

[Report of the Medical Officer of Health for Acton].

Contributors

Acton (London, England). Urban District Council.

Publication/Creation

[1896?]

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THE
Urban District Council of Acton.

ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER,
FOR THE YEAR 1895.

ACTON:
PRINTED BY J. KNOWLES, MARKET PLACE & HOOPER'S MEWS.



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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER FOR THE YEAR 1895.

To the Chairman & Members of the Acton District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

Eighteen Hundred and Ninety-Five maintained its character for Meteorological eccentricity to the last. After nearly the coldest weather of the Century in its first three months, and the warmest on record in its last three months, it ended with a day that, so far as temperature went, would not have been considered anything exceptional in June.

The severe frost caused much suffering and inconvenience to householders owing to the early freezing of the mains, and also of the pipes connecting the main with the domestic arrangements; but I trust this trouble, so far as the mains are concerned, will not

recur, as they have been lowered to 2 feet 6 inches below the surface, and arrangements have been made so that, should it be found necessary to turn the water off, it will only temporarily inconvenience a few inhabitants.

Among other sanitary improvements may be mentioned the relaying of the Uxbridge Road and High Street with wood pavement, and the extension of the Tramway to the top of Acton Hill.

The drainage of the district has received careful attention during the year. Soil Sewers were laid in Birkbeck Avenue, Wolseley Road, Creswick Road, Mill Hill Grove, portion of Avenue Road, and the Willesden Sewer from Willesden Lane to Old Oak Wharf; the total length of these sewers being 7,203 lineal feet.

I am pleased to note that you contemplate securing means of dealing more satisfactorily with cases of Infectious Disease, which I find impossible to isolate.

I regret that so far you have not seen the advisability of erecting a Destructor Furnace, but I trust that this important sanitary measure will again engage your attention, for I am firmly convinced that it is the only satisfactory way of dealing with dust-bin refuse, especially now that so much household rubbish which used to be burnt goes into the dust-bin, owing to the introduction of gas cooking stoves and closed kitcheners.

I think all the old brick dust-bins should be abolished, and superseded by the "Sanitary Bin," a portable zinc or galvanized iron receptacle ; and the rule should be enforced in every household that all moist or putrescible matter be burnt.

The District was almost entirely free from Zymotic disease during the months of April and May, such an immunity has not been the case for some years. We had a mild outbreak of Scarlet Fever during the Autumn and early winter months ; at this time Scarlet Fever was prevalent all over London and we were fortunate in having so few cases to deal with.

Influenza became epidemic in the first week of February, and continued till the middle of March, causing nineteen deaths. Many who died from diseases of the lungs probably owed their trouble primarily to this complaint. The visitation was more severe than the previous epidemics in this district, and being highly infective, spread rapidly. The further study made by the Medical Profession as to the natural history of Influenza, goes to show that it is a disease against which it is most difficult to apply measures of prevention with any substantial prospect of success.

WATER SUPPLY.

The supply has been constant except during the long frost previously alluded to. I take this opportunity of laying great stress on the importance (wherever there is a constant service) of drawing water used for drinking and cooking purposes, from a draw-off tap direct from the rising main, and not from the cistern where it has been exposed to warmth and pollution.

Recent extensive experiments have proved that the only domestic filters capable of removing all bacteria, are the Pasteur-Chamberland and the Berkefeld. The latter is cheap, easily taken to pieces and cleaned. Charcoal cannot be too forcibly condemned as a filtering medium; forming as it does with the arrested organic matter, a veritable hotbed for the growth and multiplication of the bacteria.

POPULATION.

In the middle of 1895, the population was calculated to be 27,648, an estimated increase of 48 since the middle of 1894.

The following table shows the number of the population and the inhabited houses at the four preceding censuses.

YEAR.	INHABITED HOUSES.	POPULATION.
1861.	610	3,151
1871.	1,568	8,306
1881.	2,844	17,110
1891.	4,084	24,207

BIRTHS.

The total number of births registered was 874, as against 834 in 1894, an increase of 40. The Birth rate is 31.6 per thousand persons living, as against 30.2 in 1894.

The annual death rate calculated upon a population of 27,648 was 17·2 per thousand, as against 14·2 in 1894.

The average death rate for London was 19·4 per thousand, against 21·1, 20·3, 20·9 and 17·4 in the four preceding years.

The following table shows the various ages at which death occurred in the District.

The following table compares the death rate of children under one year per thousand registered births, and the birth rate for the last nine years.

BIRTH RATE PER THOUSAND.		DEATHS OF CHILDREN UNDER 1 YEAR. PER THOUSAND REGISTERED BIRTHS.
1887	28·7	147
1888	31·1	182
1889	34·1	175
1890	28·3	151
1891	30·8	146
1892	30·5	185
1893	31·9	192·5
1894	30·2	160·6
1895	31·6	168·1

Researches have shown conclusively that one of the chief difficulties in the artificial feeding of infants, is in keeping the milk of the cow, or other animal, free from the contagion of bacilli, which are always floating in the atmosphere. Milk is found to be an admirable medium for the cultivation of these microbes, and the result of the infant imbibing these organisms is, that it is seized with diarrhoea and vomiting, which, unchecked speedily exhaust vitality and extinguish life.

The only way to combat this evil is by sterilizing the milk, and if this were compulsory in our country as it is in some parts of America, our high infant mortality would soon be diminished.

ZYMOTIC DEATH RATE.

The total number of deaths registered for the principal Zymotic diseases was 67, as compared with 63 in 1894; this gives a Zymotic death rate of 2·4 per thousand.

In the following table the death rate and Zymotic death rate are so arranged that comparison can be made for the last eight years.

	1888.	1889.	1890.	1891.	1892.	1893.	1894.	1895.
Small Pox	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Measles	1	25	11	9	24	2	15	6
Scarlet Fever	2	1	3	4	—	10	3	3
Diphtheria	2	8	7	2	4	2	5	5
Whooping Cough	9	13	3	6	25	5	17	5
Typhoid Fever	—	1	1	—	3	4	2	2
Diarrhoea and Dysentery	10	12	18	24	34	60	17	44
Puerperal Fever	—	—	—	—	1	6	4	2
Total number of Deaths from 7 Zymotic Diseases	24	60	43	45	91	89	63	67
Deaths from other causes	282	377	298	368	334	396	330	411
Total Deaths	306	437	341	413	425	486	393	478
Death rate from seven Zymotic diseases per thousand	1.09	2.8	1.9	1.8	3.6	3.4	2.2	2.4
Death rate from other causes per thousand	12.9	16.1	12.0	15.3	13.4	15.2	12	14.8
General Death rate per thousand	13.99	18.9	13.9	17.1	17	18.6	14.2	17.2

NOTIFICATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

There were 161 cases notified, as against 167 in 1894. The following table gives the number reported each year since the Act came into force.

			1890.	1891.	1892.	1893.	1894.	1895
Small Pox	...	...	—	—	13	7	2	—
Scarlet Fever	...	...	108	63	74	192	86	67
Diphtheria	...	...	14	8	27	41	22	32
Membranous Croup	...	...	4	—	13	1	—	—
Typhoid Fever	...	...	13	13	15	19	15	28
Continued Fever...	...	...	—	—	—	1	—	—
Puerperal Fever	...	...	1	—	1	2	1	3
Erysipelas	...	...	22	18	37	77	41	31
			162	102	180	340	167	161

REMARKS.

I have at your request drawn up instructions to householders regarding isolation and disinfection.

On receiving a Notification of Infectious Disease I forward at once a copy of the pamphlet, and I find it answers its purpose admirably and is of great assistance.

SCARLET FEVER.

It is satisfactory to see again a diminution in the number of cases, especially when we consider the number of poor children in the district, and the fact that an epidemic of this disease was

more or less prevalent all over London during the latter part of the year.

There were only three deaths.

DIPHTHERIA

There were 32 cases notified ; most of these were fortunately very slight attacks. Without a bacteriological examination, it is impossible to say whether a certain form of sore throat is not the actual disease, hence, many medical practitioners prefer to notify suspicious cases.

I think the Medical Officer should be informed of the addresses of any children who might be attending school with sore throats.

There were five deaths from Diphtheria during the year.

TYPHOID FEVER.

Twenty-eight cases were notified. One was attributed to oysters, and in others defective drainage was discovered and rectified. There were two deaths.

PUERPERAL FEVER.

Three cases were notified, two ending fatally ; they were attended by women whose ignorance as regards cleanliness and antiseptic precautions was apparent.

SUMMARY OF SANITARY WORK.

Visits to insure continued isolation of infectious patients ...	180
Rooms disinfected (bedding, &c., by super-heated steam)...	83
Disinfectants supplied bottles	90
Dwellings inspected	343
House drains and sanitary fittings tested	120
Sanitary defects discovered	274
House drains taken up and reconstructed	104
Visits to inspect sanitary work in progress, and to ascertain whether notices were being complied with	666
Soil pipes ventilated... ..	15
Soil pipes taken outside house walls	9
Waste pipes made to discharge in open air over trapped gullies	37
House cisterns removed from inside w.c.	1
Rain water pipes disconnected from soil drains at houses...	15
Insanitary closets replaced by sanitary apparatus	82
"Sewer air interceptors" and air inlets fixed	80
Water-waste preventers for flushing closets... ..	22
Defective roofs made good	12
Defective guttering replaced or made good	12
Dilapidated walls and ceilings repaired at houses	8
Complaints registered	186

Notices served, which were supplemented by letters and personal interviews with owners of the property	...	146
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ORDINARY NUISANCES ABATED.

Sewer manholes and road gullies	...	...	...	...	15
Smoke	...	...	...	...	2
Manure, fish offal, and other deposits	...	...	...	...	35
Cesspools abolished	...	...	...	...	11
Insanitary dwellings	...	...	...	...	9
Overcrowding	...	...	...	...	10
Cellar Flooding	...	...	...	...	16
Animals and Poultry	...	...	...	...	16
Gipsy encampments removed	...	...	...	...	20
Non-supply of water to houses	...	...	...	...	11
Receptacles for stable refuse provided	...	...	...	...	2
Piggeries abolished	...	...	...	...	5

GENERAL SANITARY INSPECTIONS.

Bakehouses	...	...	...	...	20
Dairies	...	...	...	...	8
Cowsheds	...	...	...	...	73
Slaughterhouses	...	...	...	...	126
Piggeries	...	...	...	...	183
Brickfields	...	...	...	...	54

ARTICLES OF FOOD CONDEMNED AS
UNFIT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION.

Carcass of Beef.

3 Cases of Haddock.

1 Barrel of Herrings.

7 Cases of Plaice.

A considerable quantity of Apples and Tomatoes.

Believe me, Gentlemen,

Yours obediently,

G. A GARRY SIMPSON,
Medical Officer.

7, CHURCHFIELD ROAD,

EAST ACTON, W.









