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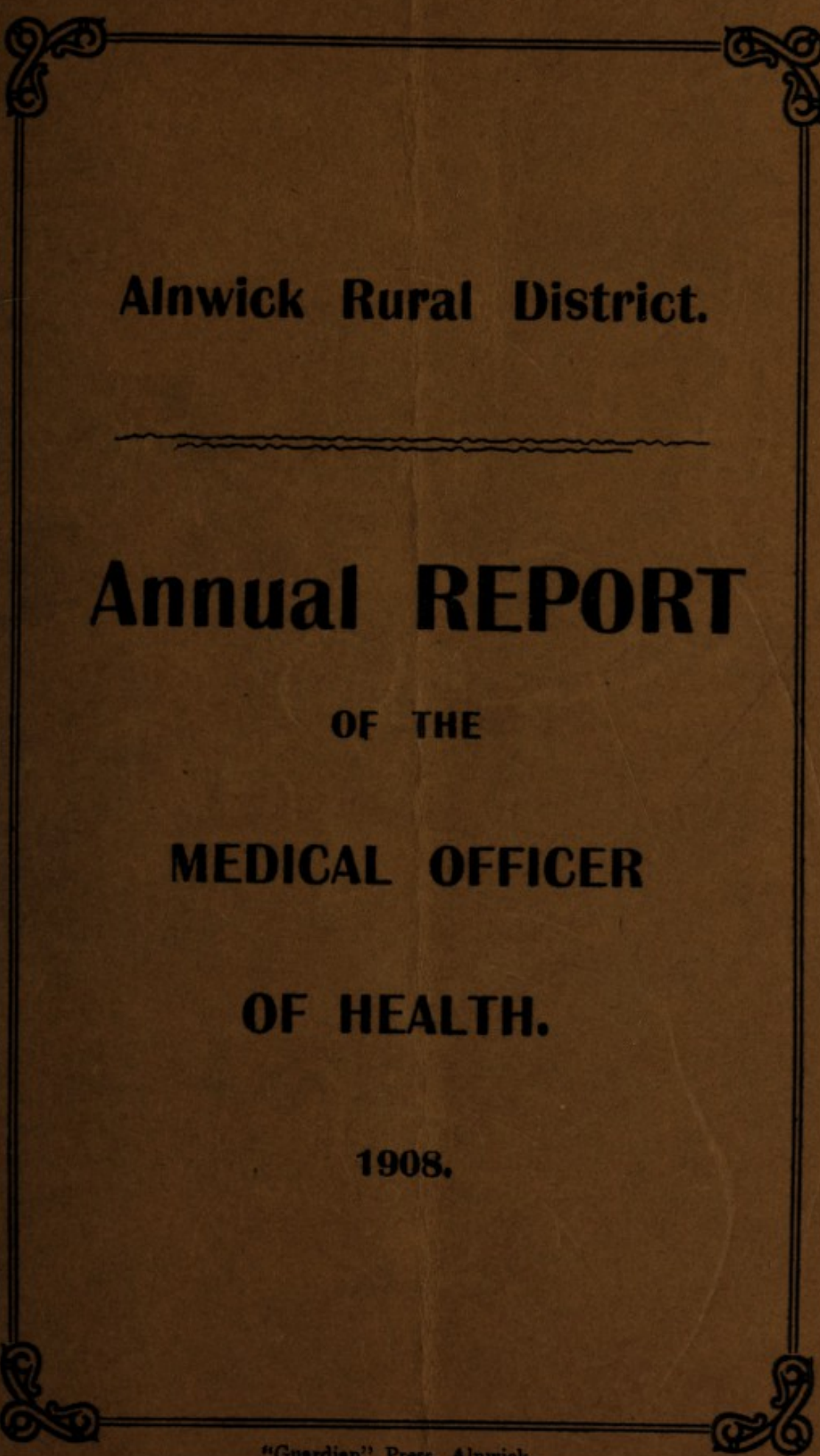
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**Alnwick Rural District.**

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**Annual REPORT**

**OF THE**

**MEDICAL OFFICER**

**OF HEALTH.**

**1908.**





Sanitary and District Council

ANNUAL REPORT

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR 1900

THE SANITARY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL

The following report of the Medical Officer of Health for the year 1900, is submitted to the Council. It contains a summary of the work done during the year, and a statement of the results of the various sanitary measures adopted. The report is divided into two parts, the first dealing with the general sanitary condition of the district, and the second with the results of the various sanitary measures adopted. The first part contains a summary of the work done during the year, and a statement of the results of the various sanitary measures adopted. The second part contains a summary of the work done during the year, and a statement of the results of the various sanitary measures adopted.

# **Alnwick Rural District Council.**

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## **ANNUAL REPORT**

OF THE

## **MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH**

**FOR THE YEAR 1908.**

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Mr. CHAIRMAN, LADIES and GENTLEMEN,

The year 1908 presented climatic conditions which, though in no way very remarkable, may be regarded as more than usually favourable. The severe weather with which the year was ushered in was not of long continuance, nor were the storms and cold of the latter part of the winter either prolonged or intense. Spring came comparatively, if not unduly early, but was considerably delayed by a sudden depression of temperature with a sharp snowstorm in May. The summer months proved to be hot and dry and by the end of August it looked as if the shortness of the rainfall would seriously affect both the water supplies and the farming interests. The autumn, although never continuously wet, yet brought sufficient moisture to obviate any ills that might have resulted from the preceding drought, and the absence of frosts made that season particularly favourable to agriculture. The temperature experienced during the greater part of the latter two months of the year were higher than usual, and it was not until the end of the Christmas week that we had a snowstorm, which, though short in duration, was the heaviest experienced in this district for many years. This storm may have done something to help the water supplies, which, in many cases, require augmenting, as the rainfall for the year has been a good deal below average.



## Vital Statistics.

The figures concerning the Birth and Death-Rates for the year 1908 are, on the whole, very satisfactory, and compare favourably with the rates for the county generally and with the previously recorded averages for this district in particular. The birth-rate is a good deal higher than in 1907, and slightly higher than in 1906. The death-rate is slightly lower than in 1907, and, with the exception of 1906, is the lowest for more than ten years back. This, considering the intense prevalence of a very deadly form of infectious disease in the district, is better than might have been expected. The following table shows the number of births and deaths registered in the district during the year 1908, 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.
1906.	304	24.28	163	13.02
1907.	282	22.53	171	13.66
1908.	306	24.44	170	13.58

From the above table it will be seen that the number of births for 1908 was 24 more than in 1907, and 2 more than in 1906, the birth-rate being in 1908 greater than in 1907 by 1.91, and greater than that in 1906 by .16. The number of deaths was less in 1908 than in 1907 by one, and greater than in 1906 by 7. The death-rate in 1908 was less than in 1907 by .08, and greater than in 1906 by .56. This shows that for the last three years the deaths have continued to show a low and steady average, and it is curious to note how much nearer still the numbers are brought if we exclude the deaths from premature birth. These deaths were in 1908, 7; in 1907, 9; and in 1906, 2; and after their deduction the deaths are 163 for 1908, 162 for 1907, and 161 for 1906.

As regards sex, the deaths were somewhat unevenly divided, 79 being males and 91 females. I have noticed this disparity for some years, 1907 being an exception. This seems to mean, not that the female death-rate is greater, for the deaths connected with parturition have been few, but simply that there are more women living in the district than men. The migration of men in search of work from the country to the large towns accounts for this state of things, and as one would expect it is typically exemplified in an almost purely agricultural sub-district like Embleton, where rural depopulation has been going on for several decades. In that sub-district for 1908 there was an excess of female deaths over male of 10 in a total of 50. 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.
1906.	99	52	12
1907.	111	56	4
1908.	110	50	10

From the above it will be seen that the variations of the numbers in the two larger sub-districts are not great, while the Denwick sub-district, having a small population, gives a very unsteady average. The following table shows the death-rates in the various sub-districts:

Warkworth.		Embleton.		Denwick.	
Deaths.	Death-Rate	Deaths.	Death-Rate.	Deaths.	Death-Rate.
110	15.63	50	10.39	10	14.93

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

	Under 1 year, one & under year	5 years, & under 5 years	15 years, & under 15 years	25 years, & under 25 years	65 years & under 65 years	65 years and over
1906.	38	8	9	15	34	59
1907.	29	12	6	7	56	61
1908.	32	13	10	7	39	69

The information conveyed by this table is fairly satisfactory. The number of infantile deaths, although a little larger in 1908 than in 1907, is a good deal less than in 1906, and is indeed below the average of a good many years back. Although the deaths between the ages of one and 15 are slightly increased in number, yet the figures cannot be regarded as excessive, considering the amount of serious infectious disease which has existed in the district during the year. Between 15 and 25 years the number of deaths is small and is made up chiefly by cases of tubercular disease. Between 25 years and 65 years the number of deaths is considerably less in 1908 than in 1907, though not so low as in 1906. Finally, in the '65 and over' division we find the number of deaths in 1908 considerably in excess of the two previous years, which is, of course, from a public health point of view, a desirable condition. The percentage of deaths over 65 was in 1908 40.5, as against 35.6 for 1907 and 36.1 for 1906.

The Infantile death-rate for the whole district was 104.5 per 1000 children born, as against 102.8 in 1907 and 122.3 in 1906.

In Warkworth Sub-district 184 children were born, and 16 died under one year.

In Embleton Sub-district 106 children were born, and 13 died under one year.

In Denwick Sub-district 16 children were born, and 3 died under one year.

This gives the Sub-districts the following Infantile death-rates:—



Warkworth.	Embleton.	Denwick.
86.8	122.6	187.5

From the above it will be seen that the Warkworth Sub-district, which for some years has shown much the highest infantile death-rate, has this year gone to the bottom of the list. This improvement is greater than the actual figures show, because, of the 7 deaths in the district from premature birth, 5 occurred in the Warkworth Sub-district, and these deaths being more or less accidental and certainly unavoidable, have no bearing on the objects for which the infantile death-rate is compiled.

The Infantile death-rate in Embleton Sub-district, after decreasing steadily for some years, shows a considerable rise this year, which, I hope, may not be maintained.

The very high Infantile death-rate in the Denwick Sub-district will be regarded with less alarm when it is understood that the numbers are so small that each single death raises the rate per thousand by more than 60. The rate was Nil last year.

The greatest number of deaths for one month, viz., 20, occurred in May; the smallest, viz., 9, in December.

The total number of births for the year 1908 was 306, giving a birth-rate of 24.44 for the whole district, distributed over the Sub-districts as follows:—

Warkworth.		Embleton.		Denwick.	
Births.	Birth-Rate.	Births.	Birth-Rate.	Births.	Birth-Rate.
184	26.15	106	22.03	16	23.91

Of the births, 159 were males and 147 females.

### Infectious Diseases.

During the year 1908, 83 cases of infectious disease have been notified in the district. Of the cases reported, 16 were scarlet fever, 55 diphtheria, 5 enteric fever, 1 continued fever, and 6 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.	Continued Fever.	Puerperal Fever.	Erysipelas.	Totals.
Warkworth	5	29	5	1	0	4	44
Embleton	11	25	0	0	0	2	38
Denwick	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
	16	55	5	1	0	6	83

Scarlet Fever.—Towards the end of the year 1907 the Council decided to have all houses in which infectious disease occurred thoroughly disinfected, except in cases where the occupiers were able and willing to undertake the duty themselves. In a widely spread and sparsely populated district like ours, the process entails much



increased expense, owing, in great part, to the time required to cover the often considerable distances. This extra expense was diminished as far as was possible by arranging that Messrs. Wilkin & Dickman, of Alnwick, should disinfect in the northern and western parts of the district, while Messrs. Green, of Amble, do the south and east. This arrangement has worked well and the marked diminution of the number of cases of scarlet fever may, I think, be taken as an evidence of the usefulness of such disinfection and the thoroughness with which it has been carried out. It must always be remembered that scarlet fever is a disease which arises much more commonly either by carried infection or by the germs remaining in houses, than by local insanitary condition, and this being so, thorough after disinfection is specially effective in arresting its spread. The chief remaining dangers are those arising from the exposing of children during the somewhat prolonged period of desquamation and the concealment of slight cases, and these perils to the community can only be met by the rigid enforcement of the law relating to the spread of infectious disease.

Diphtheria.—The year 1908, in the matter of infectious disease, is likely to be remembered as the diphtheria year. Since the Notification Act came into force the cases recorded in one year have seldom exceeded a dozen and have frequently only totalled 4 or 5. During 1908, some peculiar and unexplained condition, probably climatic, has existed, which has been particularly favourable to the development of the diphtheria germ. This state of things has not been confined to the Alnwick Rural District, but has been equally well marked in the Alnwick and Amble Urban districts, and I understand along the North-East Coast generally. In our district we have had the disease in an epidemic form in two localities and a good many sporadic cases in addition. The two epidemics occurred, one in and about Longhoughton, the other in the south-east corner of the district, the townships of Radcliffe and Togston Terrace being chiefly affected.

At Longhoughton there could be no doubt that the disease was ultimately spread from the school, which had to be closed on two occasions from that cause, with an immediate cessation of fresh cases each time. The original source of the disease was at the beginning doubtful, but later I was much inclined to think that the disease proceeded from a family who had not called in a doctor at the time of the first outbreak, but who, later on, were more or less accidentally discovered to be suffering from what probably was a second attack of diphtheria, as the symptoms were exactly the same as some months earlier. It is in such cases that the excellent arrangements made by the County Council for bacteriological diagnosis of doubtful cases have their chief use, but even this help is unavailing where the attacks are slight and the serious nature of the disease unsuspected by the parents, so that no medical aid is requested. The cottage in which the family live, and that next it, have been several times affected by diphtheria, notwithstanding the fact that everything that could be



suggested has been done to render them sanitary. The only possible cause this time appeared to be an unsealed inspection chamber for the house drain, near which the children played. In connection with the school, I drew the attention of the managers to the irregular way in which the large privy for the female side of the school was cleaned, and pointed out my reasons for suspecting that this having become infected was almost certainly an agent in spreading the disease. I strongly recommended that this privy should be replaced by water closets as on the male side, but the managers have declined the suggestion, being satisfied with the present arrangement.

At Radcliffe I have frequently pointed out the uneven and badly paved roadways contaminated by lying slop water were a great danger to the health of the inhabitants of the most populous township in our district. It is to be hoped that the Coal Company will direct their attention to this insanitary condition as soon as they have got the worst of the houses rebuilt. The street most affected by the diphtheria epidemic is new and does not suffer the above defect. The cause of the disease appears to be the emanations from an irregular stagnant ditch which runs obliquely across the fronts of the houses at a distance decreasing from about 30 yards at one end to 15 yards at the other end of the street. This ditch is contaminated by sewage before reaching Radcliffe, and by piggeries, &c., in passing it. Nothing short of piping in or conversion into an open and even cement channel can abate this very serious nuisance.

At Togston Terrace I have often referred to the defective plan on which practically all the houses are built, with the privy ashpits close up to the back doors, and, as might have been expected, a number of diphtheria cases have occurred there. It is to be hoped that a nuisance caused by an open sewer belonging to the Morpeth Authority, but flowing along our boundary, will soon be abated, now that the County Medical Officer has reported on it in a sense similar to the officers of this Council. An outbreak of diphtheria at Glanton was fortunately confined to one yard, which speaks well for the improved sanitary conditions there, as hitherto great difficulty has been experienced in checking the spread of this disease in that village.

The number of deaths from diphtheria (5) has not been great when the large number of attacks (55) is considered, which diminution in the fatality of this dangerous disease is due, firstly, to the diagnostic facilities already referred to, and secondly, to the much greater efficiency of the modern forms of treatment.

Enteric Fever appeared in four localities, but as there were only five cases, it will be seen that it never assumed an epidemic form.

During the year 1908 there were registered in the district 7 deaths from notifiable infectious disease, viz., from diphtheria 5, from enteric fever 1, and from erysipelas 1. This gives a death-rate of .55 per thousand per annum. Whooping cough caused 4 deaths, influenza 1, enteritis 4.



Thus from Zymotic diseases there were 16 deaths, giving a Zymotic death-rate of 1.27 per thousand per annum.

## **Sewerage and Drainage.**

### **DISPOSAL OF SEWAGE.**

The N.E. Railway Co. have piped in the sewage ditch alongside the public footpath from Little Mill station to Rennington. The settling tank at Togston Hall, and the storm water conduit at Dial Place, Warkworth, which formerly contained sewage, has been cleaned out. The nuisance caused by an offensive smell from a grating near the Coast Guard's house at Boulmer has been done away with by the removal of it by the owner. A new outlet into the tidal river has been provided for the Howle Kiln drain at Alnmouth, which has successfully drained off the surface water on the common. Improvements have been made to sinks and drainage at Bolton Wood Hall, Pitt's Yards at Embleton, High Learchild, Titlington Farm House, "Red Lion" yard at Felton, Golden Moor, Eglington Hill, Embleton East Farm, and in several yards in Warkworth.

Plans and sections have been prepared for a new sewerage scheme for Heather Leazes, near Warkworth, where thirteen new houses have been built, which are drained into land drains, ditches, or cesspools, and application has been made to the Local Government Board for sanction to borrow the sum of £375 for the same.

### **Privies, Waterclosets, Etc.,**

All the waterclosets in Felton have been inspected, and only one found to be in direct communication with the watermain, and it has since been furnished with a flushing cistern. Six new water closets have been provided for the Common Lodging House, or houses near it at Embleton. An extra privy has been provided for Morton's property at Embleton. Privies have been made into pail or ash closets at Rose Cottage at Embleton, "Red Lion" yard at Felton, and at the cottages near the "Blink Bonny" Hotel, Christon Bank. An additional water closet and ashpit has been built for Riddell's cottages at the Butts, Warkworth. Privies have been converted into water closets at Cuthbert's yard, Grey's yard, and Forster's yard at Warkworth.

### **Water Supply.**

At Golden Moor the water supply has been protected at the fountain head from surface water off the highway. The outlet pipe in the Denwick reservoir has been raised up above the floor, to be clear of sediment. A large boiler tank has been delivered at Mount Pleasant for storage on this high elevation. The Sturton Grange



water has been extended to the southern cottages at Low Hauxley, which completes the water supply to this model fishing village. At Glanton Mile End a wind engine has been provided to pump water from a well 370 yards distant. The  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch pipe which supplied 21 houses at Grosvenor Terrace, Alnmouth, has been re-placed with 2-inch cast-iron pipes. According to agreement the Alnwick Castle Authorities have extended the water supply from the joint smallpox hospital to West Cawledge Park Farm, and Dean Moor. Through the kindness of Mrs. Forster, of Fairfield, Warkworth, the Butts' supply has been augmented at her expense by an additional spring, yielding two gallons per minute. A draft agreement is being prepared by the Duke's solicitors for additional springs to be obtained for an important scheme for the improvement of the water supply to the higher parts of the township of Warkworth. Application has been made to the Local Government Board for sanction to borrow £200 to replace with 4-inch cast-iron pipes the 2-inch watermain laid in 1868, and now furred up. The distance from the nearest grave in the churchyard to the Acklington well is about 33 yards. The subsoil between is sand and gravel, therefore the risk of pollution of this well, which supplies the inhabitants and a dairy farm, is very great. A workable scheme has been devised for getting water from the Amble waterworks for Acklington, but this matter is still in abeyance.

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

### **Common Lodging House.**

Permission to keep a Common Lodging House for 11 working men lodgers has been given to Mr. Job Angus at Glanton.

### **The Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops Order.**

The byelaws require the walls of cowsheds of public milksellers (who keep three or more cows) to be properly limewashed twice at least in every year, in May and October, and inspections have been made to see that this is done, and that the premises are reasonably clean and sweet.

### **The Factory and Workshops' Act.**

A register of all the workplaces 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.

### **Miscellaneous Nuisances Abated.**

Under the Private Street Works Act, 1892, Togston Crescent has been paved. At Cowslip Hill, near Felton, the premises have



been re-modelled, and the bedrooms which had no proper windows have been provided with them. New floors and air grates have been provided for a house in Castle Street, Warkworth. Improvements have been made to the spouting, walls, floors, and air grates at Glanton Dene House. Surface water from North Broomhill, in the Morpeth district, has been prevented from flooding the street and yards at Togston Terrace in this district. A foul smelling fowl-house close to the street, and opposite Bridge End House, Warkworth, is now disused.

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 verbal or informal notice.

Before closing my 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, water supplies, drainage, cowsheds, slaughter houses, and miscellaneous nuisances. Mr. Wilson and I have worked together for many years, and our cordial co-operation has been a benefit, not only to ourselves, but, I believe, also to the Council.

To the Clerk of the Council 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 the carrying out of my recommendations.

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

Medical Officer of Health.



# ALNWICK RURAL DISTRICT.

CAUSES OF, AND AGES AT, DEATH DURING YEAR, 1908.

CAUSES OF DEATH.	All Ages	Under 1 year	1 and under 5	5 and under 15	15 and under 25	25 and under 65	65 and up- wards	Wark worth	Emble- ton	Denwick
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Whooping-cough	4	2	2					4		
Diphtheria (including Membranous croup ..	5		2	3		1		2	2	1
Enteric Fever ..	1						1	1		
Epidemic influenza ..	1							1		
Enteritis ..	4	3	1					3		
Erysipelas ..	1		1					1		
Phthisis, (Pulmonary Tuberculosis) ..	13				4	9		12	1	1
Other tuberculous diseases ..	6	4	1		1	4	9	3	2	
Cancer, malignant disease ..	13							8	5	
Bronchitis ..	5	1				1	3	2	2	1
Pneumonia ..	5	2	1	1	1			4	1	
Other diseases of Respiratory organs..	1			1					1	
Alcoholism ..	1					1		1		
Cirrhosis of liver } ..	1									
Premature birth ..	7	7						1	1	1
Diseases and accidents of parturition..	1					1		5		
Heart diseases ..	20		1			11	8	1	7	2
Accidents ..	7		1	3		3		5	2	
All other causes ..	80	13	3	2	2	11	49	49	27	4
All causes ..	175	32	13	10	8	42	70	113	52	10

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



