10 Jun. 1922.

⁸⁰ HRO, 58M74/BP2112.

⁸¹ *London Gaz.* 2 Nov. 1959 <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London> (accessed 11 Feb. 2016).

⁸² *Water & Environment Journal* vol. 17 issue 4 (2007). (<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com>, accessed 30 Nov. 2015).

⁸³ B.Butler (ed.), *The Dream Fulfilled, Basingstoke Town Development 1961-1978*, 73.

⁸⁴ B.Butler (ed.), *The Dream Fulfilled, Basingstoke Town Development 1961-1978*, 73.

⁸⁵ B.Butler (ed.), *The Dream Fulfilled, Basingstoke Town Development 1961-1978*, 73.

⁸⁶ *London Gaz.* 4 Feb. 1972 <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London> (accessed 11 Feb. 2016).

Basingstoke to Kingsclere road (1970) and the Northgate reservoir (Fig. 6) at Ellisfield (1977).⁸⁷ The latter suffered a major leak in 2012 causing local flooding.⁸⁸



Figure 6 *Northgate reservoir, Ellisfield.*

During the 1960s town development and construction of the West Ham roundabout opposite the pumping station, canisters of industrial waste including cyanide from the old Thornycroft commercial vehicle manufactory were unearthed. Tests were still being carried out in 1984 to ensure that there was no seepage into ground water.⁸⁹ To avoid flooding, river channels were improved eastwards as far as Sherfield Mill. This work was done by Thames Conservancy with grants from the Ministry of Agriculture and contributions from the borough council.⁹⁰ Two other developments required land drainage – at Popley where the chalk meets the Reading Beds and springs rise to feed Petty’s Brook - and at Buckskin where soakaways were unreliable in an area of harder chalk.⁹¹ Buckskin suffered floods in February 2014 after prolonged rain resulting in over 80 homes being evacuated. The government pledged £2M for improvements in 2017.⁹²

⁸⁷ E.Stokes, *The Making of Basingstoke* (2008), 104.

⁸⁸ <http://ellisfield.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/agenda-minutes/120123-Meeting.pdf> (accessed 12 Nov. 2015).

⁸⁹ *Basingstoke Gaz.*, 13 Aug. 1984.

⁹⁰ B.Butler (ed.), *The Dream Fulfilled, Basingstoke Town Development 1961-1978*, 73.

⁹¹ B.Butler (ed.), *The Dream Fulfilled, Basingstoke Town Development 1961-1978*, 73.

⁹² *Basingstoke Obs.*, 1 Apr. 2015.

The 1989 Water Act enabled parts of the water industry to pass into the private sector. The rights and liabilities of the former water authorities were divided between the National Rivers Authority and the new companies.⁹³ In 1993 South East Water was formed when Mid-Southern Water, Mid-Sussex Water, Eastbourne Water and West Kent Water merged, with the French company Saur Group as the main shareholder.⁹⁴ In 2017 South East Water was managed by Hastings Funds Management Ltd on behalf of Australian and Canadian investors.⁹⁵

Sewerage to 1905

Under the 1815 Paving Act⁹⁶ an unelected body of commissioners, with limited funds, were charged with ensuring that all private drains which discharged into the public sewers were kept in good repair and cleansed at the cost of the owners.⁹⁷ In 1837 a committee was formed to solve the occasional problem of torrents of dirty water flowing down Winchester and New Streets flooding houses in Church Street. By January 1839 an underground barrel drain, or common sewer, had been installed along the length of London Street and part of Winchester Street.⁹⁸

When the Superintending Inspector for the General Board of Health, William Ranger, visited Basingstoke in 1853 he reported that there were sewers in many of the streets but they were not constructed to carry the contents of privies or water closets. Many householders merely discharged their sewage on to the road surface or into inadequate and stinking cesspits or ditches. Out of a population of *c.*4,200 in 1851 only 200 were connected to the sewerage system.⁹⁹ All the untreated sewage found its way into the River Loddon and the canal.

⁹³ <https://corporate.thameswater.co.uk> (accessed 9 Mar. 2017).

⁹⁴ <http://www.midsussextimes.co.uk/news/local/water-company-to-be-sold-1-687474> (accessed 11 Feb. 2016).

⁹⁵ <http://www.southeastwater.co.uk/about-us> (accessed 9 Mar. 2017).

⁹⁶ HRO, 15M84/Z1/51.

⁹⁷ HRO, 76M86/20.

⁹⁸ TNA, MH 12/10688.

⁹⁹ TNA, MH 13/17/220; TNA MH 12/10683.

Some 18 years later Dr Ballard published a report on the sanitary conditions in the town by which time the estimated population was 5,574.¹⁰⁰ He reported that sewers in London Street and part of Winchester Street emptied into the New Street drain which all discharged into Flaxpool and the River Loddon; another branch ran down Wote Street into the canal basin. The drains appear to have been laid in an ad hoc fashion as no plan was available to Ballard and there was no record of how many houses had been connected to the system.¹⁰¹ The majority of houses still had cesspits or dead wells for excrement and slops. Many were just yards from drinking water wells which suffered from contamination. 'In short, the town people are unwittingly drinking their own excrement'.¹⁰²

When the Urban Sanitary Authority¹⁰³ replaced the Paving and Lighting Commissioners in 1872, it became responsible for drainage and sewerage in the town. At the first meeting they agreed to issue a contract to the Town Manure Company to dispose of sewage.¹⁰⁴ The Local Government Board regularly enquired as to the progress of a suitable sewage removal system, but at this early stage the authority replied that the town was in a healthy state with a low mortality rate.¹⁰⁵ In 1873 they invited tenders for a scheme to drain the town but in the meantime formed a watering streets committee which installed additional stand pipes, purchased hydraulic pumping units and hoses and a water cart for the purpose of watering the streets, paying the Water Company £10 per month for the supply.¹⁰⁶ The Authority aimed to provide one privy and cesspit for every two cottages.¹⁰⁷

When the Basingstoke Canal was opened in 1794 the engineers diverted the Wote Street drain to act as a feeder to the wharf. After the 1872 collapse of the canal tunnel at Greywell, the static water in Basingstoke and Old Basing became stagnant, polluted and fetid and neither the canal owners nor the Corporation would accept responsibility for the problem. Following the Public Health Act 1875 the Cwre were forced to make improvements and were

¹⁰⁰ TNA, MH 12/10688.

¹⁰¹ TNA, MH 12/10688.

¹⁰² TNA, MH 12/10688.

¹⁰³ The Borough Council acted as the Urban Sanitary Authority.

¹⁰⁴ HRO, 148M71/1/7/1.

¹⁰⁵ HRO, 148M71/1/7/1. Mortality rates were 1853 – 17/1,000; 1866 – 22/1,000.; 1906 – 10.8/1,000.

¹⁰⁶ HRO, 148M71/1/7/1.

¹⁰⁷ HRO, 148M71/1/7/1.

fined in 1876 for causing the pollution of the canal.¹⁰⁸ A short term solution was to purchase a soil cart to remove the night soil from the streets,¹⁰⁹ but a new sewerage system was essential.

Members of the town council visited successful drainage schemes in Baldock, Tonbridge, Swindon and Wimbledon. Several sites on land owned by Lord Bolton to the east of Basingstoke were proposed for a sewage farm,¹¹⁰ but opposed by riparian owners in Sherfield on Loddon, Stratfield Saye and Old Basing who predicted damage to trout stocks in the Loddon, contamination of cattle pasture and their milk and an obnoxious smell.¹¹¹ The proximity to mills, springs and watercress beds and difficulty of laying pipes across the water meadows delayed a decision until May 1878. After almost 23 years of debate 13 a. were purchased from Lord Bolton at £100 per acre lying between the L&SWR and GWR railways, known as Cowdrey's Down (Fig 1.).¹¹² He also offered a site next to the gas works in Basing Road in the parish of Eastrop for a pumping station.¹¹³ The population at this time was estimated at 6,000.¹¹⁴

Compulsory purchase orders were placed on owners of the land through which the pipes would pass. The Local Government Board was approached for a loan of £18,000 to cover the cost¹¹⁵ and Mr Rowell of Wimbledon was hired as the engineer in charge of the works.¹¹⁶ The Council also leased two pieces of land from the Great Western Railway totalling 5 a. at a rent of £30 a year.¹¹⁷

¹⁰⁸ L Rosenthal , *Basingstoke Canal News Autumn* (2009), *Owners of the Basingstoke Canal 1870-1880*.

¹⁰⁹ HRO, 148M71/1/7/1.

¹¹⁰ HRO, 148M71/1/7/1.

¹¹¹ HRO, 8M62/71; HRO 148M71/1/5/22/11.

¹¹² OS 6-inch XVIII.NE 1912.

¹¹³ HRO, 148M71/1/7/1; HRO 8M62/71.

¹¹⁴ *Hants & Berks Gazette*, 11 Dec. 1920.

¹¹⁵ HRO, 148M71/1/7/1; HRO 8M62/71.

¹¹⁶ HRO, 148M71/1/7/1.

¹¹⁷ *Hants & Berks Gazette*, 11 Dec. 1920.



Map 4 Location of the sewage farm at Cowdreys Down (1912).



Map 5 Proposed 1879 sewage pumping station and pipes.

In 1878 150 navvies were needed for the new works.¹¹⁸ One main 18 in. stoneware pipe ran through the bottom of the valley, receiving sewage from smaller pipes from the higher ground by gravity (Map 5).¹¹⁹

The pumping station comprising a steam engine, boiler, mixing rooms, lime and coal stores and a cottage was built in 1879, far enough from the town well to avoid contamination. The pumps were capable of moving 229,000 gallons of sewage a day.¹²⁰ An open-jointed subsoil drain was also laid beneath the sewage pipes.¹²¹ It later emerged that both sets of pipes were poorly installed with unsealed joints.¹²²

The sewage was treated with lime, tar and salts of magnesium using the Hille's process as adopted at Wimbledon. It passed into one of two deposit tanks used alternately for a day at a time, where the solids settled.¹²³ Each tank measured 150ft. x 20ft. x 4ft. (46m. x 6m. x 1.5m.) deep. The stonework pipes had occasional walls jutting into them to encourage the sewage to flow from side to side and mix the chemicals.¹²⁴ Manholes or lamp-holes to facilitate inspections were installed at all pipe junctions and changes in gradient and back flap valves prevented gases rising back into the town.¹²⁵

The sludge initially consisted of 95 per cent water and proved difficult to cart away and merely transferred the pollution of the river to its banks. The sludge was later improved by pressing it into dry cakes, free from smell and easier to transport for sale to local farms.¹²⁶ The effluent containing manurial properties was pumped 110ft. (30m.) to a tank on Cowdrey's Down. A system of broad irrigation was used on a rotational basis over six plots of land. Crops of mangolds and rye grass were grown at intervals on the resting plots. The sale of crops produced on the land was intended to cover the working expenses of the

¹¹⁸ *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 6 Jul. 1878.

¹¹⁹ TNA, HLG 6/989/2.

¹²⁰ HRO, 148M71/1/5/22/11.

¹²¹ Parl. Papers, 1907, [(Cd. 3656], XXV.1), p. 90-93.

¹²² Parl. Papers, 1907, [(Cd. 3656], XXV.1), p. 90-93.

¹²³ HRO, 58M71/144.

¹²⁴ HRO, 58M71/144.

¹²⁵ HRO, 148M71/1/7/1, 58M74/144; Parl. Papers, 1907, [(Cd. 3656], XXV.1), p. 90-93.

¹²⁶ HRO, 58M74/144.

station.¹²⁷ The thin layer of soil on the chalk was regularly ploughed to assist the water to naturally filter through the bedrock into the River Loddon.¹²⁸

Water supply and drainage featured in local elections for several years. Campaigners in the 1888 municipal election highlighted the fact that the farm could no longer cope and that there was no effective means of spreading the waste in spite of the Corporation spending £100 on additional carriers.¹²⁹

Typhoid Epidemic, 1905

By 1905, it had long been known that the main sewer, laid in 1879, was defective and was not water-tight in many places. Work started on repairing the sewer in April 1905 and continued throughout the year. During the work it was found that there were broken pipes and leaking joints. The chalk in many places was stained by escaping sewage.¹³⁰ On 29 July 1905 it was necessary to plug back the sewage for two or three hours. It was found that the plug put in the sewer from Goddard's Lane did not fit properly, so a workman went back to the next manhole at the junction of Reading Road and Goddard's Lane, and put a plug in the sewer there. The contractor's foreman said that when the time came to remove the plug he told the workman to remove the plug and assumed the man had done so.¹³¹

When the Borough Surveyor returned from his holidays on 31 August, a person living in Steam Mill Terrace told him that sewage had been overflowing behind his cottage and they could not get it away. The following day the Surveyor looked at all the manholes to find the cause, and then he discovered the plug. The plug had blocked the drain that carried all the sewage and storm water from Coronation Road, Reading Road and Steam Mill Terrace.¹³²

This had caused the sewage to back up and the resulting pressure caused some of it to escape

¹²⁷ HRO, 148M71/1/7/1.

¹²⁸ HRO, 148M71/1/5/32/15; B. Butler (ed.), *The Dream Fulfilled, Basingstoke Town Development 1961-78*.

¹²⁹ *Hants & Berks Gazette*, 20 Oct. 1888.

¹³⁰ HRO, 148M71/1/5/32/2 Report by Dr Farrar to the Local Government Board, 16 Nov. 1905.

¹³¹ HRO, 148M71/1/5/32/8 Notes taken at Enquiry into Enteric Fever.

¹³² HRO, 148M71/1/5/32/2.

through the broken pipes and make its way into the town well through a fissure in the chalk.¹³³

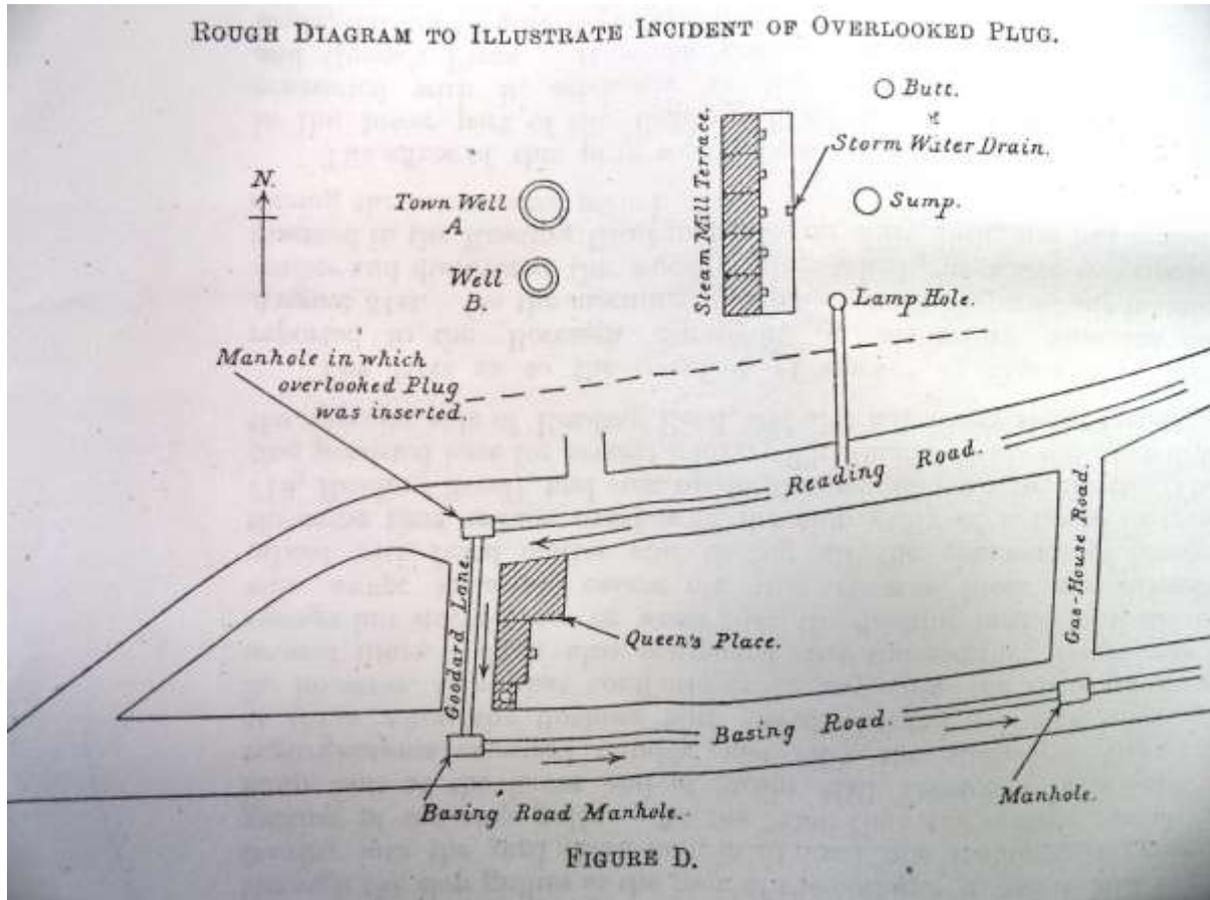


Figure 8 Dr Farrar's Diagram of the overlooked plug.

On 16 September the first case of typhoid was notified. The victim died the next day. On 18 September a second person contracted the disease. On 20 September there were four more cases of typhoid and on the 21st another six.¹³⁴ By the end of the epidemic, 170 people living in Basingstoke had caught typhoid and there were at least 10 other cases of people living outside the town who contracted the disease in Basingstoke.¹³⁵ Fifteen of the victims died.¹³⁶

¹³³ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 14 Oct. 1905.

¹³⁴ HRO, 148M71/1/5/32/7 Papers relating to compensation claims from people who had contracted typhoid. For more discussion of the typhoid epidemic see, Bob Clarke (2017) *The Great Basingstoke Typhoid Epidemic*.

¹³⁵ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 29 Sept. 1906.

¹³⁶ HRO, 148M71/1/5/32/7.

NOVEMBER 24TH, 1905.

NOTICE!

.....

An analysis of the Town's Water received on Nov. 21st, proves it to be full of most dangerous ingredients, dangerous alike to life and health. These dangerous ingredients can be rendered harmless by boiling, and I appeal to every household to insist that **NO WATER** be used in his household for any purpose whatever, whether for washing or drinking that has not been

THOROUGHLY BOILED.

It will not be for long; in as quick time as possible the Service from the New Well will be ready, but until then to insist on the **WATER** being

CAREFULLY AND CONSISTENTLY
BOILED

both for the safety of his family and himself.

FRERE WEBB, M.D.,

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

The Mains will be disinfected again, before the New Water is run into them, due Notice of which will be given.

Munday, Typ.

Figure 9 Water safety poster 1905.

In view of the severity of the outbreak, the Local Government Board decided that Dr Reginald Farrar, one of the board's medical inspectors, should enquire into the circumstances of the outbreak.¹³⁷ At the Town Council meeting on 12 October the Mayor announced that

¹³⁷ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 30 Sept. 1905.

the outbreak was caused by sewage polluting the well from which the town derived its water supply and that Dr Farrar had concluded that the pollution was caused by a workman leaving a plug in the sewer that was not discovered for over a month afterwards.¹³⁸ The Medical Officer of Health (MOH) complained that nobody had told him about the plug in the sewer and the escaping sewage. He only found out when Dr Farrar told him. He said that had he known earlier he would have told people to boil water immediately, and the outbreak could have been averted.¹³⁹ The Surveyor said that when he discovered the plug, he did not think the blockage was a danger to the public otherwise he would have told the MOH. When he heard about the outbreak of typhoid, the business with the plug had passed from his mind.¹⁴⁰

Some of the patients were treated at the Isolation Hospital, others were treated at the temporary corrugated iron smallpox hospital that was erected on Kingsclere Road during a smallpox outbreak in 1902 and some were nursed at home.¹⁴¹ The council's Health Committee also arranged for six hospital huts that had been erected at Alton during the Boer War to be transported to Basingstoke and set up in the grounds of the Isolation Hospital. One of the huts was used as a dormitory for nurses. In all, the committee employed 27 nurses during the epidemic, in addition to ward-maids, cooks and laundry-maids.¹⁴² The committee considered whether to charge the patients affected by the epidemic for the cost of their treatment at the Isolation Hospital and the temporary hospital, but decided against it.¹⁴³

The Council set up a sick relief fund. When the fund was eventually wound up, it had received £730 14s..2d. which it spent relieving 163 sufferers and families.¹⁴⁴ Expenditure was a mixture of cash payments, reimbursing people for out of pocket expenses such as payments to nurses, and paying rent to landlords where the breadwinner was unable to work; payments to convalescent homes, doctors' fees; and relief tickets for presentation at various butchers and grocers.¹⁴⁵

The epidemic cost the Basingstoke ratepayers over £5,000 for the costs of huts, furniture and bedding, medical attendance, printing handbills, disinfectant, nurses, providing a temporary

¹³⁸ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 14 Oct. 1905; HRO, 148M71/1/5/32/2.

¹³⁹ HRO, 148M71/1/5/32/5 Medical Officer's report.

¹⁴⁰ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 4 Nov. 1905.

¹⁴¹ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 7 Apr. 1906.

¹⁴² HRO, 148M71/1/5/32/2.

¹⁴³ HRO, 148M71/1/11/8; *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 16 Dec. 1905.

¹⁴⁴ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 30 Jun. 1906.

¹⁴⁵ HRO, 148M71/1/5/32/10, Papers relating to groceries sent to people with typhoid.

water supply, compensation payments to some of the sufferers, legal fees, and other expenses.¹⁴⁶

Sewerage after the Typhoid Epidemic

In the 1905 municipal election campaign, the Ratepayers' Association candidates, Frederick Prance (solicitor) and Edwin White (timber merchant), fought for an enquiry into the epidemic in the town. They demanded provision of pure water and opposed wasting money on the supply of electricity in preference to completing a better drainage system. They were elected by large majorities.¹⁴⁷

After the epidemic, Dr Farrar reported that nearly all houses in the town were provided with outdoor water closets apart from a few houses in Cliddesden and some cottages built for the Great Western Railway employees in South View which had pail closets emptied twice a week. Sewage disposal worked on a dual system. Storm water drains took excess water from roads directly into the River Loddon. Water from roofs, yards and water closets drained into the sewers which were flushed twice a day by 14 automatic flushing tanks. The originally badly laid sewage pipes had allowed seepage into the soil and conversely excess groundwater entered the pipes causing them to buckle. On occasions 1¼ million gallons a day of mixed subsoil water and sewage had to be lifted by the pumping station which frequently could not cope. By the time of Farrar's inspection, improvements had already begun to cement the pipe joints, replace broken sections and to lay an adequate subsoil drain. The latter drained into the Loddon by an outfall in the tail water of Basingstoke Mill at a rate of 1½ million gallons a day and the pumping station lifted a much reduced rate of sewage of 314,300 gallons a day.¹⁴⁸

With the influx of troops during the First World War, a further 14 a. were leased by the Authority from Lord Bolton adjoining the existing farm. This was used from 1915 to 1916. In 1919 this land plus a further 41 a. was purchased from Lord Bolton for £6,500 with an estimated cost of £6,850 for the works. This brought the total area for irrigation to 77 a. As

¹⁴⁶ HRO, 148M71/1/5/32/16 Williams v. Basingstoke Corporation; *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 20 Oct. 1906.

¹⁴⁷ HRO, 19A02/3/10; *Hants & Berks Gazette*, 21 & 28 Oct. & 4 Nov. 1905.

¹⁴⁸ Parl. Papers, 1907, ([Cd. 3656], XXV.1), p. 90-93.

this expansion was urgent, a sub-committee of the borough council was elected with powers to proceed without having to wait for approval from the Works Committee. Ames, Croster & Co. Ltd. were contracted to do the work.¹⁴⁹ The Council were confident that this would cater for a population of 19,000 assuming that growth for the next 30 years was the same as for the previous 30 years.¹⁵⁰

Further extensions to the farm and improvements to the old farm were carried out in 1922¹⁵¹ employing 40 men for 16 to 17 weeks with a small contribution to the cost coming from the Unemployment Grants Committee.¹⁵² The net cost of the pumping operation for that year was reduced by the sale of crops totalling £290 some of which fed the entire borough's team of working horses.¹⁵³ A newly installed meter registered that 79 million gallons a year of effluent were pumped to the farm in 1923.¹⁵⁴ All new build houses were connected to the sewage system and by 1925, following a particularly wet year, just under 122 million gallons of sewage and subsoil water were pumped at a cost of £961. There was 56 a. of cultivated land producing 685 tons of mangolds, wheat, oats, straw and hay sold at £631. The cost of running the farm was £1,742 including interest on the original loan.¹⁵⁵

With the addition of some individual street extensions, this system continued into the 1960s, the sewage farm catering for a population of 36,000. New sewer pipes were laid in anticipation of the London overspill population growth of 50,000. The borough commissioned Lemon & Blizard to build a new sewage treatment works in Whitmarsh Lane, Chineham at a cost of £3¼ million (Fig. 10).¹⁵⁶ Central government contributed £1½ million. The Basing Road beam engines were offered for preservation but were eventually scrapped.¹⁵⁷ The new plant was operational by 1967 and a number of households within the

¹⁴⁹ *Hants & Berks Gazette*, 25 Dec. 1920.

¹⁵⁰ *Hants & Berks Gazette*, 11 Dec. 1920.

¹⁵¹ *Hants & Berks Gazette*, 14 Oct. 1922.

¹⁵² *Hants & Berks Gazette*, 18 Feb. 1922. The Unemployment Grants Committee was set up by the Government in 1920 to assist local authorities in carrying out approved public works schemes other than work on roads or housing schemes.

¹⁵³ *Hants & Berks Gazette*, 5 May 1923.

¹⁵⁴ *Hants & Berks Gazette*, 14 Oct. 1922.

¹⁵⁵ *Hants & Berks Gazette*, 25 Apr. 1925.

¹⁵⁶ www.google.co.uk/maps (accessed 14 Feb. 2017).

¹⁵⁷ B. Butler (ed.), *The Dream Fulfilled, Basingstoke Town Development 1961-78*.

borough and the surrounding rural district received main sewerage for the first time. 65,000 cubic metres of effluent per day were discharged into the River Loddon.¹⁵⁸

From 1 April 1974 the responsibility for sewerage and sewage disposal passed from the borough to the Thames Regional Water Authority.¹⁵⁹ The 1989 Water Act enabled parts of the sewerage industry to pass into the private sector. Sewage responsibilities for Basingstoke transferred to the newly established company of Thames Water.¹⁶⁰ Kemble Water Holdings Ltd, a consortium of institutional investors, acquired Thames Water in 2006.¹⁶¹



Figure 10 *Whitmarsh Lane, Chineham, Sewage Treatment Works (2017).*

In 2010 the level of effluent in the water of the Loddon was high at 42.7 per cent, and even higher at 58 per cent during low levels in dry periods. Thames Water was charged with not meeting its biodiversity duty.¹⁶² In July 2011 the Department for Environment, Food and

¹⁵⁸ *Fact File River Loddon, National Rivers Authority*, www.environmentdata.org/archive/ealit:2993 (accessed 13 Feb. 2017).

¹⁵⁹ B. Butler (ed.), *The Dream Fulfilled, Basingstoke Town Development 1961-78*.

¹⁶⁰ <https://corporate.thameswater.co.uk> (accessed 9 Mar. 2017).

¹⁶¹ <https://corporate.thameswater.co.uk> (accessed 9 Mar. 2017).

¹⁶² Report to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2010), www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/node/6548 (accessed 13 Feb. 2017).

Rural Affairs (DEFRA) made sewerage companies, namely Thames Water in Basingstoke, responsible for private sewers and lateral drains from 1 October 2011 and private pumping stations from 1 October 2016.¹⁶³

A major upgrade programme was undertaken at the sewage treatment works in 2014.¹⁶⁴ Ammonia and phosphate levels in the Loddon were monitored in 2015 anticipating house building projections of 748-850 houses per year to 2029.¹⁶⁵ Monitoring of the outflow is ongoing in 2017. The River Loddon is designated as a Site of Importance to Nature Conservation (SINC).¹⁶⁶ A planning application was submitted in October 2016 by Thames Water Utilities Ltd. for expansion of the works to include an enhanced sludge digestion scheme to cope with present and future demand.¹⁶⁷

Medical Services in Basingstoke to 1925

There is evidence of medical services in Basingstoke from the Middle Ages. Walter de Merton who subsequently founded Merton College in Oxford and was Lord Chancellor and Bishop of Rochester came from a family who owned land around Basingstoke and he remembered a small hospital dedicated to St John Baptist for the care of 'sick folk and wayfarers'. Between 1230 and 1240 he granted land to endow a new chapel and hospital as a place of retirement for aged and infirm priests but also for the care of the 'wayfaring poor of Christ'. It was situated where the new town centre was in 2018. This seems to have ceased around the time of the Reformation.¹⁶⁸

Health provision in the 17th century

There is no evidence to show what diseases or discomforts might have afflicted the population of Basingstoke in the 17th century other than references to the plague. One is a

¹⁶³ <https://www.thameswater.co.uk> (accessed 9 Mar. 2017).

¹⁶⁴ *Thames Water: Basingstoke (Buckskin area) Drainage Strategy*.
<https://corporate.thameswater.co.uk/> (accessed 13 Feb. 2017).

¹⁶⁵ <http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/content/doclib/964.pdf> (accessed 14 Feb. 2017).

¹⁶⁶ <https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/content/doclib/1043.pdf> (accessed 20 Apr. 2017).

¹⁶⁷ <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/pnadetail?noticeUID=6983> (accessed 11 Feb. 2017). Ordnance Survey maps of various dates for Old Basing indicate a disused sewage works at NGR SU 6731 5451. No documentary evidence has been found for this and personal comment from local residents suggests that this is incorrect.

¹⁶⁸ VCH of Hampshire: volume 2/pp208-211. London, 1903

record of a meeting of JPs in the town in 1603 and is concerned with the provisioning of Winchester during an outbreak of plague in the city; the other records the outbreak of plague in Basingstoke in 1666, a year in which many towns in Hampshire were affected.¹⁶⁹ Bubonic plague and typhus were the epidemic diseases of the period. Malaria and tuberculosis were endemic, and measles common and often fatal, especially among children.¹⁷⁰ There was little to be done when these illnesses struck except to give nursing care the patient and to try to relieve the symptoms.

Treatment was usually the responsibility of the women in the household. There were home-made remedies for common complaints – the ingredients purchased from the apothecary – and many women were skilled in their preparation.¹⁷¹ Recipes for these remedies, with recommendations for their use, would be exchanged among family, friends and acquaintances. Other remedies were prepared by the apothecary and purchased ready-made.

Basingstoke was not a large town. With the surrounding villages and smaller settlements, the population might have totalled 3,100 at most.¹⁷² The figures are important because it required a population of a certain size to support the business of any professional man who might choose to set up there: the physician and surgeon required patients who could pay them, and the apothecary needed sufficient customers to patronize his shop. The sources show that at any one time there was just one apothecary serving the town. The earliest recorded was William White, who died in 1636.¹⁷³ He was followed by his son (or perhaps his grandson), Hugh White, who was active in second half of the century and died in 1688. He left his shop to his son John, who appears not to have carried on the business.¹⁷⁴ Then came Henry Barfoot, who died in 1703 and might have overlapped with Hugh White.¹⁷⁵

There is no record of any physician or surgeon in the town before 1650, when Isaac Myles, surgeon, signed a lease for a property in the town.¹⁷⁶ Barnard Wright ‘practitioner in physic

¹⁶⁹ HRO 44M69/G3/154 and 154M84W/3

¹⁷⁰ Laurence, A. (1994) *Women in England 1500-1760: A Social History*, London: Phoenix Press, pp. 95-98

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² Hughes, E. and White, P. (1991) *The Hampshire Hearth Tax Assessment, 1665 with the Southampton Assessments for 1662 and 1670*, Winchester: Hampshire County Council

¹⁷³ HRO 1636B/49

¹⁷⁴ PROB 11/391/225

¹⁷⁵ PROB 5/4857, 4858, PROB 11/475/325

¹⁷⁶ HRO 20M51/3

and churgery' died in 1685.¹⁷⁷ The 1690s saw an increase in numbers: in 1692 Arthur Knight and Robert Kemp, both surgeons of Basingstoke, were signatories to the license attesting to the apprenticeship of Richard Worssum of Overton to Alex Kempe, surgeon of Basingstoke, who died in 1692 or earlier.¹⁷⁸

The first evidence of a licensed midwife practicing in the town was in 1704, when Elizabeth Wells, widow and midwife, testified regarding the father of two bastard children born to Mary Gage.¹⁷⁹ Any woman experienced in childbirth could act as midwife but licenses could only be awarded by the Church of England.

All three apothecaries left wills and for William White and Henry Barfoot there are also inventories of their goods. The wills are principally concerned with the distribution of lands and houses among their children, but the inventories list all the goods in their shops and enable us to see the scope of their work in detail. More than 110 items were listed in William White's shop, some exotic, such as unicorn's horn (possibly the tusk of a narwhal, most likely used for decorative purposes in the shop rather than as a medicine) and many familiar to us today: spices such as nutmegs, cinnamon, mace, ginger, saffron and turmeric, all with medicinal uses, as an aid to digestion and as stimulants for the stomach. There were the stronger and weaker purgatives: prunes, rhubarb and senna, also an unfamiliar herb called turbith 'of violent purging quality'. Musk, civet and ambergris were used in perfumery, as they are today; musk was also of use in 'spasmodic disorders, malignant putrid fevers, hiccoughs'. Opium and laudanum (tincture of opium), the only available pain-killers, were used widely and extensively. Molasses, a good source of iron and calcium, were sometimes taken as a tonic in spring to rid the body of 'winter toxins'. Apothecaries also prepared ointments and plasters to treat skin diseases, which might include pitch, resins or brimstone. The inventory of Henry Barfoot included many of the same items, except for opium and laudanum, which might represent a tightening of prescribing rules.

No wills survive for any of the barber surgeons, just an inventory of the goods of Barnard Wright. Sadly, it tells us little about his work: in his study were 'several books' – not

¹⁷⁷ HRO 1685AD/128

¹⁷⁸ HRO 21M65/E13/2/1

¹⁷⁹ 148M71/1/5/6/8/18

itemised – worth £5 and in a chamber, two ‘chirurgeries tools and implements’ and a case of silver tools, together worth £6. Altogether his goods were worth £60 3s. 8d.

A point of interest is that Kemps were active throughout north Hampshire in the latter part of the century and the early 1700s. As well as Alex and Robert Kemp in Basingstoke, Alexander Kemp was a barber surgeon in Bishopstoke (d. 1688), Bennet Kemp barber surgeon in Alton, and Richard Kemp of Whitchurch physician and surgeon, apprenticed to Robert Kemp of Basingstoke in 1710.¹⁸⁰

Health care in the 18th century

At the beginning of the 18th century physicians, who were all university graduates, were at the apex of the medical hierarchy. Physicians dealt with cases of internal disease, diagnosing their clients by the taking of detailed case histories, observation of symptoms and uroscopy (examination of the patient’s urine) but as attending university was costly few doctors at this time were qualified physicians. The 1784 *Hampshire Directory* reveals there were no physicians practising in Basingstoke¹⁸¹ so patients from the town requiring the help of a physician had to travel to larger towns such as Winchester or Portsmouth or pay a medical specialist to visit them. Basingstoke patients who could afford it did, however, have a rare advantage at this time as they could be referred to physicians at the Hampshire County Hospital in Winchester, the first provincial hospital in the country, founded in 1736. The hospital was founded to care for patients from all over Hampshire and funds were sought county-wide.

Most qualified medical care within the community in this era was given by surgeon-apothecaries, the forerunners of our present-day general practitioners. The *Hampshire Directory* lists four doctors practising in Basingstoke in 1784. They were John Covey, a surgeon-apothecary, and John Gale, John Lyford and John Ricketts who all stated they were surgeons and man-midwives. These doctors would have received their medical training by being apprenticed to a master surgeon for up to seven years. In the first half of the century surgeons were expected to apply for a bishop’s licence in order to practise. When Richard Kemp of Basingstoke applied in 1710 his testimonial stated he was ‘skillfull in the Art and Practice of Physick & Chirurgery and a very fitt person to have a licence granted to

¹⁸⁰ HRO 1688B/22, 21M65E13/2/8, 21M65/E13/2/17

¹⁸¹ HRO, 1784 Hampshire Directory.

him'.¹⁸² It was signed by ten sponsors, including his father Robert, also a Basingstoke surgeon, to whom he had been apprenticed. Young men often served medical apprenticeships with their doctor father or uncle. There were a number of these medical dynasties in Hampshire, and in the Basingstoke area these included the Kemps, Lyfords and the Coveys. The majority of 18th-century doctors were men though occasionally a woman appeared in the records. An advertisement in the *Hampshire Chronicle* in April 1788 states that 'Mrs Ricketts, Widow and Relict of John Ricketts, late of Basingstoke, Surgeon, Apothecary, and Man Midwife, deceased, begs leave to acquaint the Public that she, with skilful and proper assistance, continues to carry on business in all its branches at her house'.¹⁸³ Surgeon-apothecaries dealt with a variety of cases caused by illness or accident, and they performed a wide range of surgical operations including amputations, removal of bladder stones and the excision of tumours. As there were no analgesics available in the 18th century the surgery would have been performed using laudanum or alcohol to deaden the pain. In the 1784 *Hampshire Directory* Charles Shebbeare of Basingstoke is recorded as a chemist and druggist, and there would have been other shop keepers in the town selling medicines, often at the same time as groceries.¹⁸⁴ In addition to treating clients who visited them, doctors made house calls, often riding their horses many miles, night or day, in all weathers, to visit patients. Most surgeon-apothecaries charged an average of 2s. 6d. per visit but if the patients were wealthy fees charged were often more. Doctors also charged extra if they had long journeys to reach their patients, sometimes as much as four times the basic price, as shown in the accounts of a surgeon-apothecary working in Odiham, a small town near Basingstoke, in the second half of the 18th century.¹⁸⁵ Some bills in parish overseers of the poor archives indicated that even paupers received qualified medical care in this era. An example of this is a bill sent to the Odiham overseers in respect of a 'newborn child' who required ointment for 'several blisters all over it'.¹⁸⁶ In addition to treating their individual patients medics also dealt with epidemics of childhood ailments, typhoid and small pox. In 1781 Basingstoke suffered a prolonged small pox epidemic during which many people died as shown in the parish burial register of All Saints church.¹⁸⁷ When it is possible to analyse the mortality rates of a town (as in Odiham near Basingstoke in the 1780s) with the number

¹⁸² HRO, 21 M 65 E13/ testimonial 2.

¹⁸³ Hampshire Chronicle, 7 Apr. 1788.

¹⁸⁴ HRO, 1784 *Hampshire directory*.

¹⁸⁵ Wellcome Institute, MS 3974, Account No. 161.

¹⁸⁶ Wellcome Institute, MS3974, account no. 202.

¹⁸⁷ HRO, 174M74/PR8.

of cases during epidemics it can be seen that the success rates of curing patients were remarkably good.¹⁸⁸ Severe illness was not necessarily a death sentence in this era.

Not all the surgeon-apothecary's work involved illness. Childbirth was one aspect of health care that some doctors dealt with which accounts for the title of 'man-midwife' used by three of Basingstoke's four doctors in 1784. At the beginning of the 18th century childbirth was almost exclusively a female ritual. Male doctors were only called in if it was necessary to remove the foetus surgically in obstructed labour. As the century progressed, attending women in childbirth became a growth area for male doctors as they realised the financial potential. It became fashionable to employ a male obstetrician even though they charged far more than female midwives did. A man-midwife could charge as much as £50 especially when attending wealthier women, while midwives in the community charged an average of 5s. Attending mothers in childbirth gave medics the status of trusted family doctors and as the middling class increased more people could afford to pay for medical help. This change in the practice of midwifery caused rivalry between male and female midwives.

Midwives trained through informal apprenticeships with experienced midwives, often their mothers or other female relatives. As they received no formal training midwives were often perceived to be unqualified or 'irregular' practitioners by the doctors they worked alongside, but their practical education was probably comprehensive and often superior to that of the doctors, at least in cases of normal childbirth. In the archives one can find testimonials for midwives such as the one for Elizabeth Harris of Basingstoke in which it is stated that she 'is a woman well experienced in the Art of Midwifery, and that she hath for several years past successfully used the said Art'.¹⁸⁹ The controversy between male and female midwives continued throughout the 18th century. The women saw their male colleagues as a 'band of mercenaries'¹⁹⁰ while the men claimed female midwives were 'dram-drinking matrons' and 'ignorant beldames'.¹⁹¹

There were certainly a number of 'irregular' practitioners involved in health care in the 18th century and Basingstoke would have had its share of visiting quacks like other towns.

¹⁸⁸ Wellcome Institute, MS 3974, and HRO, 47M81/PR3.

¹⁸⁹

¹⁹⁰ J. Towler and J. Bramall, *Midwives in History and Society*, (1986), 104.

¹⁹¹ Jean Donnison, *Midwives and Medical Men*, (1977), 33.

However, quacks were not necessarily frowned upon. They charged less than the regular doctors although their remedies were similar to the medicines sold by qualified medics. Quacks often placed advertisements in local newspapers, either announcing when and where they could be consulted, or praising the qualities of their medicines. In 1788 such an advertisement appeared in the *Hampshire Chronicle* singing the praises of 'True Daffy's Elixir' which apparently cured a total of twenty-two ailments including tuberculosis, scurvy, piles, ague and 'disorders peculiar to women'.¹⁹² Quacks rarely visited rural areas so people in surrounding villages would have travelled to Basingstoke to consult them. In addition to consulting quacks selling the latest 'magic' potions, other unqualified 'irregulars' that Basingstoke inhabitants would have consulted included bonesetters and tooth-pullers.

Women were important in the provision of medical care during this period. With virtually no institutions involved in the care of the sick, most patients were nursed at home by their female relatives or servants. These women were also repositories of traditional lore regarding the treatment of all manner of complaints. Eighteenth century recipe books frequently had recipes for medicines, the ingredients of which look alarming to 21st-century eyes. Self-diagnosis and self-medication were seen as sensible as sending for the doctor, although, in fact, not understanding the causes of illness people, including the educated, placed their faith in *anything* that might help. When Parson Woodforde had earache in 1781, he 'put a roasted Onion in my ear going to bed'.¹⁹³ He doesn't report whether the treatment was successful. However, despite a lack of insight into the causes of good and bad health the inhabitants of Basingstoke were probably well served by their four doctors in the 18th century and the health of the community would be envied by many third world countries today.

Medical services in the 19th century

In the 19th century ill people were still looked after at home by doctors, known as general practitioners, from c.1850. These doctors were in private practice and charged a fee on an item of service basis. In 1828 five surgeons, including two father and son partnerships,

¹⁹² *Hampshire Chronicle*, 23 June 1788.

¹⁹³ James Woodforde, *The Diary of a Country Parson*, Folio Society (1992), 225.

served the 3165 residents of Basingstoke, falling to three in 1851 and rising to five again by 1871 for a population of 5574 and falling to four in 1881.¹⁹⁴

Before 1834 the vestry employed local doctors when needed to care for the poor who could not afford doctors.¹⁹⁵ In 1835 the new Basingstoke Poor Law Union employed doctors on an annual contract basis to provide medical care for all the poor in the union, including surgery, accidents and midwifery consultations. These doctors sometimes worried that some of their fee paying patients may leave them for fear of ‘contamination’ from their contact with patients funded by the Poor Law Union. Drugs and routine treatment costs were covered by the doctors within their contracts, and their services were usually accessed via the local union relieving officer. Exceptional and complex costs were financed by the union. Two doctors were assigned to Basingstoke; Edward Covey and John Nicholls, each at a stipend of £170 a year.¹⁹⁶

After the 1840 Vaccination Act, smallpox vaccination was made freely available to the poor, and this was extended in 1853 to make vaccination compulsory for all infants less than 4 months old.¹⁹⁷ In 1897, the union bought supplies of the antitoxin for treating diphtheria.¹⁹⁸

Cod liver oil and quinine for malaria were routinely made available to the poor by 1866¹⁹⁹ and this continued to the end of the poor law system in 1929.

The union supported disabled people and sometimes sent them to appropriate institutions for training. The mentally ill were supported within the community, taken into the workhouse if this was not possible, or sent to an asylum if they were dangerous or of ‘difficult social habits’. The union also paid an annual subscription to the hospital in Winchester to cover the cost of treatment for the poor.²⁰⁰

After the National Insurance Act passed by the Lloyd George government in 1911 workers who earned less than £160 per annum had to contribute four old pence a week, their employers three old pence per a week and central government two old pence per week. This gave the worker free medical care including for tuberculosis and some sick pay and maternity

¹⁹⁴ Pigot & Co trade dir. (Hants), 1828, 1844; census 1851, 1871, 1881.

¹⁹⁵ HRO, 46M74/PV2, 1817-1841.

¹⁹⁶ HRO, PL3/5/1, 1835-1836.

¹⁹⁷ HRO, PL3/5/8, 1850-1854.

¹⁹⁸ HRO, PL3/5/23, 1897-1899.

¹⁹⁹ HRO, PL3/5/12, 1865-1869.

²⁰⁰ HRO, PL3/5/* series.

benefits. Their families however were not covered by this scheme and had to pay for medical care unless they were very poor.

The general practitioners were paid an annual capitation fee per patient and the patients were said to be on their 'panel'. After 1919 the contributions and the benefits were both increased but the capitation fee paid to the doctor was reduced.

Basingstoke cottage hospital

In 1867, Wyndham Portal, a local paper mill owner from Overton- a village eight miles from Basingstoke, wrote to the Mayor of Basingstoke suggesting the founding of a Cottage Hospital to care for suitable cases among the poor of Basingstoke and the surrounding area who could not be adequately treated at home. This was approved by the town council but then went into abeyance.²⁰¹

In 1874 the town council agreed to support such a hospital and a meeting of representatives of the town council, local doctors and other persons interested took place.

A site on Hackwood Road was found and plans were drawn up for an eight-bed hospital at a cost of £600. No infectious cases including tuberculosis were to be admitted. Subscriptions to cover the cost were sought. One substantial donor was Thomas Pain who lived in Basingstoke- he was a director of Tattersalls the race horse auctioneers and Managing Director of The Land Loan and Enfranchisement Company. It was not felt appropriate to name a ward after him and therefore it was named Audley Ward after the house in which he lived. Patients had to be recommended for admission either by a subscriber [who paid an annual subscription and included local parish councils] or their employer who usually paid the fee of between 2s. and 8s. per week of their stay. The running of the hospital was to be overseen by a committee with representatives from the borough council, local worthies and local doctors.

The hospital opened in 1879. The local general practitioners cared for the patients. One nurse was employed who was to be helped by a woman when necessary for the work of the ward. In the first year 45 patients were treated. In 1887 the year of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee a new Victoria Ward was opened. In 1895 the cost of maintaining the hospital was £423 and 60 patients were treated. In 1897 Councillor May paid for a new wing- the May Wing .

²⁰¹ HRO 8M62/6

In 1907 Sir Wyndham Portal paid for a mortuary. Various fund raising events were held and on ‘ pound days ‘ local schoolchildren were encouraged to bring to the hospital a pound’s weight of any kind of food or dry goods.

In 1901-1902 soldiers injured in the South African war were transferred from Netley Military Hospital. A further wing was added in 1910 –the cost being borne by the hospital. In that year 144 patients were treated and the cost of maintaining the hospital was £570. Between 1914 and 1918 17 beds were used for injured soldiers and 133 were treated. In 1915 and 1916 there was extensive rebuilding and alteration. The operating theatre was enlarged and modernised, the kitchen and domestic offices were improved, and a new block for night nurses was built. Central heating was installed –being paid for by Mr John Liddell in memory of his son Captain John Liddell VC who was killed in action. In that year 107 civilian patients were treated at a cost of £900. A visiting surgeon was appointed-prior to this surgery had been performed by the general practitioners who also administered the anaesthetics. A private ward for paying patients was provided.

In 1919 May Ward was enlarged to 24 beds. In 1920-1921 X-ray equipment was installed-a gift from the Royal Hampshire County Hospital in Winchester, the cost of installation being paid for by Mrs Simonds as a memorial to her late husband. In 1920 a Saturday Club was founded to help to provide funds to pay for the costs of treating patients. In 1922 a visiting ophthalmic surgeon was appointed and an electric lift was installed at a cost of £978 and in the following year a children’s ward was built costing £930. Around this time there were regular reports about the hospital in the local newspaper *the Hants and Berks Gazette*.

In 1921 the census showed the population of Basingstoke to be 12,414. In 1923 five physicians and surgeons are listed ²⁰² One of these was usually also the Medical Officer of Health who was responsible for vaccinations.

In 1925 the name was changed to Basingstoke Hospital and 547 patients were treated with running costs of £2183. [There is a reference to “ a change of attitude of the public towards the hospital” but this is not enlarged upon.]In the late 1930s fund raising events were held in order to build a new hospital but this went into abeyance with the onset of the Second World War. In 1948 the hospital was taken over by the National Health Service and continued to be run by the general practitioners with visiting consultants from Winchester and London until

²⁰² Kelly's Directory of Hampshire-1923

Basingstoke District Hospital was built on its present site in the early 1970s. It later became known as Hackwood Road Hospital.



Figure 11 *Basingstoke Cottage Hospital c.1900.*

During the First World War there was a Red Cross Hospital for wounded soldiers in West Ham House on Worting Road. This closed in January 1919. On 29 March 1919 the *Hants and Berks Gazette* published a letter from E G Bullock, Commandant at West Ham Red Cross hospital thanking all those who had helped the hospital. He said that during the time that they were open [just over four years] they treated between 1,600 and 1,700 patients, performed 82 operations and had only four deaths.

Hospitals for infectious diseases

There were other hospitals specifically for the treatment of infectious diseases in and around Basingstoke during this period. A local historian Arthur Attwood said he had received a report of a death from smallpox in a Pest House in Chapel Hill in 1758. A pest house was

recorded in a Charter of George III in 1784.²⁰³In 1840 a new railway bridge was to be built on this site and the railway company paid for the building of a new Pest House near the Cricketer's Inn adjacent to what is now the Victory Roundabout with one woman paid to feed the patients. In 1868 a public meeting approved the building of a new hospital for infectious diseases but this was not begun until 1880. By 1899 the railway company wanted to expand the goods yard on this land and a purpose built brick Isolation Hospital was built on the Kingsclere Road. In 1905 it was described as having forty beds.²⁰⁴A quarter of a mile away there was a corrugated iron Smallpox Hospital. The commonest infectious diseases that were admitted were scarlet fever and diphtheria. The Isolation Hospital ceased to be used in the 1940s and was later used as offices by the Health Authority when it was known as Bridge House.



Figure 12 *The former isolation hospital on Kingsclere Road.*

Basingstoke workhouse and it's infirmary

²⁰³ Taking the Pulse of Basingstoke ed. Applin B-2005. Basingstoke Archaeological and Historical Society

²⁰⁴ Report of Medical Inspectors of the Local Government Board on the outbreak of enteric fever in Basingstoke in 1905.

The Basingstoke Workhouse was built on Basing Road in 1836.²⁰⁵ (See *Basingstoke Workhouse and Poor Law Union*) The union contracted Medical Officers to cover its various districts. An advertisement in *the Hants and Berks Gazette* in December 1878 offered a salary of £85 per annum exclusive of the authorised fees for surgical and midwifery cases and for visiting lunatic paupers. The medical officer was usually also the Medical Officer of Health and public vaccinator for his district for which he received a further £38 18s.6d. a year [The average agricultural wage in 1878 was £36.10s.2d. per annum²⁰⁶] The workhouse had an infirmary wing to care for residents who also had an illness-it had 40 beds in 1848. It was not until 1900 that the workhouse built a separate infirmary block about 200 yards from the main building. The workhouse closed as a result of the Local Government Act of 1929. The main workhouse building was used for a variety of purposes but gradually fell into disrepair. The infirmary continued to be used for long stay geriatric patients, convalescent patients from Basingstoke hospital and in the 1970s for beds where the local general practitioners could look after their own patients. For a period it was renamed Cowdery Down Hospital to try to remove the stigma of the workhouse. By the 1970s it was again known as Basing Road Hospital. It finally closed in 1974.



Figure 13 *Basingstoke Infirmary*.

²⁰⁵ Basingstoke Workhouse and Poor Law Union-Large, B 2016 Basingstoke

²⁰⁶ British Labour Statistics: Historical Abstract 1886-1968 [Department of Employment and Productivity]

Hospitals for psychiatric illness

In 1898 Hampshire County Council began to consider the building of a second asylum to serve the north of the county as the County Lunatic Asylum at Knowle near Fareham was becoming overcrowded²⁰⁷. A site was found with good railway access at Park Prewett farm which was on the Vyne estate and then in the parish of Sherborne St John but was in Basingstoke in 2018. Plans were delayed and building work did not begin until 1910. By 1917 the main building and three villas were completed and they were immediately taken over by Number Four Canadian General Hospital-a military hospital. It eventually opened as a mental hospital in 1921 with a private patient block being opened in 1930. Again in the Second World War the hospital was requisitioned by the Emergency Medical Service for civilian and service patients. In 1940 Sir Harold Gillies opened his plastic surgery unit at Rooksdown House. The hospital finally reverted to being a mental hospital in 1948. The plastic surgery unit did not move to Roehampton until 1955. Pinewood Hospital at Park Prewett opened in 1955 for the treatment of informal psychiatric patients.



Figure 14 *Park Prewett Hospital with soldiers in 1916.*

²⁰⁷ HRO 279M87

Cemeteries

In 1853 William Ranger reported that there were six burial grounds in Basingstoke. One was attached to the parish church; a second was the Liten at the ruins of the Holy Ghost chapel; a third in London Street belonged to the Independent Chapel; the Society of Friends had grounds in Totterdown and Wote Street; a sixth was attached to Lady Huntingdon's Chapel.²⁰⁸

The Liten, approximately 3.25 a. in size,²⁰⁹ was established in the 13th century, situated to the north of the town on a chalk hill. A chapel was completed here by the Fraternity of the Holy Ghost in 1244. This was enlarged in 1524 by Lord Sandys of The Vyne at Sherborne St John, when he added the Chapel of the Holy Trinity as a private burial place for the Sandys family. The ruins of both chapels in 2017 are Grade II* listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments.²¹⁰

The Society of Friends purchased a small plot of land from George Webb in 1696 for use as a burial ground.²¹¹ The Totterdown burial ground for the Society of Friends was founded in 1775.²¹² Lady Huntingdon's Chapel was founded in 1780, but the last burial was recorded in 1833.²¹³ The first burial in the ground attached to the Independent Chapel in London Street was in 1838 but interments also occurred in the vaults between 1837 and 1850.²¹⁴ In 1700 there were 210 burials in the town; 318 in 1800²¹⁵ and an average of 466 between 1821 and 1830.²¹⁶ There was no dedicated burial ground for Roman Catholics.

²⁰⁸ TNA, MH 12/10688 Ranger's Report.

²⁰⁹ *Post Office Dir. Hants. & IOW*, (1875), 28.

²¹⁰ <http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101242913-church-of-the-holy-ghost-basingstoke-and-deane#.WVJ2hevyuvE> (accessed 27 Jun. 2017).

²¹¹ HRO, 24M54/312/10.

²¹² Hampshire Advertiser & Salisbury Guardian, 16 Jun. 1855; White's Dir. of Hants, 1875, 28; *White's Dir. Hants* (1859), 488-9; HRO, 24M54/312/14..

²¹³ TNA, MH 12/10688 Ranger's Report; Hampshire Advertiser & Salisbury Guardian, 16 Jun. 1855; *White's Dir. Hants* (1875), 28; *White's Dir. Hants* (1859), 488-9; HRO, 24M54/312/14.

²¹⁴ TNA, MH 12/10688 Ranger's Report.

²¹⁵ *Questions* (Parl. Papers HL), Abstracts vol. 4. p.275.

²¹⁶ *Abstract of Population Returns of Great Britain (Parl. Papers 1831 (1833))* 149.

The Basingstoke Burial Board was formed c.1850 and purchased an additional 3 a. of land adjoining the Liten²¹⁷ from the trustees of Charles May. This became known as South View Cemetery.²¹⁸ The independent burial grounds were all closed under the order of the Secretary of State in 1856.²¹⁹ Foundation stones for two separate chapels, built of chequered flint and Bath stone, for Episcopalians and Dissenters were laid in October 1857.²²⁰ A lodge was built in similar style at the entrance to the ground which survives in 2017.²²¹ Just over half of the new ground was consecrated for Episcopalian burials on 29 July 1858,²²² the remainder being for Dissenters. By 1870 the two chapels were in poor condition²²³ and continued to require repairs until at least 1922.²²⁴ They were subsequently demolished in the 1950s.²²⁵ The cost of the land, buildings and enclosure wall was £3,500.²²⁶

In 1867 the Great Western Railway sold 1,000 sq. yds (836 sq. m.), of land for £100 in the south-east corner of the Liten to the Society of Friends. The money was raised by subscriptions from prominent Quaker families in the town – Steevens, Wallis, Meatyard and Hooper.²²⁷ Between 1873 and 1949, 22 of the 42 graves were dedicated to members of the Wallis family.²²⁸

As space was running out in South View, the Burial Board opened 25.5 a. of land in Worting Road in 1913 for a new cemetery at a cost of £5,200 (Fig. 11).²²⁹ Initially just 10 a. were to be laid out with gardens and burial plots with the remainder to be let for agricultural purposes.²³⁰ A chapel was built in the centre of the 10 a. plot with a lodge for the caretaker at

²¹⁷ *Post Office Dir. Hants* (1867), 481.

²¹⁸ HRO, 21M65/20F/19.

²¹⁹ *Hampshire Advertiser & Salisbury Guardian*, 16 Jun. 1855.

²²⁰ *Hampshire Advertiser & Salisbury Guardian*, 31 Oct. 1857; *Kelly's Post Office Dir. Hants*. (1867), 481.

²²¹ *White's Dir. Hants* (1859), 488-9.

²²² *White's Dir. Hants* (1859), 488-9.

²²³ *Hampshire Advertiser & Salisbury Guardian*, 16 Jun. 1855.

²²⁴ *Hants & Berks Gazette*, 12 Aug. 1922.

²²⁵ D Reavell, *History of South View, Basingstoke*, 10.

²²⁶ *White's Dir. Hants* (1859), 488-9.

²²⁷ HRO, 24M54/313.

²²⁸ HRO, 24M54/494/1; *Hampshire Advertiser*, 10 Dec. 1881.

²²⁹ TNA, HLG 6/992; South View Conservation Group, *A Guide to the Cemetery Landscape & Design – Walk 4*.

²³⁰ TNA, HLG 6/992.

the roadside where new entrance gates and wall bearing the Corporation coat of arms were constructed by Messrs James Smallbone & Sons of Streatley, Berkshire.²³¹ South View was closed to new burials c.1912 but in 2017 was still available for the interment of ashes.²³² Notable Basingstoke residents buried at South View include Thomas Burberry clothing manufacturer, Alfred Milward of Milwards Shoes and John Mares supplier of polar clothing and raincoats.²³³

Worting Road cemetery had space for 11,753 grave plots considered sufficient for 45 years.²³⁴ It was divided into 478 plots for Roman Catholics, 6,491 for Church of England and 4,784 for non-conformists.²³⁵ Burials were accepted from Basingstoke (pop. 11,259) and Eastrop (pop. 281).²³⁶

In 1924 the Imperial War Graves Commission²³⁷ submitted a list of graves in Worting Road and South View of men who had fallen in the First World War and applied for permission to erect the newly designed standard Portland stone CWGC headstones free of charge.²³⁸ There are 22 headstones for Canadian casualties and six British soldiers in Worting Road and 20 in South View, including one Belgian, four Canadians and that of VC holder Captain John Aidan Liddell. One further grave commemorating a Second World War airman was erected in South View and 18 to German and 26 British casualties in Worting Road.²³⁹

In 2017 there are reserved areas in Worting Road for Jewish and Muslim burials.²⁴⁰

²³¹ *Hants & Berks Gazette*, 15 Jun. 1912.

²³² <http://www.friendsofthewillis.org.uk/index.php/history/basingstoke-history-hr> (accessed 27 Jun. 2017).

²³³ <http://www.friendsofthewillis.org.uk/index.php/history/basingstoke-history-hr> (accessed 27 Jun. 2017). Pers. knowledge.

²³⁴ TNA, HLG 6/992.

²³⁵ TNA, HLG 6/992.

²³⁶ TNA, HO 45/10579/181495.

²³⁷ Established May 1917 and renamed CWGC in 1960 <http://www.cwgc.org> (accessed 19 Jul. 2017).

²³⁸ *Hants & Berks Gazette*, 23 Feb. 1924.

²³⁹ <http://www.cwgc.org> (accessed 26 Jun. 2017).

²⁴⁰ <https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk> (accessed 26 Jun. 2017).

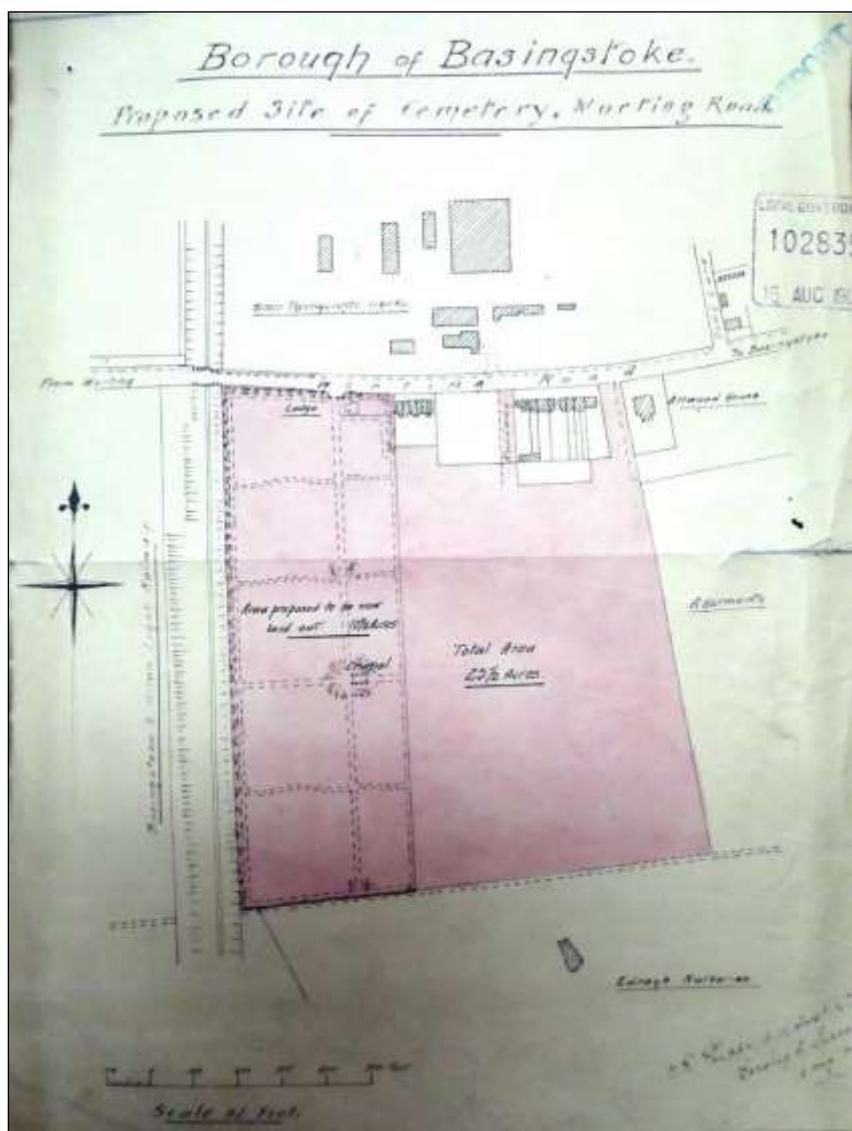


Figure 15 Site of the Worting Road Cemetery (1909).

A privately-owned crematorium was opened in 1998 set in 22 a. of grounds to the south-west of the town on Stockbridge Road, North Waltham.²⁴¹ Prior to this, cremations were carried out in the Park Crematorium, Aldershot opened in 1960.

The Worting Road cemetery is predicted to reach its capacity by 2019/2020 and planning permission was granted in 2015 for a 16-acre site adjacent to the North Waltham crematorium for a new cemetery and chapel designed to cater for burials for a further 95 years.²⁴²

²⁴¹ <http://www.dignityfunerals.co.uk> (accessed 26 Jun. 2017).

²⁴² http://www.gazetteandherald.co.uk/news/13769727.Plan_to_build_new_cemetery_given_green_light/ (accessed 18 Aug. 2017).

Two other burial grounds exist within the District but little supporting documentation has been found. An NHS Foundation cemetery for children and stillbirths lies in the north-west at Rooksdown, near to the original Park Prewett Mental Hospital. Patients from the hospital were buried here but no headstones survive.²⁴³ Another is in the parish of Eastrop surrounding St Mary's church, a building much extended since the 16th century. The earliest monument within the church dates from 1663 and amongst the headstones in the churchyard is a First World War CWGC casualty.²⁴⁴

Gas Supply

Gas was first supplied to Basingstoke in 1834. Interested parties had attended a meeting at the town hall in December 1833 chaired by the Mayor and convened by Mr George Caston, ironmonger, who had previously ascertained opinions in the town,²⁴⁵ to listen to Mr Barlow a London gas engineer, who later was appointed contractor to build the gas works.

The gas company was set up in May 1834 with 39 shareholders and a board of 23 directors in addition to the Chairman (Mr Vigor) and Secretary/Treasurer (George Caston).²⁴⁶ The company was authorised to provide 'inflammable air' or gas under the title of the Basingstoke Gas and Coke Company.²⁴⁷ A site at Norden (Norn) Hill was purchased from Mr Lamb for the erection of a gas works. Once it was constructed, the address became Gasworks Road or Lane.²⁴⁸ The Trustees of the Alton, Reading and Andover roads gave permission for gas mains to be installed under their roads.²⁴⁹ The clerk to the Paving Commissioners held a meeting to consider the proper locations for public lights. Local tradesmen laid the mains and pipes and the first supply of gas was available by mid-September 1834.²⁵⁰

²⁴³ Pers. Comm.

²⁴⁴ <https://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/explore>; <http://www.cwgc.org/> (Accessed 21 Aug. 2017).

²⁴⁵ *Centenary Booklet 1934* – Willis Museum, BWM2010.48.

²⁴⁶ HRO, 19M65/B63.

²⁴⁷ *Centenary Booklet 1934* – Willis Museum, BWM2010.48.

²⁴⁸ Stokes, E., *The Making of Basingstoke*, (2008) 87-88.

²⁴⁹ Minute Book – HRO, 19M65/B63.

²⁵⁰ *Centenary Booklet 1934* – Willis Museum, BWM2010.48.

Samuel Attwood's diary recorded that the gas works were opened on 1 October 1834 with a partial illumination, the band paraded through the town with public dinners and suppers and ringing of bells.²⁵¹

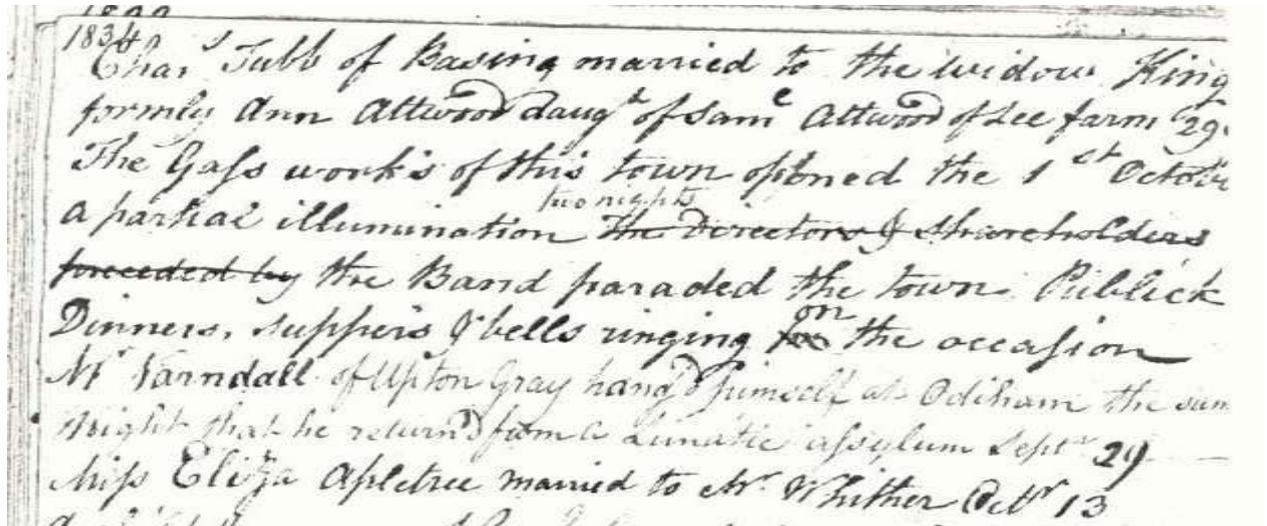


Figure 16 Extract from Samuel Attwood's diary 1834.

It was agreed to supply gas on the following terms:

- 'gas to pass through a meter and be paid for quarterly at rate of 14s per 1000 cu. ft.
- price of rent charges for meters:

	If Rented	If Purchased
A meter for 3 lights	1/6d per quarter	£2 4s.0d
A meter for 5 lights	1/9d per quarter	£2 12s.6d
A meter for 10 lights	2/6d per quarter	£3 12s.6d

- all inside fitting, burners to be paid for and fixed at the expense of the consumer and a stop lock placed on service pipe laid down by Company. Company preserves the right to examine fittings before they are charged with gas
- outdoor lamps burning all year round, excepting the usual moonlight nights, at £3 5s.0d pa including cleaning and lighting'.²⁵²

²⁵¹ HRO, 8M62/27.

²⁵² HRO, 19M65/B63.

The 1815 Paving Act had required the commissioners to be provided with public lights during seven months of year at £3 each and during the whole year at £4 5s.0d. each including maintenance costs, with the exception of the five nights of each full moon.²⁵³ The turnpike trusts advised on the number of lights they required. The initial number of private lights exceeded 150 which, together with the sale of coke and a few public lights, provided revenue for the first year.²⁵⁴ Advertisements were placed in the *Hampshire Chronicle* and *Reading Mercury* inviting coal and coke merchants to tender to supply coal,²⁵⁵ the basic requirement to produce gas. New jobs were created for stokers, lamp-lighters, fitters, etc. By 1836, 169 private lights had been provided and the attendees at the AGM that year were asked to reassure the inhabitants on the safety, utility and economy of gas over other lights.²⁵⁶ The lamplighter lit the public lights every evening even if there was a full moon and the secretary advised on the time to extinguish them. At the end of the year, the company announced a small profit of £41 15s. 3d; not enough to recommend a dividend.²⁵⁷

In 1839 the London & Southampton Railway Company (later London & South Western Railway) (L&SW) was supplied with gas. However, it was responsible for laying down its mains, services and providing and covering the cost of the necessary pillars and lamps and meter. The rail company invited gas fitters to tender for this work.²⁵⁸

By 1840 the gas company was flourishing and the first dividend was paid in 1841. Even the stokers were paid a gratuity. The Great Western Railway was supplied with gas in 1848 on the same terms as the L&SW Railway, their meter being fixed to the bridge in Bunnian Place.²⁵⁹ Generally through the 1840s and 1850s consumption continued to rise enabling a reduction in the price of gas. Pamphlets were produced and distributed to householders extolling the advantages of gas.²⁶⁰

²⁵³ HRO, 76M86/20.

²⁵⁴ *Centenary Booklet 1934*, Willis Museum, BWM2010.48. Stokes, E., *The Making of Basingstoke*, (2008) 88.

²⁵⁵ *Hampshire Chronicle*, 15 Sept. 1834.

²⁵⁶ HRO, 19M65/B63.

²⁵⁷ HRO, 19M65/B63.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

As the principles of gas manufacture became better known, plant became obsolete and was replaced. In 1862 increased consumption meant an additional gasholder had to be built on the north side of the existing one not only to produce more gas but to store a supply for the winter and 3-inch mains were replaced by larger pipes. New shares were issued to provide the extra capital required to meet this expansion which included a new coal shed and tanks for tar and ammonia liquor.²⁶¹ The old gasholder was replaced in 1869²⁶² and a general update and renewal of mains continued through the 1870s. The stock of the company was listed as coke, tar, ashes and gas.²⁶³

From the 1870s onwards, requests for gas were received from many quarters including John Mares' factory, Sewage Works Committee, Milward's shoe workshops, Guardians of the Workhouse, St Michael's Church as well as extensions to various areas of the town. A report submitted by the Watch Committee in 1874 to the directors stated that of a total of 4,500 lamps lit during the quarter only six were reported as not burning and 50 as not burning well.²⁶⁴

At a request from the Paving Commissioners streetlights were lit all year without regard to full moon.²⁶⁵ The new houses at South View were connected to gas as they were being built and fitted with gas boilers and cookers, which provided a rental income to the company. Public lights were installed along Southern Road, Hackwood Road and London Road with a subsequent increase in private consumers along the line of the new mains.²⁶⁶

During the 1880s all the services were examined and upgraded with larger mains to meet increased demands. Lanterns on public lights were replaced by globe lamps. A plant was built to manufacture sulphate of ammonia.²⁶⁷ In 1882 the company held its first exhibition of gas apparatus to show how gas could be used for other purposes such as heating. As an inducement the cost of gas was reduced.²⁶⁸

²⁶¹ HRO, 19M65/B64.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

Royal Assent was granted in 1887 for the company to be incorporated and it became the Basingstoke Gas Company.²⁶⁹ The statutory responsibilities acquired allowed it to raise capital not only to re-model and enlarge the works, but also to build plant to manufacture residual products and later the preparation of dehydrated and refined tar for road spraying.²⁷⁰

The more economical incandescent lighting was introduced in 1897 and by 1904 had been adopted universally.²⁷¹ In 1905 a central office and showroom opened in Church Street.²⁷² A Parliamentary Bill in 1907 proposed the Illuminating Power Standard of Gas be reduced to 14-candle power and the standard price reduced from 4s 2d to 4s.²⁷³ This measurement of gas remained until the Gas Regulations Act of 1920 introduced the British Thermal Unit.²⁷⁴

In 1912 Basingstoke Corporation applied for statutory powers to supply electricity to the town. The gas company urged them to reconsider this as, 'a trading competition would be set up with the gas company which would be unfair and unjust, particularly as the company is one of largest rate payers'.²⁷⁵ The Board of Trade agreed to the gas company undertaking the supply of gas and electricity as was already happening in Andover and Farnham,²⁷⁶ but Basingstoke Corporation proceeded with their application and from late 1914 lit the four main streets (Winchester, London, Wote and Church streets) with electricity.²⁷⁷

From 1914 there was an exceptional demand for gas for industrial purposes, domestic customers and the demands of war. A new gas holder was commissioned.²⁷⁸ During World War 1 gas consumption was very heavy because of the many soldiers billeted locally and the need to accommodate Belgian refugees.²⁷⁹ Many difficulties were experienced owing to lack of manpower and horses in obtaining coal and cartage. The latter was solved firstly by

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ *Centenary Booklet 1934*, Willis Museum, BWM2010.48.

²⁷¹ HRO, 19M65/B65.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ <http://www.gasarchive.org/FirstWW.htm> (accessed 7 Nov. 2016).

²⁷⁵ HRO, 19M65/B66.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

borrowing a steam wagon and later by the purchase of a steam wagon from Wallis and Stevens at a cost of £539 13s. 3d.²⁸⁰ The government committee of high explosives explained to the company how to manufacture chemical constituents required for high explosives from coal tar. The urgent requirement for this tar resulted in the requisition of the plant by the government.²⁸¹ By 1917 gas consumption for lighting was down owing to restrictions under the Defence of the Realm Act, but heating and power increased. The high cost of living and difficult working conditions led to the workers' union demanding better conditions and pay rises for the workers.²⁸²

Electricity gradually supplanted gas for public lighting from the town centre outwards. It became costly for the gas company to maintain the remaining lights and in 1919 a contract was signed agreeing that the Corporation would take over maintenance of the remaining gas lights.²⁸³

The Gas Regulation Act 1920 changed the way of charging for gas and introduced a national basis for the testing and reporting of gas quality.²⁸⁴ From the start of gas regulation in the mid-19th century the quality of gas had been judged by its illuminating power and expressed in candle power. The act changed this to the heating power (calorific value) of gas. A unit of heat value is British Thermal Unit (BTU) which is the amount of heat required to raise one pound of water (nearly one pint), to one degree of Fahrenheit. A new word was introduced 'therm' and a therm is one hundred thousand BTU.²⁸⁵

Gas production was affected by coal miners' strikes, particularly in the 1920s and consumers were asked to use less. Imported coal proved to be unsuitable for gas.

In the 1920s electricity was supplied to all new housing developments as they were built and the Corporation had ongoing disputes into the 1930s, all unsuccessful, to prevent the gas company from connecting gas to these sites.²⁸⁶ At the same time gas was extended to the

²⁸⁰ HRO, 19M65/B66.

²⁸¹ *Centenary Booklet 1934*, Willis Museum, BWM2010.48.

²⁸² HRO, 19M65/B66.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁵ *Centenary Booklet 1934*, Willis Museum, BWM2010.48.

²⁸⁶ HRO, 19M65/B66.

villages of Cliddesden, Worting and Basing and Park Prewett hospital estate.²⁸⁷ The company actively marketed gas cooking and heating by holding cookery demonstrations at regular intervals in conjunction with Brown & Polson and arranging for consumers to be advised on the use of gas fires.²⁸⁸ This form of marketing was replaced by press advertisements in the 1930s and the first of many national slogans used was, ‘thank goodness for GAS!’.²⁸⁹ The company used their own fleet of vehicles for coal haulage and coke deliveries and for fitting and maintenance purposes. All were badged with their name and slogans as appropriate. Extra haulage was required for delivery of tar for road spraying.

²⁸⁷ Minute Books – HRO, 19M65/B66 and /B67.

²⁸⁸ HRO, 19M65/B67.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.



Figure 17 *Marketing slogan 1930s.*

The gas company celebrated its centenary in 1934 but was taken over soon afterwards. The centenary was celebrated with a history booklet, long service certificates were presented to workers with 30 or more years' service and a celebration supper was held for all staff and

employees who received a cash gift.²⁹⁰ In 1936 the Associated Utilities Ltd (AUL) company based in Aldershot purchased Basingstoke Gas and Coke Company. The main operating office moved to Victoria Road, Aldershot.²⁹¹ In 1939 AUL considered the absorption of Basingstoke Gas by the Reading Gas Company.²⁹² Gas continued to be produced at the gas works on Norn Hill until the early 1960s when it was piped in from Reading by the Reading Gas Company.²⁹³ In 1968 high pressure gas cylinders were installed on the Daneshill East industrial estate and work commenced to replace town gas with North Sea natural gas.²⁹⁴ During six weeks in 1969, the Southern Gas Board conversion team converted 33,000 appliances in 12,000 homes in Basingstoke and surrounding villages to natural gas.²⁹⁵ The three gasholders, works and associated Town Yard were demolished during 1970 and the area was developed as Basing View.²⁹⁶

The Gas Act of 1948 nationalised the gas industry and the Basingstoke supply was transferred to the Southern Gas Board.²⁹⁷ It went through many structural reorganisations until the re-privatisation of the industry in 1986 when shares were sold on the stock market by British Gas plc (BG).²⁹⁸ The successor to BG was National Grid Transco from whom the Scotia Gas Network (SGN) acquired the southern region gas distribution network on 1 May 2005.²⁹⁹ In 2017 Basingstoke gas was supplied by Southern Gas Network, a wholly owned subsidiary of SGN which is controlled by a consortium.³⁰⁰ SGN distributes natural and green gas to 5.9 million homes across Scotland and the south of England.³⁰¹ From 2017 the company is replacing all iron mains pipes with yellow polyethylene pipes which are designed

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ HRO, 19M65/B67.

²⁹² HRO, 19M65/B217.

²⁹³ Personal communication Bob Applin 9 Nov. 2016.

²⁹⁴ Basingstoke Town Development 7th Annual Report. 48.

²⁹⁵ Basingstoke Town Development 9th Annual Report.

²⁹⁶ Basingstoke Town Development 10th Annual Report. 22 and *The Making of Basingstoke*, Eric Stokes. 88.

²⁹⁷ www.gasarchive.org (accessed 7 Nov. 2016). HRO, 20A00.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ www.sgn.co.uk Regulatory Accounts for 2016, 7 (accessed 7 Nov. 2016).

³⁰⁰ <https://www.sgn.co.uk/uploadedFiles/Marketing/Pages/Publications/Docs-Annual-Regulatory-Accounts/SGN-Southern-Regulatory-Accounts-170731.pdf> (accessed 14 Aug. 2017).

³⁰¹ <https://www.sgn.co.uk/About-SGN/> (accessed 14 Aug. 2017).

to last 80 years.³⁰² The business is regulated by the office for gas and electricity markets (Ofgem).³⁰³

Electricity supply

In 1894 Basingstoke Council considered the provision of electricity in Basingstoke, and commissioned a report from Mr Robert Hammond,³⁰⁴ who was a consulting engineer experienced in setting up lighting schemes and a member of the Institute of Electrical Engineers.³⁰⁵ In 1898 the Steam Carriage and Wagon Company (later to become Thornycroft) applied for a supply for their works from the anticipated power station.³⁰⁶ In 1900 a provisional order was granted by the Board of Trade under the Electric Lighting Acts 1882 and 1888 to the Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of the Borough of Basingstoke known as the Basingstoke Electrical Lighting Order 1900. The area covered was the borough of Basingstoke and parishes of Sherborne St John and Basing.³⁰⁷ From 1894 the need for, and the options of public or private provision of, electricity were debated.³⁰⁸

In 1912, Basingstoke Lighting Committee sent a deputation to visit nine towns already using electricity to compare costs. The report showed 13 towns were making a loss, but 18 towns were making a profit. Basingstoke council decided to supply electricity and advertised the intention in the *Hants & Berks Gazette* in November 1912 to install and supply electricity to the whole of the borough and the parishes of Basing and Sherborne St John.³⁰⁹ They engaged Mr J B Morgan, electrical engineer of Horsham³¹⁰ who reported on the borough surveyor's scheme and supported their application to the Board of Trade.³¹¹

³⁰² <https://www.sgn.co.uk/uploadedFiles/Marketing/Pages/Publications/Docs-Annual-Regulatory-Accounts/SGN-Southern-Regulatory-Accounts-170731.pdf> (accessed 14 Aug. 2017).

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ Eric Stokes, *The Making of Basingstoke*, 130.

³⁰⁵ Grace's Guide to British Industrial History.

https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/Robert_Hammond (accessed 10 Feb. 2018).

³⁰⁶ SEB Basingstoke District, Programme of *Closing Down Ceremony 1960*, Willis Museum.

³⁰⁷ *Rural Electrification & Electro-farming* magazine, Vol XII, No 139, Dec. 1936. Willis Museum

³⁰⁸ Eric Stokes, *The Making of Basingstoke*, 130.

³⁰⁹ *Hants & Berks Gazette*, 16 Nov. 1912.

³¹⁰ *West Sussex County Times*, 29 Aug. 1908.

³¹¹ *Borough of Basingstoke Minutes, 1912*, Willis Museum.

The London and South Western Railway was instrumental in pushing for the installation of electricity³¹² and discussions continued with interested parties until 1913 when the application for a new order was made and granted by the Board of Trade.³¹³ A generating plant was erected in Brook Street, a central location. The cost of construction and electrical equipment came to £13,000.³¹⁴ The supply of electricity started at the end of 1914,³¹⁵ when the population stood at 11,000.³¹⁶



Figure 18 Basingstoke Electricity Works, Brook Street 1914.

Distribution was a three-wire system of continuous current with a voltage of 460 – 230V. This made it suitable for the rail company which had a direct current (DC) of 220V. Diesel provided the power which was economical to run as it did not need a lot of machinery.³¹⁷ A bore-hole into the underground water supply provided cooling water for the engines.³¹⁸ Initially, there

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ HRO, 148M71/1/5/30. *Borough of Basingstoke Minutes, 1912*, Willis Museum.

³¹⁴ Folder 6, *Borough of Basingstoke – Electricity*, Willis Museum.

³¹⁵ HRO, 19M65/B66.

³¹⁶ Folder 4, *Borough of Basingstoke – Electricity*, Willis Museum.

³¹⁷ *Rural Electrification & Electro-farming* magazine, Vol XII, No 139, Dec. 1936. Willis Museum.

³¹⁸ Folder 6, *Borough of Basingstoke – Electricity*, Willis Museum.

were two feeder cables, one laid to a feeder pillar in the Market Square and one to a feeder pillar at the junction of Church Street and Brook Street.³¹⁹

In addition to the compulsory area of the four main streets, distribution was laid down to Brook Street, Station Hill, Cross Street, New Street, London Road to Goldings, Winchester Road to Brambly's Lane and Sarum Hill to the Drill Hall.³²⁰ An Area of Supply was established to the Basingstoke municipal boundary and because of one or two big-buildings, to Basing and Sherborne St John.³²¹

Nationally the supply of electricity was fragmented. The Electricity Act of 1919 established Electricity Commissioners who took over some regulatory powers from the Board of Trade, but they lacked the compulsory power to reorganise the industry or to interconnect supplies and make improvements. The Electricity Act of 1926 established the Central Electricity Board (CEB) and constructed a national network to interconnect with the most efficient power stations. From this Act the National Grid was established and implemented over ten years.³²²

The Basingstoke Electricity (Extension) Special Order 1927 enabled the supply to be extended to supply 147 square miles of surrounding area.³²³ Every road supplied is listed.³²⁴ Through the 1930s there were numerous applications by Basingstoke Council to the various rural district councils to install electricity in their area mainly by overhead cables.³²⁵ Development presented many problems due to the location of villages and farms and in obtaining the sometimes reluctant agreement of local landowners.³²⁶ Some negotiations became so protracted that villages to the south of Basingstoke were transferred by Basingstoke RDC to the Mid-Southern Utility Company (MSUC).³²⁷

³¹⁹ *Rural Electrification & Electro-farming* magazine, Vol XII, No 139, Dec. 1936. Willis Museum.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*

³²¹ HRO, 68M72A DDC70.

³²² Folder 7, *Borough of Basingstoke – Electricity*, Willis Museum.

³²³ Folder 4, *Borough of Basingstoke – Electricity*, Willis Museum.

³²⁴ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 12 Mar. 1927.

³²⁵ HRO, 68M72A, DDC70.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*

³²⁷ *Ibid.*

The first external supply came from the Reading Grid sub-station supplementing the 2MW supply from Basingstoke and also the CEB grid.³²⁸ When this became inadequate a 132kV supply point was established at Alton and by 1960 rapid growth was covered by 884 miles of cable.³²⁹ Concurrently an Alternating Current (AC) supply was gradually established continuing until 1960 when the DC supply, now only operating in the town centre, was finally shut down.³³⁰

The Borough Electricity Department's showroom³³¹ was in Church Street and incorporated a demonstration room and remained there until 1967 (from 1950 as the SEB Showroom) when it moved to premises in the new Shopping Precinct.³³² Electricity was marketed through the sale of electrical goods, advertisements in the local press³³³ and at special shopping events.³³⁴ An average of 200 customers were added each year.³³⁵ Additionally, companies like T M Kingdon & Company were advertising their services for installation and sale of electrical products.³³⁶

³²⁸ Extract from SEB Staff Magazine, July 1965. Folder 4, *Borough of Basingstoke – Electricity*, Willis Museum.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*

³³⁰ SEB Basingstoke District, Programme of *Closing Down Ceremony 1960*, Willis Museum. Folder 7, *Borough of Basingstoke – Electricity*, Willis Museum.

³³¹ *Rural Electrification & Electro-farming* magazine, Vol XII, No 139, Dec. 1936

³³² Folder 3, *Borough of Basingstoke – Electricity*, Willis Museum.

³³³ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 19 Feb. 1927.

³³⁴ *Basingstoke Shopping Week, Oct. 7 – 14 Souvenir Programme 1925*, Willis Museum.

³³⁵ *Rural Electrification & Electro-farming* magazine, Vol XII, No 139, Dec. 1936. Willis Museum.

³³⁶ *Hants & Berks Gazette*, 5 Mar. 1927.



Figure 19 *Borough of Basingstoke Electricity Department's showroom, 1936.*

By 1935 electricity was supplied through 46 sub-stations and used in many work places. A major user was the Central Dairy of the Portsmouth Estates Improvement Company who used it in all aspects of its operation.³³⁷ Another large user was the Malshanger estate where the underground water supply was electrically pumped out of the ground, in addition to being used for dairy and farming purposes.³³⁸ The electricity department supplied power to the Rural District Councils (RDC) as they installed water pumping stations and sewage pumping stations. Most of the country houses in the area were connected to electricity by overhead cables, as were industries such as Kelvin, Bottomley and Baird, Thornycroft in Basingstoke, Portals Paper Mills, Overton and the Auto Tyre Service Company at Worting.³³⁹

The electricity industry was nationalised from 1 April 1948. Generation and distribution were separated. Generation became the responsibility of the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) and distribution was organised into electricity boards. In 1950, Basingstoke became one of five districts within the Portsmouth area of the Southern Electricity Board (SEB).³⁴⁰ The District comprised the original Basingstoke Corporation area of supply, Alton Electricity Company and the western portion of the Mid-Southern Utility Company. Subsequently an

³³⁷ *Rural Electrification & Electro-farming* magazine, Vol XII, No 139, Dec. 1936. Willis Museum.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*

³³⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁰ Folder 6, *Borough of Basingstoke – Electricity*, Willis Museum.

additional five square miles were transferred from Reading District bringing the size of the area to 319 square miles.³⁴¹ The Manor House, Winchester Road, purchased by the SEB in 1949 became the District Office.³⁴²

The Electricity Act 1957 changed the Central Electricity Authority into the Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB).³⁴³ Through the 1960s the SEB were placing all cables underground in built-up areas.³⁴⁴ The 11kV switchboard at the Brook Street generating station was de-energized for the last time in December 1967 when the depot moved to the Daneshill Industrial Estate as part of the redevelopment of Basingstoke.³⁴⁵ The building was demolished in 1972³⁴⁶ and the area was designated as public open space on the Basingstoke town map.³⁴⁷ A major sub-station remains on part of the site.³⁴⁸

Privatisation of the industry was implemented in 1990, repealing all the previous electricity acts and Basingstoke's electricity stopped being provided by the SEB, as it had been since 1948. The company became Southern Electric and continued as a plc company. In 1998 the company merged with Scottish Hydro Electric plc and became part of Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE).³⁴⁹ The 'Southern Electric' name and logo have continued to be used by SSE as a brand name for the distribution of electricity in the south of England.³⁵⁰ In 2017 this was rebranded as Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks, part of SSE.³⁵¹ In 2018 the customer and engineering side of Basingstoke's electricity service is covered from Reading. The business is regulated by the Office for Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem).³⁵²

³⁴¹ Folder 4, *Borough of Basingstoke – Electricity*, Willis Museum.

³⁴² Folder 3, *Borough of Basingstoke – Electricity*, Willis Museum.

³⁴³ <http://www.referenceforbusiness.com/history2/29/Scottish-And-Southern-Energy-Plc.html>. (accessed 20 Feb. 2018)

³⁴⁴ *Basingstoke Town Development 2nd Annual Report* year ending 31 Mar. 1963, 8.

³⁴⁵ Folder 4, *Borough of Basingstoke – Electricity*, Willis Museum.

³⁴⁶ Folder 7, *Borough of Basingstoke – Electricity*, Willis Museum.

³⁴⁷ HRO, H/CL5/PL170X/176. *Basingstoke Town Development 11th Annual Report* year ending 31 Mar. 1972, 9.

³⁴⁸ *The Making of Basingstoke*, Eric Stokes, 131.

³⁴⁹ <http://www.referenceforbusiness.com/history2/29/Scottish-And-Southern-Energy-Plc.html>. (accessed 20 Feb. 2018)

³⁵⁰ <http://www.referenceforbusiness.com/history2/29/Scottish-And-Southern-Energy-Plc.html>

³⁵¹ <https://www.ssen.co.uk/Whoweare/>. (accessed 20 Feb. 2018)

³⁵² <https://www.sgn.co.uk/uploadedFiles/Marketing/Pages/Publications/Docs-Annual-Regulatory-Accounts/SGN-Southern-Regulatory-Accounts-170731.pdf> (accessed 14 Aug. 2017).

Fire-fighting

The inventory of the goods inside Basingstoke church taken by the churchwardens in May 1728, listed a fire engine with 16 buckets. Also potentially of use in fire-fighting was the ‘cradle for mending the tower’ and two ladders.³⁵³ An account of a fire in the town later that year refers to ‘the playing of two Engines’ and the use of firehooks.³⁵⁴ It might be that the following reference in the accounts of the overseers of the poor for the year 1725 referred to the town fire engine:

‘Paid John Watts for Looking after Ingine 3 year £3-0-6’.³⁵⁵

An undated document, probably written shortly before 1838, recorded that there were three fire engines belonging to the town: the large engine stationed at the Church; the Royal Exchange engine also at the Church; and an engine at the Town Hall. There was an engineer appointed for each engine, but no crew and no overall superintendent.³⁵⁶ In 1838 the Norwich Union Fire Office provided another fire engine for the town, which was kept under the control and management of their agent, William Glover, a plumber and painter, at his premises in Winchester Street.³⁵⁷

Following a public meeting on 20 March 1838 at which the Mayor and Council were asked to take responsibility for the management of the three engines and the establishment of a fire brigade to be paid out of the town rates,³⁵⁸ the Council resolved that the Watch Committee should make arrangements for setting up a fire brigade.³⁵⁹ The brigade consisted of a superintendent with an annual salary of £3, three engineers with an annual salary of £2 each, and twelve firemen who would be paid 3s.6d. every time they were called out to test the engines or attend a fire. The Committee also resolved that the engine would be sent to any parish near Basingstoke in the event of fire provided the messenger brought a written undertaking signed by a responsible inhabitant of the parish confirming they would pay £2 for each engine required and all the expenses attending the conveyance.³⁶⁰

³⁵³ HRO, 35M48/16/19 Basingstoke: Inventory of church goods 1728.

³⁵⁴ *London Evening-Post*, 22 Oct. 1728.

³⁵⁵ HRO, 46M74/PO2 Overseers’ Account Book, 1701-1735.

³⁵⁶ HRO, 46M89/20 Plan for a Fire Establishment.

³⁵⁷ *Hampshire Advertiser*, 17 Feb. 1838.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 24 Mar. 1838.

³⁵⁹ HRO, 148M71/1/6/2 Watch Committee minute book 1836-57, 1 May 1838.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 28 May 1838.

At a fire in Wote Street in 1839 the engines could not be properly supplied with water owing to an insufficient number of buckets. Two years later the Watch Committee agreed to the purchase of new buckets. A further supply was bought in 1851, bringing the total of buckets up to 120.³⁶¹ From 1857 the superintendent continued to report that the old tub engine was in a decayed state and was hardly worth repairing.³⁶² In 1861 the brigade sold the old engine for £5.7s.6d. and bought a new engine of £124 less 7½ per cent for cash.³⁶³

In 1868 responsibility for the Fire Brigade transferred from the Watch Committee to a Fire Brigade Committee of the Town Council.³⁶⁴ By 1871 the Basingstoke and Eastrop Waterworks Company Ltd had approved tenders amounting to £621 to provide iron pipes, sluices, cocks and hydrants for use in case of fire and for watering the sewers and flushing down drains.³⁶⁵ The superintendent of the brigade reported that high pressure supplied by the hydrants would 'prove of inestimable value'.³⁶⁶ By 1883 52 hydrants had been placed round the town: 45 were fixed by at the expense of the Waterworks Company and the remainder were fixed after the passing of the Public Health Act 1875 at the expense of Basingstoke Corporation acting as the Urban Sanitary Authority.³⁶⁷

As well as using the engine that was bought in 1861, the Fire Brigade in 1891 was still using the two other engines: one was supplied in 1800 and the other in 1735. Both were still in working order.³⁶⁸ Following the demonstration of a Merryweather steam powered fire engine in May 1891 which sent a jet of water several feet above the flagstaff over the Town Hall tower, some 160 ft. in height, some of the town councillors considered that the three manual fire engines would be insufficient to cope with a major fire in the town, while others questioned the necessity of buying a steamer and considered that the town could not afford one. Eventually, after much debate, the Council decided to buy a steamer from Messrs

³⁶¹ Ibid. 1 Oct. 1839, 19 Jan. 1841 and 1 Jan. 1852.

³⁶² Ibid. 1 Jul. 1857 and 1 Oct. 1857; 148M71/1/6/3 Watch Committee minute book 1858-75, 1 Jul. 1859 and 2 Jan. 1860.

³⁶³ Ibid. 1 Apr. 1861 and 1 Jul. 1861.

³⁶⁴ HRO, 148M71/1/3/13 Town Council minute book, 1866-74, 9 Nov. 1868 and 22 Dec. 1868.

³⁶⁵ HRO, 148M71/1/5/61/1 Papers relating to Basingstoke Waterworks.

³⁶⁶ HRO, 148M71/1/3/13 Town Council minute book, 1866-74, 9 Nov. 1871.

³⁶⁷ HRO, 148M71/1/5/61/8 Papers relating to Basingstoke and Eastrop Water Bill bundle 2 List of Hydrants.

³⁶⁸ *Hants and Berks Gaz.* 16 May 1891.

Merryweather for £400: £200 raised from subscriptions promised to the Fire Brigade; and £200 from the rates.³⁶⁹



Figure 20 *Basingstoke Volunteer Fire Brigade 1887. Superintendent John Burgess Soper with the white beard.*

A return to the Home Office in 1911 stated that the Basingstoke Brigade consisted of a President, Captain, Deputy Captain, Chief Engineer, one additional Engineer, two sub-Engineers, 10 Firemen and a Secretary. Their apparatus consisted of a Steamer, Hose, Cart, Manual, Hose Reel, Fire Escape, Van and 2,000 feet of Hose. Although it was a purely Voluntary Brigade, the Council provided the clothing and the apparatus.³⁷⁰

In 1913 Basingstoke RDC and Overton Parish Council agreed to contribute towards the cost of a motor fire engine for the Basingstoke Fire Brigade on condition that this bought them the right to the services of the Basingstoke Brigade. As the basement of the Corn Exchange

³⁶⁹ *Hants and Berks Gaz.* 16 May and 19 Dec. 1891.

³⁷⁰ TNA, HO 45/10664/214369 Letter from Town Clerk to Home Office, 2 Oct. 1911.

where the fire engines were kept was too small to house a new engine and was also not ideal for the horse-drawn engines as it was on a bad incline for horses to start on, there was a need for a purpose-built fire station. In November 1913 the Town Council opened its new station in Brook Street. They bought the land from Messrs May and Company for £225 and paid £965 for the building, which was designed by J Arthur Smith and built by Goodall and Sons. The fire engine, christened 'Amy' in honour of the Mayor's wife, was built by Dennis of Guildford and cost £888. It had a maximum speed of 12 mph and carried ten firemen, a 35 ft. telescope ladder and 1,200 ft. of hose. It could pump up to 300 gallons of water per minute.³⁷¹ In 1928 the brigade brought another motorised fire engine from Dennis Bros for £1,150.³⁷² The Fire Brigade Committee authorised the brigade to dispose of the old steamer and accept any reasonable offer.³⁷³



Figure 21 *Basingstoke Volunteer Fire Brigade with steamer, 1903.*

³⁷¹ *Hants and Berks Gaz.* 8 Nov. 1913.

³⁷² HRO, 148M71/1/3/21 Town Council minute bk, 1927-30, 25 May 1928.

³⁷³ *Ibid.* 19 Jul. 1928.

As elsewhere, control of the fire brigade passed to the National Fire Service in 1941 and then to Hampshire County Council in 1948.³⁷⁴ In April 1997 the Hampshire Fire Service was replaced by the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority.³⁷⁵

The town centre development involved the demolition of the fire station in Brook Street and a bigger one was needed to provide cover for the rapidly expanding town. A new three-storey station was built at a cost of £125,000 near Worting Road which opened in August 1966. The station also served as the Divisional Headquarters for North-East Hampshire which moved from Aldershot. The building included dormitories for the nine-man duty crew who manned the station 24 hours a day. The appliance bay had room for six vehicles. The Council allocated 20 houses on the nearby West Ham estate for firemen and it was hoped to recruit part-time volunteers from the estate.³⁷⁶

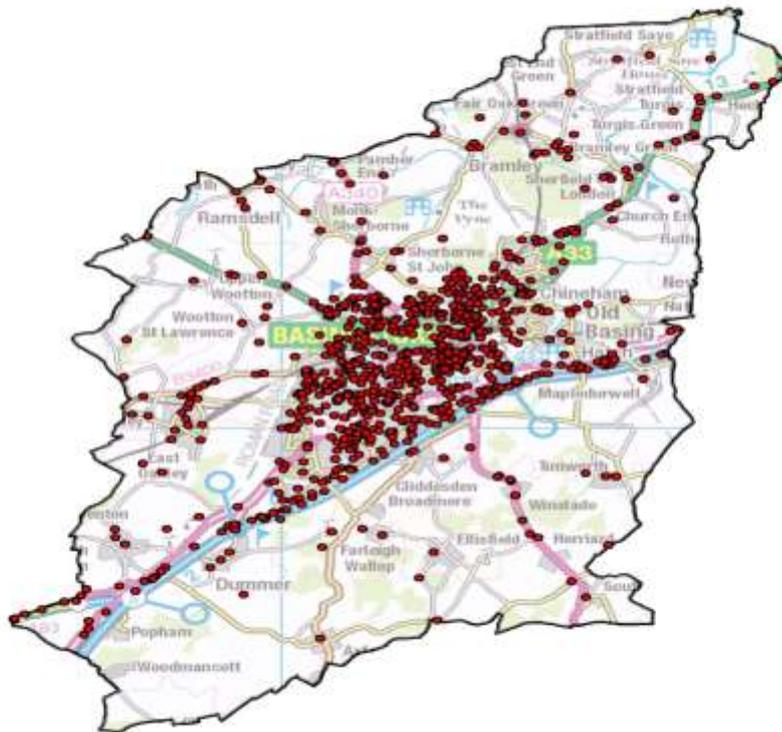
Basingstoke is a strategically important fire station having ready access to the M3. Basingstoke has numerous high rise and commercial buildings within the town centre and several large industrial parks situated in the peripheral areas. The station attended 995 critical calls from April 2011 to March 2014 mainly in the built-up areas of Basingstoke, especially around the town centre, but also along the main arterial routes of the A33 and M3.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁴ Fire Services Act, 10 & 11 Geo.VI, c.41.

³⁷⁵ www.hantsfire.gov.uk/about-us/who-we-are/history

³⁷⁶ *Hants and Berks Gaz.* 5 Aug. 1966.

³⁷⁷ [www.hantsfire.gov.uk .Basingstoke full supporting document.pdf](http://www.hantsfire.gov.uk/Basingstoke%20full%20supporting%20document.pdf) (accessed 15 Feb. 2018).



Map 6 *Critical incidents for fire brigade (April 2011 to March 2014).*

In January 2016 work started on demolishing the 1966 fire station to make way for a new fire station on the same site at an estimated cost of £6 million. The new building was completed and began to be used in September 2017.³⁷⁸ It was formally opened on 15 February 2018. The old building was demolished due to its high maintenance costs and advances in firefighting tactics. The new building has enhanced training facilities, increased vehicle capacity and improved access. In 2018 the station had 64 full-time firefighters, 18 on-call firefighters and four members of the community safety team. It had three fire engines, an aerial ladder platform, a response support vehicle and a small fires vehicle.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁸ *Basingstoke Gaz.* 21 Sept. 2017.

³⁷⁹ *Basingstoke Gaz.* 22 Feb. 2018.