



Overcrowded House Bishopstone 1889

Alleged House Overcrowding

Stephen Fowler, labourer, of Bishopstone, who did not appear, was summoned by the sanitary authority of the Highworth and Swindon Union, for whom Mr. J. E. G. Bradford appeared, for having an overcrowded house at Bishopstone, on July 25th.

Mr. Bradford briefly stated in opening, that defendant had come from London, and taken possession of the house, which formerly was inhabited by his mother. The house belonged to the churchwardens, and was a sort of freehold property to the "man in possession", it being left by some charity. Defendant had come down from London with his wife and six children for the purpose of taking possession of the house. Mr. W. H. Avenell, inspector of nuisances to the sanitary authority of the above union, stated that he had given defendant notice to abate the nuisance. There were two bedrooms, one 10ft. By 9ft. and the other 9ft by 8ft.

The Bench, at this stage, retired to consider the point whether defendant's mother was not the real tenant of the house.

After returning, they decided to hear the evidence of Dr. E. F. Streeten, medical officer to the above authority, who stated that the overcrowding was injurious to health. There were seven children in family, ranging in age from 7 months to sixteen years.

The Bench adjourned the case for a week, in order that defendant's mother should also be summoned.

Swindon Advertiser and North Wilts Chronicle, 3 August 1889

Swindon Police Court – Thursday

Stephen Fowler, labourer, of Bishopstone, and **Elizabeth Fowler**, his mother, were summoned, the former by adjournment from last week, charged with overcrowding their house at Bishopstone. The evidence was fully gone into last week, but an additional witness was called this week in the person of Mr. P. Morse, relieving officer, who stated that he had visited the house only the previous day. He considered the house was very overcrowded. Defendants had not abated the nuisance since the notice had been served upon them. There was not space in either room "to swing a cat".

Cross examined: He had heard that the elder defendant had brought up 12 children in the same house, but since then she had come to him and complained of the overcrowded state of the house since her son had been with her.

For the defence on behalf of Stephen Fowler, it was contended that the duty of abating the nuisance lay with the owner and occupier of these premises, Elizabeth Fowler, and that no order could be made upon her son/ The Bench, however, made an order upon both defendants to abate the nuisance in a fortnight.

Swindon Advertiser and North Wilts Chronicle, 10 August 1889

Swindon Police Court – Thursday

Stephen Fowler, labourer, of Bishopstone, and **Elizabeth Fowler**, his mother, were summoned for disobeying a justice order to abate a nuisance of overcrowding at his house.

Mr. G. M. Butterworth, from the offices of Messrs. Bradford, Davis and Butterworth, appeared to prosecute on behalf of the guardians of the Highworth and Swindon Union.

Mr. W. H. Avenell, Inspector of nuisances, proved that the nuisance had not been abated. He said he had obtained this information from Stephen Fowler's wife.

Fowler asked the inspector why he had not come to him, remarking, "What had my wife to do with my business". He submitted that he had abated the overcrowding by removing two of his sons.

Mrs. Fowler, the elder defendant, said the nuisance had not been abated.

Stephen Fowler was then sworn, and stated on oath that he removed two of his sons the day before the notice to abate the nuisance expired. He still had five children at home.

The Bench retired to consider, and on returning into Court, the Chairman said the case would be adjourned for a week, for the attendance of further witnesses.

Swindon Advertiser and North Wilts Chronicle, 7 September 1889

Swindon Police Court – Thursday

In the matter of the summons against **Stephen Fowler**, labourer, of Bishopstone, who was charged last week with neglecting to obey a magistrates order to abate an overcrowding, at his house. Mt. G. M. Butterworth now stated that the order had been obeyed, and he wished therefore to let the summons be withdrawn.

This was accordingly done.

Swindon Advertiser and North Wilts Chronicle, 14 September 1889