

**[Report 1907] / Medical Officer of Health, Alnwick (Union) R.D.C.**

**Contributors**

Alnwick (England). Rural District Council.

**Publication/Creation**

1907

**Persistent URL**

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/cwc7qrdj>

**License and attribution**

You have permission to make copies of this work under a Creative Commons, Attribution license.

This licence permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See the Legal Code for further information.

Image source should be attributed as specified in the full catalogue record. If no source is given the image should be attributed to Wellcome Collection.



Wellcome Collection  
183 Euston Road  
London NW1 2BE UK  
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722  
E [library@wellcomecollection.org](mailto:library@wellcomecollection.org)  
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

Albany Rural District Council  
ANNUAL REPORT  
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR 1907

MR. CHAIRMAN, COUNCIL AND CITIZENS,  
I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th inst. in relation to the subject of the annual report of the Medical Officer of Health for the year 1907. It is a pleasure to me to be able to submit to you this report, which is the result of my work during the year. I have endeavored to give you a full and complete statement of the work done, and to show the progress made in the various branches of the public health service. I have also endeavored to show the results of the work done, and to show the progress made in the various branches of the public health service. I have also endeavored to show the results of the work done, and to show the progress made in the various branches of the public health service.

VERIFICATION

The report of the Medical Officer of Health for the year 1907, as submitted to the Council, is hereby verified by the Council, and is hereby adopted as the official report of the Medical Officer of Health for the year 1907.

# Alnwick Rural District Council.

---

## ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

## MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR 1907.

---

MR CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

The year 1907 presented climatic conditions more severe and unpleasant than we have been accustomed to in this district for some years back. It was only in the last week of 1906 that winter assumed anything like the severity associated in one's mind with that season. This was followed by a continued low temperature with occasional snow storms lasting well through the first quarter of 1907. The spring which followed was wet and cold, and agricultural operations were considerably hampered and delayed. The summer was remarkable not so much for the excessive rainfall as for the absence of sunshine, which left the corn crops unripened at a time when they are generally harvested. This latter process was one of extreme tediousness and difficulty as the autumn was not relieved by that spell of fine weather, which often does so much to make up for a cold wet summer. Although the latter part of the year was wet and cheerless, yet this district seems to have escaped in a wonderful manner the floods and snowstorms experienced in most of the other parts of the country both to the northwards and southwards.

### Vital Statistics.

The figures concerning the Birth and Death Rates are fairly satisfactory, both by comparison with the country generally and with previous years in this district. The birth rate is lower than it has been for some years back, but against this may be put a considerably decreased infantile death rate, and I shall show that this improvement



is really greater than the figures show owing to the inclusion of a comparatively large number of deaths from premature birth. The number of deaths and the death rate though slightly greater than in 1906 is still considerably below the average, in fact with that exception, the lowest for ten years. The following table shows the number of births and deaths registered in the district during the year 1907 with the corresponding rates 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.
1905	327	26.12	177	14.14
1906	304	24.28	163	13.02
1907	282	22.53	171	13.66

From the above table it will be seen that the number of births for 1907 was 18 less than that for 1906, and 45 less than that for 1905, and the birth rate for 1907 was less than that for 1906 by 1.75, and less than that for 1905 by 3.59. The deaths for 1907 were in number 8 more than in 1906, and 6 less than in 1905; the death rate in 1907 being .64 greater in 1907 than in 1906 and .58 less in 1907 than in 1905.

As regards sex the deaths were fairly evenly divided, 87 being males and 84 females. This majority of male deaths is in this district unusual, as for some years the number of female deaths has greatly exceeded that of males, notwithstanding the fact that few deaths have been connected with child-birth, and that most of the accidental deaths have occurred in the case of males. The following table gives the distribution of the deaths as regards the Sub-districts, the numbers for the two preceding years being given for comparison :

	WARKWORTH.	EMBLETON.	DENWICK
1905	105	64	8
1906	99	52	12
1907	111	56	4

From the above it will be seen that the variations in the numbers of deaths for the two larger Sub-districts have been somewhat irregular although within narrow limits, while the Denwick Sub-District with its small population shows variations of from 50 per cent to over 66 per cent, the number being too small to give a steady average. The following table gives the deaths for each Sub-district with the corresponding death rates :

WARKWORTH.		EMBLETON.		DENWICK.	
DEATHS.	DEATH RATE.	DEATHS.	DEATH RATE.	DEATHS	DEATH RATE.
111	15.77	56	11.64	4	6.12



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

	UNDER one 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
1905.	40	20	5	12	47	53
1906.	38	8	9	15	34	59
1907.	29	12	6	7	56	61

The information conveyed by this table is on the whole satisfactory. The number of infantile deaths is markedly reduced, and there is a general movement of the weight of figures to the old age end of the table. Seven of the twelve deaths between the ages of one and five were caused by infectious diseases. The deaths from tubercular disease go chiefly to swell the number of deaths between 25 and 65, as out of 13 no less than 10 are credited to that division. The part of the table relating to deaths over 65 is satisfactory, as it shows that the proportion of the total deaths included in that section was 35.6 per cent, as against 36.1 for 1906 and 30.5 for 1905.

The infantile death rate for the whole district was 102.83 per 1,000 children born as against 122.32 for 1906 and 125.00 for 1905.

In Warkworth Sub-district 174 children were born and 22 died under the age of one year.

In Embleton Sub-district, 94 children were born and 7 died under the age of one year.

In Denwick Sub-district 14 children were born and all survived.

This gives the Sub-districts the following infantile death rates :

WARKWORTH.	EMBLETON.	DENWICK.
126.43	71.27	Nil

From the above it will be seen that the infantile death rate is still much larger in the Warkworth Sub-district than in the Embleton. As I have several times pointed out this disproportion has existed for some years, and although there is a considerable improvement in the rate in the Warkworth Sub-district this year, it is still excessive for a population living more or less under rural conditions. Thus in this Sub-district the infantile death rate rose steadily from 89.0 in 1903 to 147.2 in 1906, and has fallen to 126.43 in 1907. In the Embleton Sub-district the opposite state of affairs has existed, the infantile death rate having fallen steadily from 171.7 and 171.1 in 1903 and 1904 to 85.1 and 71.2 in 1906 and 1907.

I have great hope that the infantile death rate may be still further reduced by the gradual introduction of trained district nurses,



whose good advice may do much to encourage more sanitary methods both of the feeding and general treatment of infants, but I regret to say they are too often regarded as unpractical theorists by mothers whose experience is as frequently as not gauged by the number of children they have buried.

The greatest number of deaths for one month, viz., 22, occurred in March, the smallest number, viz., 7 in May.

The total number of births for the year 1907 was 282, giving a birth-rate of 22.53 for the whole district distributed as follows over the Sub-districts:

WARKWORTH.		EMBLETON.		DENWICK.	
Births.	Birth Rate.	Births.	Birth Rate	Births.	Birth Rate
174	24.72	94	19.53	14	20.92

Of the births 138 were of males and 144 of females.

## Infectious Diseases.

During the year 1907, 53 cases of infectious disease have been notified in the district. Of the cases notified, 34 were scarlet fever, 12 diphtheria, 2 enteric fever, and 5 erysipelas. The distribution of the infectious diseases as regards the Sub-districts will be seen from the following table:

Sub-District.	Scarlet Fever.	Diphtheria	Enteric Fever	Erysipelas	Totals
Warkworth	14	11	1	1	27
Embleton	20	1	1	3	25
Denwick	0	0	0	1	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>53</b>

Scarlet Fever.—During 1907 there was never any severe epidemic of scarlet fever. Most of the cases occurred in the early part of the year, thus in January 3 cases were notified; in February 8; in March 6; in April 4; in May 1; in June 6; in July 4; in August 1; in October 1.

A good deal of alarm was caused by an epidemic of scarlet fever at Embleton. The cases notified were not numerous, but in one case the form of disease assumed was malignant and there was a general suspicion that slight attacks were being concealed. This epidemic had one good result which was that the Council made arrangements to provide for the disinfection of infected houses in all cases where I considered that it was unlikely to be thoroughly done by the occupiers. All such houses are now thoroughly disinfected with formalin under my instructions either by Messrs Wilkin and Dickman of Alnwick, or Messrs Green of Amble.



Diphtheria appeared in four different localities in the district, viz., at Glanton 1 case; at Radcliffe, 5 cases; at Togston Terrace and Crescent, 3 cases; and at Warkworth 3 cases. At Glanton the drainage has been much improved and it is to be hoped that this case which appeared in January is the last of a long series. At Radcliffe the outbreak was due to a defective cover of a sewer manhole, but until the roads are properly laid so as to avoid collections of stagnant water we are likely to have occasional cases. At Togston Terrace and Crescent the proximity of the privy ash-pits to the doors of the houses has always been a menace to the health of the population. The cases at Warkworth which I regret to say were all three fatal, were apparently caused, the first by a defective sewer trap, and the others by a nuisance caused by depositing refuse on the river bank.

Enteric Fever appeared in two localities, viz., Little Mill Station and Newton House Farm. The first of these cases was certainly imported although certain sanitary defects were pointed out and remedied. In the second there was no apparent sanitary defect.

During the year 1907 there were registered in the district 6 deaths from notifiable infectious disease, viz., 1 Scarlet Fever, 4 Diphtheria, and 1 Erysipelas. This gives a death rate of .49 per thousand per annum.

Measles caused the deaths of 3 children.

Influenza caused the deaths of six persons, diarrhoea of 2 and enteritis of 1.

Thus from Zymotic Diseases there were 19 deaths giving a Zymotic death rate of 1.51 per thousand per annum.

## Sewerage and Drainage.

### DISPOSAL OF SEWAGE.

A drain outlet from Brandon White House, in the Glendale Rural District, has been diverted away from West Hedgeley Cottages in this rural district. At Chester House an unsanitary sink has been replaced with a new glazed sink and trapped waste pipe discharging on to a gully outside. The main sewers at Radcliffe have been ventilated with 6-inch cast-iron shafts at the upper ends, and a manhole which had a wooden lid has been supplied with a cast-iron air-tight cover. At Shilbottle South Farm Cottages the pigeries have been properly drained, and the floors cemented, and a burst drain in front has been attended to. At Percy Cottage, Shilbottle, an old stone conduit has been replaced with sanitary pipes. At Embleton Hall a



foul sink in the kitchen has been replaced with a white glazed sink, and a trapped waste pipe which discharges on to a gully outside. Drainage has been provided for the piggeries at Glanton North Field, and various sties at Embleton. At Little Mill Station, where enteric fever occurred, the drain which is within a few feet of the pump well has been replaced with iron pipes. At the premises at Warkworth Churchside, where a fatal case of diphtheria occurred, the drainage system has been entirely re-newed and ventilated, and self cleansing gulleys fixed in the place of antiquated and useless metal traps. At Thompson's Cottages at the Butts, Warkworth, a defective drain has been re-laid and ventilated, and in certain yards in the village new gulleys have been fixed. Sewage from the Coastguard Cottages at Craster has been diverted from an old stone conduit into a new pipe sewer. The cellar at the Poplars, Alnmouth, which was full of stagnant water has been drained. The north sewage tank at Embleton has been supplied with an air-tight cover, and converted into a septic or liquefying tank and a nuisance close to the highway abated. At Embleton all the untrapped storm water grates have been furnished with proper gulleys, or converted into junction manholes with air-tight lids, and all the dead ends have been ventilated with 6 inch cast-iron shafts.

### **Privies, Waterclosets, etc.**

At Bell's Row, Lesbury, the offices have been converted into ash closets, and the ashpits which were near the houses have been abolished, and the back street paved. At Prospect Terrace, Felton, an ashpit close to a door has been abolished, and a pail closet formed. The cesspool at the back of South Charlton School has been filled up, and the privies converted into pail closets. At Humbleheugh a privy has been made into an ash closet with movable receptacle. At Christon Bank a new ash closet with wagon has been provided instead of a privy which adjoined a dwelling. At Warkworth Mill Cottage an ashpit which was within four feet of a bedroom window has been removed to a safe distance. An extra ash closet has been provided for the premises at the North end of Quaker Row, at Embleton, and at the Blue Bell Inn the privy has been made into a water closet. At Rose Cottage, Embleton, a privy has been made into a pail closet. At Glanton a number of privies in small and confined yards have been converted into water closets.

### **Offensive Ditches and Collections of Matter.**

A rubbish shoot has been provided for Embleton in the quarry near the Blue Row. The sewage ditch at Acton Hall Cottage has been cleaned out. A stream at Rennington, which is fouled by



about half-a-dozen drain outlets, has been cleaned out. An offensive ditch adjoining the highway at High Newton Cottages has been abolished. The sewage ditch at Boulmer Moor has been cleaned out, also the ditch in the Chapel field at Christon Bank. A midden has been provided for the stable at Powburn Road, Glanton, where manure was kept on the village road.

## **Water Supply.**

An extra pillar fountain has been supplied at Christon Bank. The pollution by sewage of the well opposite Shilbottle Village Farm house has been prevented by the laying of an iron pipe in the sewer, and a trapped gulley to receive the overflow. An additional stop valve has been fixed near Dunstan in order that the supply can be shut off in sections for repairs, with a minimum of inconvenience to the consumers. Plans have been prepared, and an important scheme is being formulated for the improvement of the water supply to the higher parts of Warkworth.

The following farms and cottages are badly off for water:—Acklington Low Park, Birling North Field, Dean Moor, Glanton North Field, Middle Cawledge Park, Shipley Lane, Sturton Grange South Side, and West Cawledge Park.

## **The Dairies, Cow Sheds, and Milkshops Order.**

The flooring of Young's byre at Acklington has been cemented in place of railway sleepers, and the channels and flooring at Chester House cow sheds have been improved. At Morwick Mill byres improved lighting and ventilation have been provided. A new dairy farm for twenty cows at Togston has been registered, and a byre for ten extra cows has been registered at Hazon, which brings the number up to seventy, at that farm.

## **Miscellaneous Nuisances.**

A dead horse which was washed up during a flood in the river Coquet has been buried in lime near Acklington Park. A disused house at Chapel Row, Togston, has been put into tenantable repair, and it is no longer over-run by children, who committed nuisances in it. In order to lessen the disadvantages of no through ventilation in the back-to-back houses at the Cross Row at Radcliffe, air shafts



have been provided from the living rooms up the roofs. A new shed in a garden for tripe boiling has been made at a butcher's premises at Warkworth, in place of one close to dwellings.

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

## **The Factory and Workshop Act.**

A register of all the work-places in the district is kept, 95 in number, which are inspected from time to time to ascertain if they are clean, free from effluvia, not overcrowded, and in good sanitary condition.

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

To the Sanitary Inspector, Mr. M. Temple Wilson, I owe the latter part of this report dealing with Sewerage, Drainage, Privies, Ditches, Water Supplies, Cow-sheds, Slaughter Houses, and Miscellaneous Nuisances. Mr. Wilson and I have now been associated in this work for many years and have always worked together smoothly.

To the Clerk of the Council, Mr. H. W. Walton, I have frequently been indebted for the trouble he takes to furnish me with information as to local statistics and sanitary law.

Finally I have to thank the Chairman and Members of the Council for their deference to my opinions on matters of public health and their consistent support in putting these opinions into action.

**Scott Purves, M.D.,**

*Medical Officer of Health.*



# ALNWICK RURAL DISTRICT.

## CAUSES OF, AND AGES AT, DEATH DURING YEAR, 1907.

CAUSES OF DEATH.	All Ages.									
	1	2	Under 1 year	1 and under 5	5 and under 15	15 and under 25	25 and under 65	65 and upwards	Wark-worth	Emble-ton
Measles ..	..	3		3			1	3	1	
Scarlet fever ..	..	1								
Whooping-cough ..	..	2	1	1					2	
Diphtheria and Membranous croup	..	4		3	1		5	1	4	
Epidemic influenza	..	6							2	
Diarrhoea ..	..	2	1					1	1	
Enteritis ..	..	1	1						1	
Erysipelas ..	..	1			1				1	
Other septic diseases	..	1							1	
Plithisis, (Pulmonary Tuberculosis)	..	13				3	1	1	7	1
Other tubercular diseases	..	2	1				9		5	
Cancer, malignant disease	..	4					1	4	2	
Bronchitis ..	..	6	1	1				4	1	
Pneumonia	..	6				1	3	4	2	
Alcoholism	..	1					1	1	1	
Cirrhosis of liver }	..								8	
Premature birth ..	..	9	9				15	7	14	1
Heart diseases	..	22					4	4	7	
Accidents ..	..	10		3	4	2	18	4	3	
All other causes ..	..	85	15					43	56	1
All Causes	..	179	29	12	6	8	58	66	113	4

N.B.—This table includes deaths of inhabitants of Alnwick Rural District in Public Institutions.—(Infirmary and Workhouse).





