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ASHINGTON
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT

FOR 1904,

R. J. MILLS, M.B.,

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL.

HIRST :
PORTLAND HOUSE PRINTING WORKS CO.,

—
1905.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND COUNCILLORS,

I beg to submit my report for 1904.

The population up to June last year was estimated at 16,000. A material increase has taken place since then. The sources of this increase are (1) the excess of births over deaths and (2) the constant influx of new comers into our growing township. Of the former we have an exact estimate, and of the latter an approximate estimate by the number of new occupied homes. The population of each ward, was computed to June last year, as:—Ashington 6,500, Hirst 9,500. Adding to this the excess of births over deaths from June 1903 to June 1904, and the number found by computing the number occupying the new houses (5 to a house), we have an increase in round numbers of 200 to Ashington Ward, and 800 to Hirst Ward, thus making the respective population of the Wards up to June 1904, Ashington 6,700, and Hirst 10,300. The total population of district being 17,000. On this estimate I have based the returns for the year.

BIRTH RATE.

The total number of births registered during the year 1904, was 708—355 males and 353 females, a decrease of 9 from last year. Of these 167 were in Ashington, and 541 in Hirst, giving a rate per thousand population over district of 41·7. Calculated on the respective population of each Ward, the rate per thousand living was Ashington 24·9, Hirst 52·5.

ASHINGTON URBAN DISTRICT. BIRTHS. 1904.

MONTH.	MALES.	FEMALES.	TOTAL.
January ...	33	31	64
February ...	28	29	57
March ...	29	34	63
April ...	27	32	59
May ...	19	26	45
June ...	24	35	59
July ...	32	20	52
August ...	36	30	66
September...	38	27	65
October ...	30	25	55
November...	32	23	55
December ...	27	41	68
Total ...	355	353	708

ASHINGTON URBAN DISTRICT. DISTRIBUTION OF BIRTHS. 1904.

Month.	Ashington.	Hirst.	Total.
January ...	17	47	64
February ...	12	45	57
March. ...	15	48	63
April ...	13	46	59
May ...	12	33	45
June ...	18	41	59
July ...	14	38	52
August ...	13	53	66
September...	8	57	65
October ...	21	34	55
November...	12	43	55
December ...	12	56	68
Total ...	167	541	708

DEATH RATE.

The mortality for this year is rather heavier than 1903. Several circumstances contributing to this increase which I shall deal with in detail.

Throughout the district there were 321 deaths, 153 males and 168 females, the rate per thousand population being 18·9. Eliminating from this 7 cases of fatal accidents and 19 due to prematurity of birth, we have a corrected return of 17·35.

A comparison of the yearly mortality returns since the formation of the Council is as follows :—

YEAR, 1896	TOTAL MORTALITY, 17·8	CORRECTED MORTALITY, 17·4
„ 1897	„ „ 17·8	„ „ 16·6
„ 1898	„ „ 16·3	„ „ 15·4
„ 1899	„ „ 18·5	„ „ 16·8
„ 1900	„ „ 17·45	„ „ 15·17
„ 1901	„ „ 23·28	„ „ 21·28
„ 1902	„ „ 17·02	„ „ 15·3
„ 1903	„ „ 16·25	„ „ 14·25
„ 1904	„ „ 18·9	„ „ 17·35

The Mortality in each Ward is as follows :—85 in Ashington and 236 in Hirst. The respective rate per thousand being 12·6 in Ashington, and 22·9 in Hirst.

Of the 321 deaths at all ages, there are no fewer than 158 under 1 year—rather more than one-half the total deaths—of these, 134 were at Hirst, the remaining 24 being in the Ashington Ward. From 1 to 5 years, 55 deaths; from 5 to 15 years, 11; from 15 to 25 years, 10; from 25 to 45, 24; from 45 to 65, 29; and 65 upwards 34.

The distribution of Age Mortality is given in the following Tables for the Two Wards :—

DISTRIBUTION OF AGE MORTALITY. ASHINGTON. 1904.

MONTH.	All Ages.	Und. 1 yr.	1 to 5 yrs.	5 to 15 yrs.	15 to 25 yrs.	25 to 45 yrs.	45 to 65 yrs.	65 yrs. and Upds
January ...	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
February ...	5	1	0	0	0	3	0	1
March ...	6	3	0	0	0	0	2	1
April ...	8	2	0	0	0	3	2	1
May ...	6	1	0	0	2	0	0	3
June ...	6	0	2	0	1	0	2	1
July ...	4	1	0	0	0	0	3	0
August ...	7	1	2	0	1	0	2	1
September ..	8	4	2	0	0	0	0	2
October ...	10	4	3	0	1	1	0	1
November ...	16	4	1	1	2	1	2	5
December ...	7	3	1	0	0	0	2	1
Total ...	85	24	11	1	7	8	15	19

DISTRIBUTION OF AGE MORTALITY. HIRST. 1904.

MONTH.	All Ages.	Und. 1 yr.	1 to 5 yrs.	5 to 15 yrs.	15 to 25 yrs.	25 to 45 yrs.	45 to 65 yrs.	65 yrs. and Upds.
January ...	13	6	2	0	0	4	0	1
February ...	22	11	2	2	0	1	2	4
March ...	15	8	2	1	0	2	2	0
April ...	9	5	1	1	0	1	1	0
May ...	13	5	2	1	1	0	4	0
June ...	15	9	3	0	0	1	0	2
July ...	13	6	4	0	1	2	0	0
August ...	46	33	8	0	0	2	1	2
September ..	44	26	13	1	0	1	1	2
October ...	11	6	1	1	1	0	1	1
November ...	12	6	2	1	0	1	0	2
December ...	23	13	4	2	0	1	2	1
Total ...	236	134	44	10	3	16	14	15

AGE MORTALITY. 1904.

MONTH.	Males.	Fe- males.	All Ages.	Und. 1 yr.	1 to 5 yrs.	5 to 15 yrs.	15 to 25 yrs.	25 to 45 yrs.	45 to 65 yrs.	65 yrs. and Upds.
January...	3	12	15	6	2	0	0	4	0	3
February..	13	14	27	12	2	2	0	4	2	5
March ...	6	15	21	11	2	1	0	2	4	1
April ...	6	11	17	7	1	1	0	4	3	1
May ...	8	11	19	6	2	1	3	0	4	3
June ...	10	11	21	9	5	0	1	1	2	3
July ...	7	10	17	7	4	0	1	2	3	0
August ...	27	26	53	34	10	0	1	2	3	3
September	28	24	52	30	15	1	0	1	1	4
October ...	11	10	21	10	4	1	2	1	1	2
November	18	10	28	10	3	2	2	2	2	7
December	16	14	30	16	5	2	0	1	4	2
Total ...	153	168	321	158	55	11	10	24	29	34

Over the district the rate of Infant Mortality per thousand population is 9·3, as against 7·7 the previous year. For Ashington Ward the proportion is 3·6, and for Hirst 13 per thousand living.

Basing the Infantile Mortality, not on the whole population, but per thousand children born, the death rate over the district was 223·1. Last year it was only 171·5. For Ashington alone, it is 143·7 per thousand; and for Hirst, 247·6 per thousand.

This difference in the death rates in the Wards is accounted for partly by the increased birth rate in Hirst, both numerically and in proportion to the population. It has also to be accounted for, this year unfortunately, by the prevalence of an epidemic of Infantile Diarrhœa in the Hirst Ward, producing baneful results among the Infant population.

Between the ages of one and five the same causes operated to produce a higher Mortality in Hirst; the number being at this age, 11 in Ashington, and 44 in Hirst. Above 5 years the difference is not so marked, and when we arrive at the ages when senile changes occur, the proportionate death rate is increased in the Ashington Ward.

An analysis of the causes of death shows that Diarrhœal Diseases and Broncho Pneumonia, are accountable for almost one-half the total Infant Mortality.

It has been pointed out year after year, that a large proportion of these deaths are due to preventable diseases.

Every means has been used by your officials to educate the people in the principles of hygiene. During this last summer a special effort was made in this direction by means of printed cards in an attractive form, setting forth in the plainest manner the proper methods of infant feeding.

Not since 1902 have we had Diarrhœa in an epidemic form and it is to be hoped that by means of the lesson of this year, and the repeated reiteration of instruction and advice, the same disastrous results will be avoided.

On the seasonable incidence of this disease, our district is one peculiarly suited for its propagation and extentions. Although containing no localities grossly insanitary, nor closely congested pauper areas, still the prevailing system of the open brick ashpits connected with privies in such proximity to the houses, is one that demands the utmost care on the part of the public, as regards food pollution from flies, dust, etc. But in spite of these conditions the disease is a remedial one, and one which the more perfect application of Sanitary Science will tend to minimise; and mothers and guardians will require to be educated on the feeding and general Hygiene of the infant.

One of the causes for instance—fermentative changes set up in milk, due to the want of thorough cleanliness in the feeding bottles and preparing utensils, could with a little extra care be removed. Another cause is equally remedial, namely:—the exposure of infants in arms to chills. Even in summer, there is a marked difference in temperature in the evenings especially in our neighbourhood, where from the nature of the soil the earth parts with its acquired heat very slowly.

The practice does prevail too, and to an alarming extent, of taking infants in arms out at nights entailing most serious consequences, especially in leaving houses where the temperature is artificially raised by high fires and the absence of ventilation. A lowering of vitality is the consequence, and Diarrhœa and Broncho Pneumonia result according to the season.

From enquiries made among the Medical Men of the district, I find that the cases of Diarrhœa are mostly amongst the bottle-fed children, so that attention to the cleaning of vessels and sterilising of the milk before using would lessen the evil.

No matter how pure a milk supply may be when procured from the vendor, while the foregoing sanitary conditions prevail, contamination will be inevitable, and the greatest care will be required to be exercised in covering vessels containing infant's food from pollution by flies and dust.

There is a moral responsibility incumbent on the public, in that carelessness in the above, entails the spread of the disease to others with the disastrous results exemplified in the mortality returns.

CAUSES OF DEATH.

CAUSES OF DEATH.	Deaths in or belonging Whole District at sub-joined Account.							Deaths in Localities at all Ages.		
	All Ages.	Und. 1 yr.	1 and und. 5	5 and und. 15	15 and und. 25	25 and und. 65	65 and upds.	Ash- ington	Hirst.	Total Deaths in Public Instit'ns in District.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Smallpox	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Measles	4	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	4	0
Scarlet Fever ..	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0
Whooping Cough ..	12	7	5	0	0	0	0	0	12	0
Diphtheria and M. Croup	4	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	4	0
Croup	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Typhoid	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	1
Epid. Influenza ..	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	0
Diarrhœa	5	2	2	0	0	1	0	3	2	0
Enteritis	71	52	18	0	1	0	0	6	65	0
Puerperal Fever ..	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	2	0
Phthisis	8	0	0	0	0	7	1	2	6	0
Other Tuber Diseases ..	8	2	4	0	0	1	1	3	5	0
Cancer Malig. ..	5	0	0	0	0	2	3	2	3	0
Bronchitis	16	6	2	0	0	4	4	6	10	0
Pneumonia	9	1	2	1	2	2	1	3	6	0
Premature Birth ..	19	19	0	0	0	0	0	1	18	0
Heart Disease ..	16	1	0	2	2	8	3	7	9	0
Other Diseases of Respiratory Organs ..	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Alcoholism	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cirrhosis of Liver ..	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	0
Accidents	7	0	1	3	1	2	0	3	4	0
Debility	20	19	1	0	0	0	0	4	16	0
Apoplexy	12	0	0	0	0	9	3	6	6	0
Menigitis	7	5	1	0	1	0	0	2	5	0
Senility	15	0	0	0	0	0	15	8	7	0
Broncho Pneumonia ..	37	18	17	0	0	2	0	10	27	0
Nephritis	6	2	0	0	0	2	2	2	4	0
Other Diseases ..	17	10	0	0	1	5	1	7	10	0
Convulsions	8	7	1	0	0	0	0	4	4	0
Total	321	158	55	11	10	53	34	85	236	4

On consulting table showing the causes of death in the Mortality returns, we notice that the deaths from Phthisis are reduced to one-half that of last year, 8 as against 16. There is also a decrease in the total of Tuberculous Diseases, namely:—16 as against 21 last year. I might here again repeat my warning against the vile habit of spitting at corners and in public assemblages, as this habit besides being inelegant and a nuisance, is one of the chief causes of the propagation of Tuberculous Disease.

The Zymotic death rate for the year is higher than in 1903, the number 31 plus 71 from Zymotic Enteritis, gives a rate per thousand population of 6, as against 3·1 in 1903.

The number of cases of Infectious diseases notified during the year is considerably less than last year, 89 as compared with 213.

The district as a whole has been fairly exempt from Scarlet Fever in an epidemic form. Isolated cases have occurred but these in a decreasing ratio from last year, namely:—48 in 1904, against 165 in 1903. There was a slight increase in the cases of Enteric, 16 this year, as against 9 in 1903, but the difference is too slight for us to be other than pleased at the immunity enjoyed from this disease.

Tables are given showing the distribution of the Infectious Diseases and also the ages of those attacked.

The discrepancy in the number of Smallpox cases notified and those treated in Hospital, is accounted for by the fact that contacts under observation in the contact wards developed the disease and were removed from there for treatment.

CASES OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES NOTIFIED DURING 12 MONTHS ENDING DEC. 31ST, 1904. ASHINGTON URBAN DISTRICT.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE.	Cases Notified in whole District at Ages:—Years.							Total Cases in each Locality.		Cases removed to Hospital.	
	At all Ages.	Und. 1 yr.	1 and und. 5	5 and und. 15	15 and und. 25	25 and und. 65	65 and upds.	Ash- ington	Hirst.	Ash- ington	Hirst.
Smallpox	4	0	0	0	1	3	0	1	3	1	3
Cholera	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Diphtheria	4	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	4	0	0
Membr. Croup	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Erysipelas	15	0	0	2	6	7	0	6	9	0	0
Scarlet Fever	48	0	22	26	0	0	0	5	43	0	0
Typhus Fever	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enteric Fever	16	0	1	5	4	6	0	9	7	4	3
Relapsing Fever	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Continued Fever	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Puerperal Fever	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Plague	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

ASHINGTON U. D. COUNCIL. DISTRIBUTION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Month.	Smallpox.		Diphtheria and M. Croup.		Erysipelas.		Scarlet Fever.		Typh'd Fever.		Puerperal Fever.		Total.		
	Ash- ington	Hirst.	Ash- ington	Hirst.	Ash- ington	Hirst.	Ash- ington	Hirst.	Ash- ington	Hirst.	Ash- ington	Hirst.	Ash- ington	Hirst.	Both
Jan...	0	2	0	0	2	0	1	9	0	0	0	0	3	11	14
Feb..	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	5	5
Mar..	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	5	2	7
April	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	4	1	0	0	0	2	5	7
May.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	1	3	4
June.	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	7	0	0	0	0	2	8	10
July.	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	3	0	0	0	3	3	6
Aug..	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	2	3
Sept.	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	5	0	3	0	0	0	11	11
Oct...	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	2	4	1	0	0	5	6	11
Nov..	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	4	0	2	0	0	0	8	8
Dec..	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
Total	1	3	0	5	6	9	5	43	9	7	1	0	22	67	89

HOSPITAL.

At the beginning of the year, we had 7 Smallpox patients under treatment in Hospital. Throughout the year 16 others were admitted for this disease. Each case when notified was at once removed and the contacts kept under observation. Among these cases 3 deaths occurred, 1 accelerated by extreme old age, 1 complicated by Tuberculosis, and 1 from Malignant Smallpox. One of our Nurses unfortunately developed the disease, but only in a modified form.

The ages of the cases are as under:—

1 to 5 yrs.	5 to 15 yrs.	15 to 45 yrs.	45 to 65 yrs.	65 yrs. Upds.
1	3	1	10	1

Type of Disease.	Primary Vaccination.	Un-Vaccinated.	Vaccination Primarily after Infection by Smallpox.	Re-Vaccination	Re-Vaccination after infection by Smallpox.	Recovery.	Death.
Modified ...	1	0	0	1	5	7	0
Discrete ...	4	2	1	0	0	6	1
Confluent ...	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Haemorrhage	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

From the foregoing Table giving Vaccination results of the cases admitted it will be seen that except for the Haemorrhagic case, a type of the disease which is invariably fatal, the deaths have been among the Un-vaccinated and the only confluent case occurring was Un-vaccinated.

Re-vaccination was systematically offered to all the contacts.

I can but again express the hope that every one will consider it a duty to see Vaccination performed on their children, and to adopt re-vaccination as the most potent means to modify or cause the extinction of this disease in our midst.

Cases of Enteric to the number of 7, were treated in the Hospital in 1904, only one death occurring and that from Haemorrhage.

Several improvements have been carried out at the Hospital during this last year. A Thresh's Disinfecting Chamber for clothing, bedding, etc., has been acquired, and the results so far obtained from its use are efficient.

A Mortuary has likewise been erected and water led in to it.

I should like to call attention to the advisability of securing more ground for our isolation buildings. A larger space is necessary so that extension could be carried out when the need arose; and also that the public use of the footpath from the railway past the Hospital should be stopped, such proximity of a semi-public path to the building being dangerous when Smallpox patients are retained there.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

In accordance with the Factories and Workshops Act, 1901, I beg to report the number of Factories and Workshops in the district to be the same as last year, viz.:—5 Factories and 12 Workshops. A few improvements in some of these in the matter of cleanliness and better ventilation have been recommended and carried out. They are all above ground. The Sanitary accommodation for both sexes has been made efficient.

EXTENSION AND IMPROVEMENTS.

Extension and Improvements have been carried out by the Council in the erection of a new depôt including stables, disinfectant stores, etc.

The lighting of the district has been so extended as to meet our growing needs. There are 250 electric lamps as against 118 gas and oil lamps of the previous years. Extra lamps have been erected at places where accidents might readily occur, and also at places which otherwise might be made localities of public nuisance.

In the matter of widening the footpaths considerable progress has been made and further public facilities in this direction are in course of execution. The securing of the footpath of a uniform width from the station to the Parish Hall, should be the aim of the Council, both on the grounds of utility and appearance.

Another matter I must not omit to mention, which though not of direct utilitarian value is yet of effect from an æsthetic standpoint, namely:—the planting of trees along the main streets. The placing of seats also at convenient localities within the Council area for the benefit of the senectutes of the district is also worthy of notice.

WATER.

I am glad to be able to report that we now have an efficient water supply, both as regards quantity and purity. A number of additional taps have been provided this last year, thus bringing within the reach of all householders a more convenient and more readily accessible supply.

SEWAGE AND SCAVENGING.

A new scheme for the disposal of Ashington sewage is at present under consideration by the Council.

Improvements are in course of execution in regard to the existing sewers. Better flushing has been provided for in several instances, and I hope that before long I shall be able to report the perfect working of all the sewers in our district.

The scavenging of the district should now be a matter of congratulation to the Sanitary Authority. Considering our system of ashpits with privies attached to be the prevailing one of the place, one can understand the great difficulty of regulating such to prevent accumulation of nuisance. Every effort has been made towards the best possible, and my recommendations as regards lime spraying, deodorising and disinfecting have met with the fullest sympathy and co-operation from your Council.

The Bye-laws adopted last year are having good effect, but, will now after due intimation of their purpose require a stricter enforcement in the matter of piggeries with regard to distances from dwellings, etc. It is to be hoped also that the public will realise their responsibility in the matter of cleaning paths in front of their homes.

I cannot close my report for the year without paying my tribute as a friend and colleague of your late Medical Officer. His individuality was known and appreciated by us all.

To me personally his death was a great loss, as in public matters I was associated with him in most of his work. His chief interest was to discuss and try measures for the general good, from whatever source originating. His desire was to do good, to serve the best interest of the community, and to facilitate and carry out every effort of the Council towards the bettering of the condition of the community in Sanitary and General Hygiene.

His singleness of purpose and simple faith in human nature must appeal to all who read his last annual report, in which both by teaching in Sanitary matters, and education in the morals of citizenship he attempts to spread his ideas of social progress to those in whose interests he worked.

Thanking you for your consideration and courtesy during the past year.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

R. J. MILLS, M.O.H.