

[Report 1896] / Medical Officer of Health, Alnwick U.D.C.

Contributors

Alnwick (England). Urban District Council.

Publication/Creation

1896

Persistent URL

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ALNWICK
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER

FOR THE YEAR ENDING

DECEMBER 31st, 1896.

ALNWICK :

Printed and Published by the "Alnwick and County Gazette" Company Ltd.

ALNWICK URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31st, 1896.

ALNWICK, 6th January, 1897.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE URBAN
DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Gentlemen,

We entered upon the year, to which the following observations apply, without having attained to more than a partial recovery from what occurred to interrupt our progress and endanger the Town's advancing reputation, since the snowstorm of 1895 acquired an importance by its long continuance, and became a novelty in our experience, which, though pleasing and invigorating to some, was neither extensively nor invariably conducive to the maintenance of health and life.

It is with the hurtful aspect of it that we are more immediately concerned, but the impression conveyed by this general statement may be less than is required for a profitable understanding of it. We cannot regard the harm and loss sustained by us during that year, in so far as they were peculiar and excessive, as having been entirely the result of such disorder as would necessarily attend a few unusually cold and protracted falls of snow, had their descent been upon open ground, though they might involve in their compass and influence well constructed and moderately populated dwellings, with suitable outdoor accommodation, which included appropriate means for the prompt removal to a safe and convenient distance of whatever might become injurious to health.

A long disturbance of this kind must often, even under these favourable circumstances, lead to something like embarrassment, but our calculation of the injury done by it should rather be based on a recollection that there are parts of the district, which do not safely admit of even a small encroachment upon space and arrangements, which are never otherwise than barely sufficient, if sufficient at all, for the ordinary requirements of health and comfort. The disadvantage of the situation, moreover, must be greatly aggravated, when atmospheric changes contribute to the dampness of dwellings, and a long confinement of families or individuals within close and well filled apartments, from which there is an insufficient escape for vitiated air, except by subjecting their more sensitive occupants to an exposure too severely cold for the safety of many near the extremes of life, who have little or no reserve of strength to meet an emergency, or any subsequent illness.

Notwithstanding the discouragement, however, a feeling survived that the retrograde movement of one year need not largely extend into another, and that the causes of it were for the most part sufficiently exceptional to make us hopeful of an early return to the brighter experience of times too recent to be forgotten, when the death rate underwent a yearly reduction. The year 1896 has, in the matters which then adversely affected us, been more propitious, especially in respect of a much milder winter, with the absence of any excessive encouragement to disease or failing health, and if you bear in mind the opening sentence of this report, and make due allowance for what is stated in it, you may reach a conclusion respecting the year's experience, (as it is ordinarily reckoned) that the anticipations we cherished have in a large measure been realized.

The accompanying tables supply in detail the more interesting and useful points of information respecting the mortality and annual birth rate.

During the past year there have been registered within the district of this Council 128 deaths, of which 65 were males, and 63 were females—14 occurred at the Workhouse, and 2 at the Infirmary—35 were under 5 years of age, and of these, 25 were infants, who died within the first year of life (15 of the latter at an age under 3 months, and 8 others under 6 months)—49 persons attained the

age of 60, and of those who exceeded it, 9 at the time of death were above 65, 19 above 70, and 12 over 80. A comparison of these figures with those of last year shows a reduction of 67 in the general total, of 25 in the deaths under 5 years, and of 20 in those which occurred beyond the age of 65.

There were 4 deaths from Scarlet Fever, or affections supposed to be traceable to it, and these alone represent what are attributed to infectious disease, of which 27 notifications have been received, viz., 21 of Scarlet Fever, 5 of Erysipelas, and 1 of Membranous Croup.

All the cases sent to the Hospital (of which there were 4) made a good recovery, and the Institution was maintained in order and readiness for the reception of as many as it was considered desirable to send to it.

The other deaths from specified causes are 17 from Phthisis, 19 from other affections of the respiratory organs, 9 from heart disease, and 4 from injuries.

The death rate per 1000 of the Population, according as we include those at the Public Institutions, or leave them out of the calculation, is in the one case 19.13, and in the other 16.74.

There were 164 births during the year, of which 89 were boys, and 75 were girls. The number is 50 below that of the previous year, and represents a birth rate of 24.51 per 1000 of the Population, instead of 31.98 as in the year 1895.

The work of the year has been sufficiently varied and important to require from me a short allusion to it.

The Water Supply has proved equal to the Town's requirements, having received help in this direction by the substitution of iron pipes for those of earthenware laid through Rugley Wood, in which the flow had become impeded by roots and gravel on its way to the Reservoir; nevertheless, during part of the year, when after a winter almost without snow, a long continuance of dry weather gave rise to uncertainty as to its sufficiency to meet the demand that might still be made upon it, a general feeling of insecurity was only narrowly averted by a plentiful rainfall. This should be borne in mind, with a view to the reduction or removal of anxiety on this account during any seasons of drought that may in the future overtake the district. As a further protection against fire several

new hydrants have been distributed over the Town, bringing up the number to 168.

It must be a relief and satisfaction for you to know that the progress of the works of sewerage is no longer disappointing, and that during the past year so much has been accomplished that it amounts to a near completion of the six sections of it at present in hand, with their tunnels, tanks, and osier beds. But beyond these there are three other sections in as many different stages of development. The one for which tenders are now invited is a substitute for what was intended to pass through Greenwell Lane, and of this it may be said, that it is an improvement sanctioned by the Local Government Board, and for which we are indebted to Earl Percy, who readily assented to allow a passage for it, at some inconvenience, through his private grounds, thus disposing of the only difficulty to an earlier choice of it. For the second, an alternative course is under survey, with the view of benefiting a number of villa residences on the Alnmouth Road, and the selection of this direction for it, would be in preference to one on the road to Denwick, consequently superseded. A longer continuance of the experimental arrangement instituted some years ago with reference to the Canongate portion of the scheme has also had a good effect in limiting attention to the larger and more important sections of it to which allusion has been made, a guarantee having been given that on their completion this remaining part "will be dealt with in a way satisfactory to those who are interested in it." In consequence of this progress and arrangement, a hope is entertained that a full execution of the work will encounter no obstacle serious enough to delay it beyond the end of May, the time appointed for its completion.

In addition to this comprehensive scheme, it became necessary to provide without delay some better escape for storm water and sewage from the higher parts of the Town at Bow Alley, where a new 18 inch relief sewer has been satisfactorily laid to the extent of 75 yards, whence a larger channel conducts it, with less probability of interruption, to the outlet where a junction with the new sewer is effected.

An automatic syphon has also been introduced in connection with the sewers on the Wagon Way, or new part of the Town, and by a flushing of the pipes at short inter-

vals is securing for them a more perfect cleansing, where the flow was languid through a temporary insufficiency of water.

Several attempts have been made in the course of the year to effect something for the improvement of dwellings and districts in which working men and their families usually reside. The necessity for this is made evident not only by the scarcity of humble habitations of approved construction, but by an acquaintance with the cramped accommodation of those existing in courts and lanes, and their insufficient ventilation, both of which become less tolerable at night, and during sickness, or when these defects are assisted by contingencies from without, over which little or no control can be exercised. Zealous efforts have accordingly been put forth to interest you on their behalf, and they have been so far successful as at least to make you familiar with the views of many, who tell us as the result of much thoughtful deliberation, that the difficulty can only be adequately met by the Council at a favourable opportunity illustrating what is possible, by erecting in a good position a few small dwellings, whose inviting appearance, and superior sanitary condition, should be sufficient compensation for any trifling amount by which they may fall short of being self-supporting. Hitherto, however, progress of a preliminary character only has been the result of many animated discussions, largely on account of an unwillingness by some to risk even a small increase of expenditure at a time when much work is in hand, the full cost of which cannot at present be accurately ascertained; yet the objections raised have prevailed rather to postpone than finally arrest further careful attention to the subject. But the time cannot be distant, when the mind under less restraint can more impartially deal with it on its merits, and I hope that when it arrives, there will be an increase of unanimity in your understanding of what is needed, and of the hindrances to private enterprise which make intervention by the Board desirable if not absolutely imperative.

In the meantime by again increasing the number of seats scattered over the outskirts of the district on well selected spots to 36, encouragement is given to as many as (weather permitting) can wander a short distance from home to prolong their stay in the open air without fatigue, and with a fair amount of advantage.

The Lodging House accommodation, which for many reasons has always stood in need of enlargement, and a better position in the Town, came up again for consideration in connection with the voluntary closing of a house, whose license of late years has considerably reduced the number of lodgers, who had previously been received into it. Its total disuse for this purpose emphasizes the general situation, by bringing into clearer light the inadequacy of this special provision for persons making short visits to the Town. As I understand that the question is receiving your attention, with a view to the purchase of a suitable building, and its conversion into convenient premises adapted for this use, the progress hitherto may be reported satisfactory.

Two new slaughter houses, each of which is provided with a fasting house, have been added to the number previously in use. A new scalding house also now forms part of the accommodation in the locality assigned to them.

A commencement has been made of a road behind the gardens on the north side of Clayport and it is desirable it should be continued.

The Inspector has presented to me a summary of what came under his notice during the year for correction or removal, and it accompanies this report. In other respects, it would be unfair to claim for works which are incomplete the credit of the years improvement, which appears in a large measure to be due to a freedom from some of the rougher elements of our climate, which prove so trying to those, who lack the special consideration often required on account of infirmity or age. In this case, no better course seems open to us than that of securing and improving upon the advantage already attained, with a view to our better protection, before any want of preparation for a surprise startle as with a repetition of unwelcome evidence such as the year 1895 afforded us.

The work in hand, and in contemplation, will probably supply scope enough for your energy till another similar report is nearly due, but if time permit, though much has been done in recent years to renew the house connections with the sewers, some further search might be made as a step towards rectifying the undiscovered displacements,

and careless work of bygone days, which may still exist to prove a cause of disease, and an encouragement to its extension.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

GEO. F. EASTON, M.D., F.B.I.PH.

Report of Inspector of Nuisances.

URBAN COUNCIL OFFICE,

GREEN BAT, ALNWICK,

5th January 1897.

TO THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

SIR,

I beg to submit a summary of work done in the way of Sanitation during the year 1896.

Number of Notices issued both formal and informal for the abatement of Nuisances, 224.

Total number of Nuisances abated, 354.

Number remaining on the books in progress and under notice, 8.

Number of Water Closets repaired ...	...	...	103
„ „ cleansed from obstruction ...	...	...	29
„ Increased Water Closet accommodation ...	...	...	3
„ Common Privies converted into W.Cs. ...	...	...	2
„ Drains requiring opening and cleansing from obstruction ...	...	...	28
„ Drains requiring repairs, relaying, or otherwise improved ...	...	...	26
„ Drains not efficiently trapped ...	...	...	40
„ Drains smoke tested ...	...	...	8

„	Backyards cemented out, repaired, or improved	14
„	Premises new spouted, repaired, or cleansed out	58
„	Cases where animals were improperly kept	4
„	Cases of overcrowding abated	1
„	Rooms disinfected after cases of infectious disease	12
„	Miscellaneous Nuisances arising from various causes	26

DAIRIES, COWSHEDS, AND MILKSHOPS ORDER, 1885.

The number of Persons registered as Cowkeepers and Purveyors of Milk is 42. The Regulations have been fairly well carried out during the year.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOPS ACT, 1891.

There are 35 workshops or workrooms at present on the list. These have been inspected during the year.

COMMON LODGING HOUSES.

These, two in number, giving accommodation for 27 lodgers, have been frequently inspected and the regulations fairly well carried out.

PUBLIC BAKEHOUSES.

These, nine in number, have been periodically inspected and found clean and in good condition.

DANIEL WATERS,

Inspector of Nuisances.

1. The first part of the paper is devoted to a general
discussion of the problem. It is shown that the
problem is of great importance and that it has
not been completely solved. The author then
presents a new method for solving the problem.
2. The second part of the paper is devoted to a
detailed study of the problem. It is shown that
the problem is of great importance and that it
has not been completely solved. The author then
presents a new method for solving the problem.

3. The third part of the paper is devoted to a
detailed study of the problem. It is shown that
the problem is of great importance and that it
has not been completely solved. The author then
presents a new method for solving the problem.
4. The fourth part of the paper is devoted to a
detailed study of the problem. It is shown that
the problem is of great importance and that it
has not been completely solved. The author then
presents a new method for solving the problem.
5. The fifth part of the paper is devoted to a
detailed study of the problem. It is shown that
the problem is of great importance and that it
has not been completely solved. The author then
presents a new method for solving the problem.

