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**Alnwick Urban District.**

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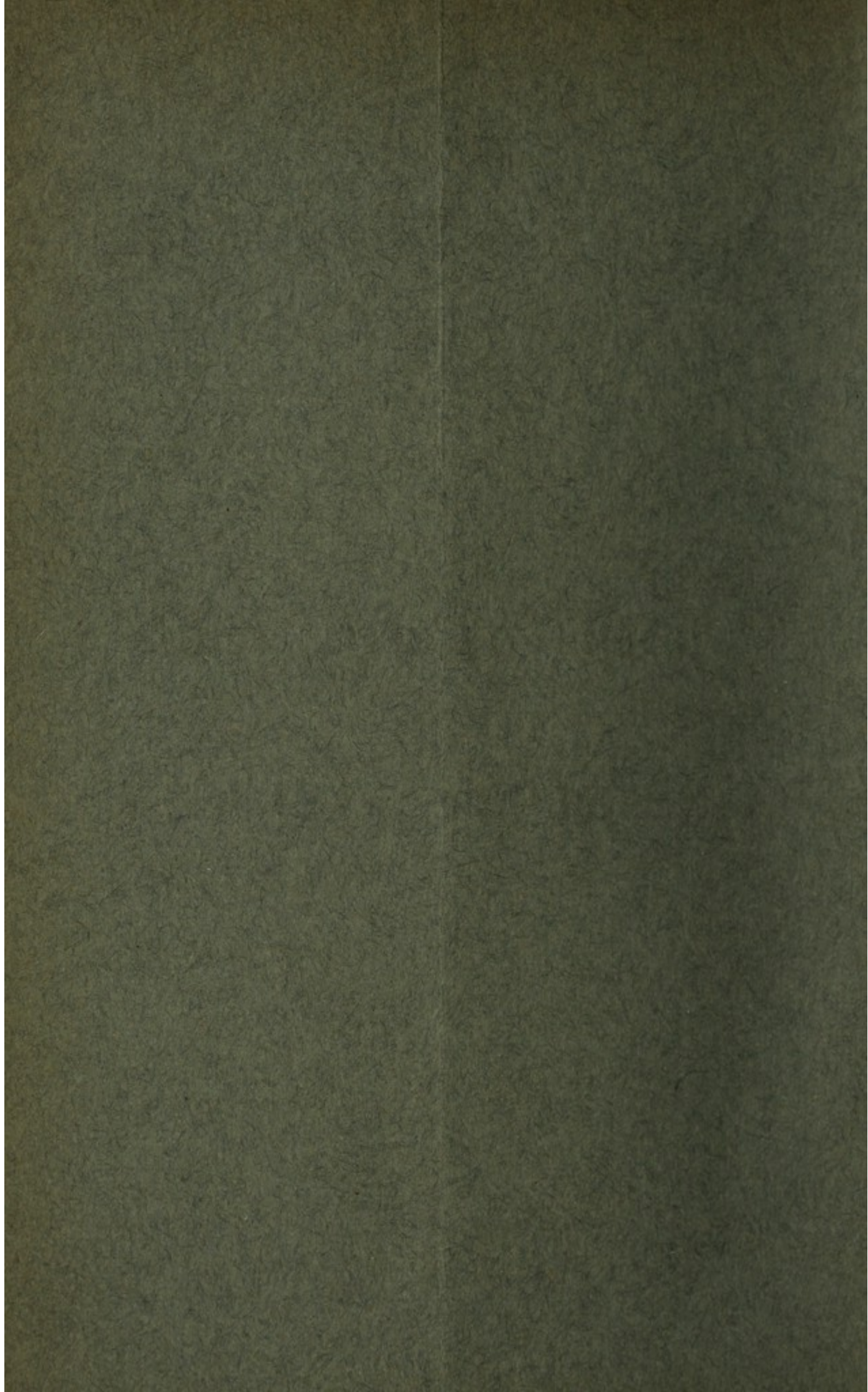
**Annual Report**

of the

**Medical Officer of Health.**

**1914.**







# Alnwick Urban District Council.

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## Medical Officer's Annual Report, 1914.

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GENTLEMEN—

It has been my custom for some years to begin my Report with a reference to the weather and the rainfall, both of which have a very marked influence on public health.

Until the month of October we had an exceptional run of dry weather, but since then we have experienced a continuance of rain. The fall for the past 12 months has been 28·55 inches, being 1·75 inches below the average for the previous ten years.

The number of days on which rain was recorded was 187.

In the early part of the year we had a certain amount of rainfall, but during the summer months we had very little. This affected very considerably the water supply of the town.

### Town Water Supply.

#### Hulne Park Spring Water.

Electric powered Pumping began on or about 8th February 1914, and after an interval was continued for a number of hours daily all the rest of the year, some Sundays excepted.

The average yield of Hulne Park Spring will have been about 75 galls. per minute = 108,000 galls. per diem ÷ 7,000 population = 15·4 galls. per head daily, for say 200 days of the year.

There has been no Pumping from Rugley Culvert Springs, but Tuffy's Well Spring, of 35 fell to 30 galls. per minute through prolonged dry weather; Rugley Deep Boring, of 42 fell to 22 galls. per minute; and Rugley Wood Well, of 18 fell to 8 galls. per minute. Thus, 95 fell to 60 galls. per minute = 86,400 galls. per diem ÷ 7,000 population = 12·3 galls per head. Thus 15·4 + 12·3 = 27·7, and required supplementing by various means with 2·3 to make up the usual total average consumption of 30 galls. per head daily.



Owing to the exceptionally dry summer and autumn, and the falling off of the "good" springs as given above, as autumn drew on, recourse had to be made again to some of the older supplies (from more superficial sources) which it was otherwise intended and arranged to discard.

By the addition of a military population of 500 men on average, and the institution of "Bath Parades," the draught from the town mains and reservoir was appreciably affected.

When the 3 Rugley Springs yield 95 galls. per minute, this gives about 19.5 galls. per head daily, and with the Hulne Park Spring at 15.4 galls. per head daily, the total supply equals 35 galls. per head per diem, and part would run to waste, were it not for a reduction of the number of hours for electric pumping of the Park Spring Water to save expense. Rugley Water comes in by gravitation.

I should like now to have a guarantee that the already condemned sources of supply have been finally cut off.

### **Vital Statistics.**

For this purpose I have taken the population at 7,000, as against 6,959 at the last census.

According to Local Government Board instructions the rates are to be calculated on the average population up to the middle of the year. Since the early part of August, when the troops were mobilized, we have had an average of 500 men billeted in the town. I have, however, not altered the basis on which I have made my calculations, for this reason, that, while men have been billeted in the town, a considerable number of residents have been called up with the colours.

Instructions have been issued to the Medical Officer in charge of Troops not to allow any billeting without the sanction of the Medical Officer of Health, but as, in this locality, they are one and the same person, no difficulty has arisen. No doubt certain cases of overcrowding have taken place, but, where these have been detected, they have been immediately remedied.

In abnormal times such as we are at present passing through, it is natural to find abnormal conditions, so far as housing accommodation is concerned. These have, however, as far as practicable, been modified.

I am glad to be able to say, in passing, that the health of the troops on the whole has been satisfactory.



There have been 139 births with a birth rate of 19.85 per 1000. 69 of these were males and 70 females. Included in the above, are 13 illegitimate births, 9 being males and 4 females.

The total deaths registered in the district were 128, giving a rate of 18.28 per 1000. 12 of these were of non-residents and have to be deducted from the total, but 8 persons who died out of the district are assignable to our own district, making a corrected total of 124, and a net death rate of 17.71.

16 deaths occurred under one year of age, making a death rate per 1000 births of 115.1. This is higher than it has been for the last 3 years.

The death rate is also higher and the birth rate lower than the average of the last 5 years.

### **Infectious Diseases.**

The number of infectious diseases notified was 22, giving a rate of 3.14 per 1000, and the deaths numbered 3, making a rate of 0.57. 1 death was due to Whooping Cough, and 2 to Diphtheria and Croup. 14 of the above 22 cases were of Diphtheria, most of them occurring in the early part of the year and among children of school age, 5 of which were treated in the isolation hospital. After a time the disease was traced to a defective drain at the National School. As soon as this was put in order, the outbreak ceased, and we had only 2 cases reported after May.

In September and early October, I had 3 notifications of Acute Poliomyelitis, but I learn from enquiries among my brother practitioners that other patients were suspected as suffering from this disease. The symptoms, however, were so indefinite that they did not consider themselves justified in sending in returns.

Within the last month I have received a circular on the subject from the Local Government Board, which will prove of great assistance to the Medical Officer of Health in the treatment of this most dangerous disease.

Up to the present time the Medical profession has known very little as to the infection, treatment and necessary time for isolation. The circular in question gives us data which will doubtless prove of great value in combating this malady.

In the later months of the year Whooping Cough—in general of a mild type—was prevalent, but I am glad to say that only one death occurred, and this is fortunate taking into consideration that most of the cases were in the worst months of the year, viz. November and December.



Diarrhoea, I am pleased to say, has been more or less absent. Two deaths only have to be recorded, one of them being at the age of 70, and we have a death rate of 0.28.

There have been 8 notifications of Phthisis and 9 deaths, with a rate of 1.28. Only 4 cases of other tubercular diseases are on the books, which goes to prove my contention that, where the Medical Officer of Health is also a general practitioner, other practitioners in the town are not disposed to notify the disease, as this might result in the Medical Officer of Health interfering in their treatment of a case, which they are just as competent to deal with as he is himself.

### **Public Conveniences.**

I am sorry to report that this very necessary requirement is still *sub judice*. I trust that the question will be definitely settled during the early months of 1915, as the sooner a modern convenience is erected, the better it will be for the town, and more especially for the travelling public. The only such places at present existing are not in accordance with up-to-date ideas.

### **Scavenging.**

This branch of the Council's work has been satisfactorily carried out, but I remarked in my daily rounds a considerable quantity of refuse was deposited in ash boxes, which could quite well have been destroyed by burning by the householder. This is more sanitary and would save a considerable amount of trouble in carrying out the work of this department.

### **Lodging Houses.**

The two Lodging Houses have been periodically inspected, and the recommendations made with respect to their management and cleanliness have been effectively carried out. Having regard to the large number of casual labourers making use of the same during the later months of the year, the duties falling upon the resident managers have been performed in an efficient manner.

### **Requirements.**

I have in previous Reports emphasised the necessity for an efficient steam disinfecter.

When we remember that over 500 men are now billeted in the town, and other 5,000 are in hutments, would not this be a good opportunity for the Urban and Rural Districts to combine and procure a thoroughly efficient portable machine?



### Improvements.

- 1.—New Houses for Occupation. 2 at Wagon Way, being Cottage Homes for Children under the care of Board of Guardians.
- 2.—Scheme for 18 New Houses down South Main Road on Site offered gratis by Duke of Northumberland has been before Local Government Board who have requested Tenders to be prepared.
- 3.—Sanitary Improvements. Extension of 9-inch Main Sewerage at Wagon Way to receive drainage from Children's Cottage Homes.
- 4.—New 3-inch Cast Iron Watermain with Fire Hydrants from Royal Oak down South Main Road towards Cemetery to supplement existing inadequate 2-inch Waterpipe and to be available for a branch main, etc., to proposed New 18 Houses.
- 5.—A 3-inch Watermain laid in at Percy Terrace to supply some more of the houses on the higher levels from the High Service Section of the Water Supply system, such as St. Paul's Vicarage.
- 6.—Street Paving Improvements. Old Flagging on South Side of Bailiffgate has been relaid with new Yorkshire Flags.
- 7.—Town Refuse Depôts on Alnwick Moor taken in charge by the Freeman (for £35 per annum vice £26 until this year), and Urban Council's own "Caretaker" dispensed with.

Mr. Milburn's Report follows as usual and speaks for itself.

It is gratifying to me to know that the other Officials and myself have worked harmoniously together during the year, and to the Members of the Council I again offer my sincere thanks for their uniform kindness.

**R. B. ROBSON, M.B., M.R.C.S.**



Council Offices,  
Green Bat,  
Alnwick.  
March 17th, 1915.

TO THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

Dear Sir,

I beg to submit to you a summary of various items of work in my department which have had attention from me during the past year.

The number of special inspections made have been 690, as distinct from general inspections which form part of the daily round of an Inspector's work; inspections under the Housing Regulations are also excluded from the above number.

As a result of these inspections 369 defects of various kinds were noted, 182 informal notices were given to parties responsible for certain of these defects, and in no instance was it necessary to ask for the Statutory powers of the Council to be put into operation in order to abate any insanitary condition.

Improvements to the drainage systems of 27 different premises have been carried out, 40 foul drains have been cleared, structural defects in 46 sanitary conveniences have been remedied in 19 instances by improved pedestal basins being fixed, and also replacing 16 defective flush cisterns by cisterns with syphonic action, and in order to provide for lack of sanitary accommodation 5 additional w.c.'s have been provided at various tenemented properties.

**Slaughter Houses.**

Visits of inspection were made to these premises on 72 occasions when slaughtering was going on, sometimes only one or two of the houses were open, and at other times the whole of them were open for the inspection of their contents, or of the conditions prevailing at time of slaughtering; on 25 of these occasions I had to speak to assistants respecting the lack of proper disposal of offal, or need for general clean-up after removal of same.



### **Common Lodging Houses.**

The two houses in the town have been visited on 47 occasions, during part of the year under review I experienced considerable difficulty in keeping one of the houses up to a passable standard of cleanliness, both in respect of beds and bedding, and also the premises generally; after some correspondence with the owner of the house and an intimation that your assistance and also that of the Council would be called into requisition if matters did not improve, the necessary overhaul of the premises was carried out, and at the end of the year both houses were serving a useful purpose by providing a lodgement for a large number of persons of the migratory class who are finding temporary employment at the building of the military encampment in the vicinity of the town.

### **Cow Sheds.**

The number of these in the Urban Area is less by 4 as compared with previous year, three of these were situated in the Town and were objectionable, either because of their close proximity to dwellings, or from general structural unfitness of premises for such purposes; as compensation for this, dairymen from the outside districts are supplying milk in larger quantities either by direct distribution, or by supplying same to purveyors.

Disinfection of premises has been carried out during the year after cases of Diphtheria, Scarlet Fever, Phthisis and Erysipelas.

Yours respectfully,

JOSEPH MILBURN,

Inspector of Nuisances.



# Common Lodging House.

The first thing I did when I came to the  
Common Lodging House was to go to the  
kitchen and see what was going on. I  
found the cook, a woman named Mary,  
who had been in the kitchen for many  
years. She was a very kind and  
friendly woman, and she showed me  
around the kitchen. I saw the  
stove, the sink, and the table. I  
also saw the bread and the butter.  
The bread was very good, and the  
butter was very nice. I was very  
happy to see the bread and the butter.  
I was very happy to see the bread and  
the butter. I was very happy to see  
the bread and the butter. I was very  
happy to see the bread and the butter.

The next thing I did was to go to the  
dining room. I found the dining room  
very clean and very nice. I saw the  
table and the chairs. I saw the  
bread and the butter. I was very  
happy to see the bread and the butter.  
I was very happy to see the bread and  
the butter. I was very happy to see  
the bread and the butter. I was very  
happy to see the bread and the butter.

The last thing I did was to go to the  
bedroom. I found the bedroom very  
clean and very nice. I saw the bed  
and the chair. I saw the bread and  
the butter. I was very happy to see  
the bread and the butter. I was very  
happy to see the bread and the butter.