

[Report 1905] / Medical Officer of Health, Alnwick (Union) R.D.C.

Contributors

Alnwick (England). Rural District Council.

Publication/Creation

1905

Persistent URL

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ALNWICK RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

For the Year 1905.

ALNWICK :

Printed by the "Alnwick and County Gazette" and Steam Printing Co., Ltd.



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TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE ALNWICK
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

GENTLEMEN,

The climatic conditions of the year 1905 were on whole favourable, and like 1904 it will be remembered as a year during which we enjoyed a more than average amount of fine weather. During the early months the temperature was never excessively low, and snowstorms were few and of short duration. A curious feature in connection with the snowfall was that the thaw was never accompanied by the usual rainfall, but was invariably caused by a mild south-west wind, which carried away the moisture so much needed after the drought of the latter part of the year 1904. Even in the early spring the effect of the above conditions was being felt, and had April been untrue to its reputation as a showery month, the effect on even the deeper water supplies would have been very serious indeed. The summer was warm and dry throughout, and the shortage of water, which had continued from March 1904, lasted well into the autumn. Towards the end of November a very hard frost was experienced in the district, when as many as eighteen to twenty degrees of frost were registered. This sudden and extreme depression of the temperature only lasted a few days, and the year closed with cold, wet weather, which should help to raise the depleted water supplies to their usual level..

Vital Statistics.

The figures which I have to present to you with regard to the Births and Deaths for 1905 are, I am pleased to say, fairly satisfactory. With an increased birth-rate, we have a decreased death-rate, which is the opposite of what usually holds good. Also we have a decreased infantile death-rate, and this rate, as I shall show later, is, so to speak,

accidentally much larger, owing to the excessive number of deaths from premature birth; which, though they have to be included, have really little bearing on the object for which the infantile death is calculated. The following table shows the number of births and deaths which have been registered in the district during the year 1905, with the corresponding rate per thousand per annum, and for purposes of comparison the same figures for the two preceding years are also given:—

| | Births. | Birth-Rate per 1000 per annum. | Deaths. | Death-Rate per 1000 per annum. |
|------|---------|--------------------------------------|---------|--------------------------------------|
| 1903 | 300 | 23·96 | 172 | 13·74 |
| 1904 | 321 | 25·64 | 205 | 16·37 |
| 1905 | 327 | 26·12 | 177 | 14·14 |

From the above it will be seen that the number of births for 1905 exceeded that for 1904 by 6, and that for 1903 by 27; the birth-rate for 1905 exceeding that for 1904 by ·48, and that for 1903 by 2·16. The number of deaths for 1905 was less than that for 1904 by 28, but exceeded that for 1903 by 5; the death-rate for 1905 being less than that for 1904 by 2·23, but exceeded that for 1903 by ·4, which last small excess of death-rate over 1903, when taken in conjunction with an excess of birth-rate of 2·16 in 1905, leaves the comparison distinctly in favour of 1905.

As regards sex, the deaths were rather unevenly distributed, the numbers being 80 males and 97 females. This excessive female mortality is rather unusual, as the male death-rate is usually slightly greater on account of greater liability to accidents, although the same condition prevailed, though less markedly, last year. There were fortunately few deaths from accident during 1905, only 3 being attributed to that cause. Again there were no deaths from puerperal fever, and only 2 in any way connected with parturition.

The following table shows the distribution of the deaths as regards the Sub-districts, and the number for the two preceding years are given for comparison:—

| | Warkworth. | Embleton. | Denwick. |
|------|------------|-----------|----------|
| 1903 | 96 | 69 | 7 |
| 1904 | 117 | 76 | 12 |
| 1905 | 105 | 64 | 8 |

From the above it will be seen that in the Sub-districts in 1905 there was a decrease all round in the number of deaths as compared with 1904, while as compared with 1903 there was a decrease in the Embleton Sub-district, an increase in the Warkworth Sub-district, and also in the Denwick Sub-district. The following table shows the deaths in each Sub-district, with the corresponding death-rates:—

| Warkworth. | | Embleton. | | Denwick. | |
|------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|----------|-------------|
| Deaths. | Death-Rate. | Deaths. | Death-Rate. | Deaths. | Death-Rate. |
| 105 | 14·92 | 64 | 13·30 | 8 | 11·95 |

The deaths may also be analysed as regards the age at death, and for comparison I give the two preceding years :—

| | Under 1 year. | 1 year and under 5. | 5 years and under 15. | 15 years and under 25. | 25 years and under 65. | 65 years and over. |
|------|------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1903 | 35 | 8 | 10 | 15 | 50 | 54 |
| 1904 | 46 | 12 | 12 | 8 | 61 | 66 |
| 1905 | 40 | 20 | 5 | 12 | 47 | 53 |

The information conveyed by this table is not at first glance altogether satisfactory, but becomes more so when the causes of death are examined more closely. In the first column, that is the deaths under one year, from which the infantile death-rate is calculated, we find 40 deaths in 1905 against 46 in 1904, and 35 in 1903. But on examining the table of causes of death (at the end of this report) it will be found that in 1905 12 deaths were caused by premature birth, while in 1904 and 1903 only 4 deaths in each case were attributed to that misfortune. Now the chief object in the careful calculation of the death-rate of children under one year is to ascertain whether, having made a fair start, conditions exist at the early and delicate part of the race of life which prevent the runners from having a good chance of continuing the course. It therefore appears to me that the value of those statistics is vitiated by the inclusion of lives which never make a proper start at all, or, in other words, are, though born alive, yet from the beginning incapable of separate life for more than a few hours. Thus, if in 1905 we exclude the 12 deaths from prematurity, we have only 28 deaths under one year as against 42 in 1904 and 31 in 1903, the same deduction being made in each case. This, if the above principle be accepted, would show a more favourable infantile death-rate for 1905 than for either of the two preceding years.

Passing to the deaths between the ages of one and five years, we find in 1905 a regrettable excess of deaths over the two preceding years, and even when taken in conjunction with the small number of deaths in the next column (five and under fifteen) the number seems large, although the causes of death are so distributed that the blame cannot be laid on any particular disease. The incidence of the deaths at more advanced ages presents no notable feature.

The infantile death-rate for the whole district is 122·32 for 1905, as against 143·3 for 1904 and 116·6 for 1903.

In Warkworth Sub-district 195 children were born, and there were 26 deaths under one year.

In Embleton Sub-district 114 children were born, and 13 died under one year.

In Denwick Sub-district 18 children were born, and one died under one year.

This gives for the Sub-districts the following infantile death-rate :—

| Warkworth. | Embleton. | Denwick. |
|------------|-----------|----------|
| 132·82 | 114·03 | 55·55 |

For several years back I have had to comment severely on the high infantile death-rate in the Embleton Sub-district. This year I am glad to see that this rate is represented by a more moderate figure, that is 114.03 for 1905, as against 171.17 for 1904 and 171.71 for 1903.

The infantile death-rate in the Warkworth Sub-district is this year slightly increased, the figures being:—1905, 132.82; 1904, 128.20; 1903, 89.

In Denwick Sub-district, with only one infantile death, the population is too small to permit of inferences being drawn.

As I have pointed out earlier in this report, the infantile death-rate in the Sub-districts of Warkworth and Embleton is this year largely increased by the occurrence of 12 deaths ascribed to premature birth, 8 of which were registered in Warkworth Sub-district and 4 in Embleton. If these 12 deaths were subtracted, the infantile death-rate would only amount to 85 per thousand children born, which must be regarded as favourable, even in a healthy country district like the Alnwick Rural.

The greatest number of deaths occurred in the months of August and December, during each of which 21 deaths were registered. The least number, viz. 10, occurred in March.

The total number of births for 1905 was 327, of which 165 were males and 162 females, giving a birth-rate of 26.12 for the whole district, distributed as follows over the Sub-districts:—

| Warkworth. | | Embleton. | | Denwick. | |
|------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|----------|-------------|
| Births. | Birth-Rate. | Births. | Birth-Rate. | Births. | Birth-Rate. |
| 195 | 27.71 | 114 | 23.69 | 18 | 26.90 |

Infectious Diseases.

During the year 1905, 76 cases of infectious disease have been notified in the district, this being less than half the number notified in 1904, viz. 166.

Of the cases notified, 46 were scarlet fever, 17 diphtheria, 3 enteric fever, and 10 erysipelas.

The distribution of the infectious diseases, with regard to the Sub-districts, will be seen from the following table:—

| Sub-district. | Scarlet Fever. | Diph- theria. | Enteric Fever. | Ery- sipelas. | Totals. |
|---------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------|
| Warkworth | 45 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 56 |
| Embleton | 1 | 13 | 0 | 6 | 20 |
| Denwick | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | — | — | — | — | — |
| | 46 | 17 | 3 | 10 | 76 |

Scarlet Fever was prevalent in the district during the early months of the year, only 3 cases being notified after May. The numbers for the months were:—In January, 7; in February, 7; in March, 7; in April, 19; in May, 2; in August, 1; in September, 1; and in

December, 1. All the cases except one were reported from the Warkworth Sub-district, and represent the end of an epidemic which occurred in the latter months of 1904, and affected mostly the large mining population in the south-east corner of the Sub-district.

Diphtheria appeared in five different localities in the district, viz.—At Radcliffe, 3 cases; at Alnmouth, 1 case; at Howick Pasture House, 2 cases; at Longhoughton Station, 1 case; and at Glanton, 10 cases. At Alnmouth, Howick Pasture House, and Longhoughton Station no very evident causes were found for the disease, which showed no tendency to go beyond those originally attacked. At Radcliffe and Glanton conditions exist which, unless great care is taken, tend to the production and recurrence of the disease. At Radcliffe we have a population of between 1500 and 2000, a large proportion of whom live in comparatively insanitary houses. The use of privy ashpits is general, an arrangement which, though often the best that can be done at isolated country places, is yet one which in the case of a large and densely packed population like Radcliffe is unsuitable, as demanding more care in the way of frequent cleansing than we ever find expended on such a system. Again, at Radcliffe the roads in front of the older rows of houses, especially the north side of the Long Row, are very uneven, and permit of the lodgment of water generally more or less contaminated from the splashing over of the gulleys.

At Glanton, *Diphtheria* has for some years put in an appearance now and then, the late outbreak being, however, the most serious for some years. Here we have a population neither so large nor so dense as at Radcliffe. Again, the privy ashpit is not in such general use; but, where it is used, it has up till now on the average been much less regularly scavenged. My suspicions were drawn to the privies of the School as a probable source of the disease. In consequence of this epidemic, and my reports thereon, considerable improvements have been made. An arrangement has been come to for the regular scavenging and disinfection of all the village ashpits every six weeks. The relaying of some of the old stone sewers with sanitary pipes is under consideration. At the School, as a compromise against the provision of water-closets, which was deemed too expensive, it has been arranged to have the privies cleaned and disinfected every week, the drain ventilated at the upper end, and disconnected by an intercepting trap where it joins the village sewer.

Enteric Fever appeared in two localities, viz.—At Warkworth and at Guyzance. There were only 3 cases altogether. The 2 cases at Warkworth were due to defects in the drains of the house, which were put right. The case at Guyzance was probably due to surface contamination of one of the two water supplies to the cottage. This supply is not now used.

Small-Pox. When I wrote my annual report for 1904, we were just getting rid of our last Small-Pox patient, and I see that I was congratulating both the Council and myself on the immediate prospect of the erection of a Small-Pox hospital. A year has passed

and we are probably by so much nearer the provision of proper isolation, and of course we have a site and plans; but the nightmare of another outbreak is still with us, so that this year it would perhaps be better to spare congratulations until we see the hospital an accomplished fact.

During the year 1905 there were registered in the district 5 deaths caused by notifiable infectious disease, viz.—From Diphtheria, 2; and from Enteric Fever, 2; and from Erysipelas, 1. This gives a death-rate from that cause of $\cdot 39$ per thousand per annum.

Whooping Cough, which has been somewhat prevalent in the district, caused the deaths of 4 children, all under five years.

Enteritis caused the deaths of 9 children, also all under five years.

Influenza caused 1 death.

Thus from Zymotic diseases there were in all 19 deaths, giving Zymotic death-rate of $1\cdot 51$ per thousand per annum.

Sewerage and Drainage.—Disposal of Sewage.

The drainage system at Denwick House has been entirely remodelled. The waste pipe from the scullery sink at Newton House, which delivered into a hole in the drain, has been made to discharge over a trapped gully. The north sewage channel at Low Newton-by-the-Sea has been extended to the high tide mark. The down spouts at Peppermoor Cottages have been disconnected from the drain. The sewer outlet from High Hauxley has been improved. The seven houses in Prospect Place, Felton, which had dangerous old sinks near the doors, have been furnished with proper gulleys. The drainage at Newton Villa (on-the-Moor) has been improved. A gully has been fixed near the back door at Lemmington Branch, and the drain outlet has been extended to a safe distance. The waste pipe of the scullery sink at Boulmer Hall has been disconnected from the drain. An open cesspool near Alnwick Abbey Lodge has been furnished with a cast-iron, air-tight cover, and the drain ventilated. At Shawdon Wood House a new drainage system has been laid, and the drain outlet extended to a suitable distance from the cottages. At premises where Diphtheria occurred at Glanton, the ashpit has been reduced in size and roofed over; the down spouts have been disconnected from the drains. New sinks have been provided at the back of the cottages at Cavil Head. The Embleton sewage settling tanks have been cleaned out. A storm water grate at Powburn, which emitted foul air near the lodge of Breamish House, has been trapped. The floors of the pigsties have been cemented at Little Mill Farm Cottages, and open channels have been made for sewage. A new sink and drain have been provided for the farmhouse at Gloster Hill.

Privies, Water-closets, &c.

The insanitary cesspools at Lesbury School, which were within six feet of the building, have been abolished, and proper closets furnished with automatic flushing cisterns have been fixed. The

cesspool at Acklington School has been done away with, and privy ashpits provided. Extra privy accommodation and an ashpit have been provided at Albion Square, Felton. A flooded ashpit, near Mr J. Stephenson's shop at Embleton, has been roofed over. An ash-closet has been provided for the gardener's cottage at Newton Villa. A privy has been erected at Shipley Moor. The exposed open privy ashpit at the Railway Bridge Cottages, Togston, has been pulled down, and the privies have been connected with ash-closets. A privy has been built at Lemmington Mill. At the signalman's cottage at Little Mill Station the coalhouse and ashpit, which adjoined his kitchen, have been converted into a washhouse, and new domestic and sanitary offices have been built. The colliery house, east of the Police Station at Shilbottle, has been provided with a closet, and the adjoining house has been supplied with an ashpit. At 3, Victoria Terrace, Felton, the yard has been cemented and limewashed, a flooded ashpit abolished, and a privy made into a pail-closet. At Laburnum Cottages, Glanton, two new w.c.'s have been built. Proper sanitary arrangements have been made for that part of Woodbine Cottage, Alnmouth, which is now let as a separate tenement. Certain privies at Glanton have been converted into proper closets with cisterns.

Offensive Ditches and Collections of Matter.

The sewage ditch in the plantation near Howick Pasture House has been cleaned out, likewise the ditch near South Togston Cottages. Since the liquid manure has been diverted from the roadside ditch at Swarland Fence, an improvement continues to be evident. The sewage ditch in the recreation field at Shilbottle has been cleaned out, and the flap on the outlet of the sewer put right. The cleaning of the sewage ditch at Powburn has been completed. Rubbish shoots have been provided for Shilbottle and Glanton.

Water Supply.

A well at Lemmington Branch has been fenced from cattle. A tap has been provided at the Broxfield tank to supply the cottages. A spring yielding four gallons per minute has been diverted into the spring chamber at Rock, in connection with the Craster and Dunstan Waterworks. A spring in a field in front of the farmhouse at Heckley Fence has been conveyed there by gravitation. Fifteen self-closing pillar fountains have been fixed at Radcliffe. The Newton-on-the-Moor supply has been extended to Newton Villa. The Burghers' Waterworks, which supply the greater part of Warkworth, have just been vested in the Council, and various schemes are being considered for its improvement.

Water Certificates, under the Public Health (Water) Act, 1878, have been granted to enable new houses to be occupied at Heather Leazes, near Warkworth; for three houses at St. Lawrence's Terrace, Warkworth; and for three new houses at Broompark.

The Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops Order.

The byre for eight cows at Newton Hall, which had an old sink inside, has been provided with a gulley trap outside. Drainage has been provided for Mrs Davidson's byre at Felton. The walls of the cowsheds at Spitalford have been repaired inside, and limewashed. An extra byre to hold twenty cows, which brings up the number to fifty, has been built at Acklington Field House, and a model dairy, fitted with the latest appliances, has been made near it.

Slaughter House.

A new gulley has been fixed at the slaughter house in the Tithe Barn Lane, Warkworth, and the midden abolished, all the offal now being removed in galvanized receptacles.

Miscellaneous Nuisances.

At Newton Villa the wooden floors have been ventilated with air bricks, the plaster of the ceilings put right, and other improvements made. A land drain has been laid round the two upper cottages at Abberwick to lessen the dampness of the stone floors of the bedrooms. Overcrowding has been reduced at the three-roomed cottage No. 5, Boulmer, which was occupied by three families. At Glanton Police Station that part of the gable which is below the level of the garden has been cemented. Two cottages at the Lantern Buildings, Bolton, have been re-roofed and spouted. The remaining house which discharged rainfall on to the Front Street at Alnmouth, has been spouted. Ash boxes are no longer kept in the back streets at Argyle Terrace, Alnmouth, but in the yards instead.

NOTE.—The above list does not include a great number of minor sanitary defects, or nuisances, such as stopped-up drains, which have been attended to after informal notice.

Before closing this report, I must express my obligation to those who have during the year assisted me in carrying out the duties devolving on me as Medical Officer of the Alnwick Rural District.

To the Sanitary Inspector, Mr M. Temple Wilson, I owe the latter part of this report dealing with sewerage and drainage, privies, ditches, water supplies, cowsheds, slaughter houses, and miscellaneous nuisances. Mr Wilson and I have now worked together for more than a dozen years, always amicably; and I have never asked him for help or information without receiving it, at whatever inconvenience to himself.

Finally, I have to thank the Chairman and Members of the Council for their consistent support of all reasonable proposals which I have had to bring before them, and their kindness in excusing me when I am called away by any of the emergencies which are continually arising in the life of a medical practitioner.

SCOTT PURVES, M.D.,

Medical Officer of Health.

TABLE OF CAUSES OF, AND AGES AT, DEATH during Year 1905,
in the Alnwick Rural District.

| Causes of Death. | Deaths in the whole District at subjoined ages. | | | | | | | Deaths in Localities (at all ages.) | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| | All Ages. | Under 1 year. | 1 & under 5. | 5 & under 15. | 15 & under 25. | 25 & under 65. | 65 & upwards. | Warkworth. | Embleton. | Denwick. |
| Whooping-cough | 4 | 1 | 3 | 2 | | | | 4 | 1 | |
| Diphtheria and Membranous Croup | 2 | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| Enteric Fever | 2 | | | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | |
| Epidemic Influenza | 1 | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| Enteritis | 9 | 7 | 2 | | | | | 1 | | |
| Erysipelas | 1 | | | | | 1 | | 6 | 2 | 1 |
| Other Septic Diseases | 1 | | | | | 1 | | | 1 | 1 |
| Phthisis (Pulmonary Tuberculosis) | 11 | | | | 6 | 5 | | 4 | 7 | |
| Other Tubercular Diseases | 6 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | | 5 | 1 | |
| Cancer, malignant disease | 11 | | | | | 5 | 6 | 4 | 7 | |
| Bronchitis | 8 | 2 | 3 | | | 1 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 1 |
| Pneumonia | 10 | | 3 | | | | 5 | 5 | 4 | |
| Premature Birth | 12 | 12 | | | | | | 8 | 4 | |
| Diseases and Accidents of Parturition | 2 | | | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | |
| Heart Diseases | 19 | 1 | | | | 9 | 9 | 8 | 10 | 1 |
| Accidents | 4 | | 2 | | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Suicides | 3 | | | | | 3 | | 2 | 1 | |
| All other causes | 71 | 16 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 16 | 29 | 46 | 23 | 2 |
| All Causes | 177 | 40 | 20 | 5 | 12 | 47 | 53 | 105 | 64 | 8 |

The Dairies, Condensed, and Milkhouse Order

The type for eight cows at Norton Hall, which had been in the hands, has been provided with a single new system.

| No. | Name | Breed | Age | Color | Remarks | Remarks |
|-----|------|-------|-----|-------|---------|---------|
| | | | | | | |
| 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 3 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 4 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 5 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 6 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 7 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 8 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |

SCOTT PULVER, S.W.

Manager, Dairy of North