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Contributors

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ASPULL
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.



ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

For the Year ending 31st December, 1919.

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March, 1920.

To the Chairman and Members of the Aspull Urban District
Council.

Gentlemen,

I beg to submit my Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary Administration of the Township for the year ending December 31st, 1919.

A. NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE DISTRICT.

(1). POPULATION.—The census population in 1911 was 8,276. The population for 1919 has been divided by the Registrar-General into a "Death-rate population" and a "Birth-rate population." The "Death-rate population" excludes all non-civilian males, whether serving at home or abroad, and is estimated from the rationing returns supplied by the Ministry of Food.

The "Birth-rate population" is intended to include all the elements of the population contributing to the birth-rate, and consists therefore of the "Death-rate, or Civilian population," plus all non-civilians enlisted from this district.

The Registrar-General's figures for Aspull for the year 1919 were:—

Death-rate Population	...	...	7,276
Birth-rate Population	...	...	7,579

The density of population in 1919 was 3.97 persons per acre.

The population has shown the following variations since 1881:—

Census Population 1881	...	...	8,111
Census Population 1891	...	...	8,952
Census Population 1901	...	...	8,380
Census Population 1911	...	...	8,276
Estimated Population 1919	...	...	7,579

From consideration of the Birth-rate, Death-rate, the condition of the local industries, and the result of our house-to-house inspection under the Housing Regulations, the figure 7,579 appears to be an approximately correct estimate of the population.

The decline will be even more rapid in the near future unless strenuous efforts are made to foster our present industries, and to attract new ones to the locality.

(2) PHYSICAL FEATURES AND GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE DISTRICT.

The Urban District of Aspull forms part of the Wigan Union, and comprises an area of 1906 acres, lying North-East of the County Borough of Wigan.

The ground has a general upward trend in a North-Easterly direction, the height above sea level varying from 250 to 500 feet.

The subsoil is clay overlying the coal measures of the Wigan coalfield. The higher part of the township includes a considerable area of open moorland.

(3) SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

The chief occupations are coal mining, cotton weaving, and spinning, and iron and steel working.

A small proportion of the inhabitants are engaged in agriculture. The larger proportion of the township is isolated, except for the tram service to Wigan, and there is a lamentable lack of facilities for recreation, amusement, and social improvement.

VITAL STATISTICS.

(a) POPULATION.—Estimated population for 1919, 7,579. This has been dealt with in Section A (1).

(b) BIRTHS.—The number of births registered during the year was 188.

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Legitimate	83	94	177
Illegitimate	4	7	11
Total	87	101	188

This figure gives a birth-rate of 24.8 per 1,000 per annum, which is an increase of 3.9 per 1,000 on the figures of 1918, but a decrease of 3.7 on the average of the previous 10 years—1909-1918—viz., 28.5.

The illegitimate births—11—give an illegitimate rate of 58.5 per 1,000 children born.

(c) DEATHS.

The number of deaths (civilian only) 114, giving a death-rate of 15.6 per 1,000 per annum, which is 7.9 lower than the death-rate for 1918, and 0.9 lower than the mean of the previous 10 years, 1909 to 1918—16.5.

The causes of death were:—

	Males.	Females.
All causes	72	42
Scarlet Fever	1	1
Influenza	9	5
Erysipelas	—	1
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	4	3
Other Tubercular Diseases ...	—	1
Cancer	2	2
Heart Disease	3	7
Bronchitis	9	1
Pneumonia	18	7
Diarrhœa	1	5
Cirrhosis of the Liver	1	—
Nephritis	2	2
Congenital Debility	4	3
Suicide	1	—
Other Defined Causes	16	4
Ill-defined Causes	1	—
Infantile Mortality	—	—

The number of deaths under 1 year was 25—16 females, 9 males—giving an infantile mortality of 132 per 1,000 births. This is 16 per 1,000 births less than in 1918.

The deaths of illegitimate children under 1 year total 2, giving a death-rate of 181.8 per 1,000 illegitimate births.

The following table summaries the foregoing figures:—

	Birth rate.	Death rate.	Epidemic Death rate.	Phthisis Death rate.	Infantile Death rate.
1919	24.8	15.6	1.09	0.96	132
1918	20.9	23.5	2.51	0.97	148
Average of 10 years } 1909—1918 }	28.5	16.5	2.90	0.78	141
Increase or decrease } in 1919 on 1918 }	+3.9	-7.9	-1.42	-0.01	-16
Average of 10 years } 1909—1918 }	-3.7	-0.9	-1.81	+0.18	-9

The following table gives the rates for the population of England and Wales for 1919. The rates for the township are given below them for comparative purposes:—

	Birth rate per 1000 total population.	Death rate per 1000 total population.	Deaths under 1 year per 1000 births.
England and Wales ...	18.5	13.8	89
Aspull	24.9	15.6	132

The figures in the last column call for remark. Out of every 1,000 children born in the whole of England and Wales 89 died before reaching the age of 1 year. In Aspull 132 died.

In the 96 great industrial centres (i.e., towns having a population exceeding 50,000), where populations are aggregated in small superficial areas, the density commonly exceeding 300 per acre, and where employment of mothers is general, the infantile mortality in 1919 was 93.

The County Council administer the Maternity and Child Welfare schemes.

(5) POOR LAW RELIEF.

The amount of out-door relief granted to poor persons in Aspull during the year 1919 was £1,254 1s. 0d. The number admitted to the Wigan Poor Law Institution from Aspull during the same year was 10.

B. SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.

(1) WATER.—The water supply is obtained from the Bolton Corporation's Rivington Watershed. The supply is constant and sufficient, the quality excellent, and there is no possibility of contamination at its source.

(2) DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.—The district is sufficiently drained and sewered. All sewage is taken by the mains of the Wigan Corporation and dealt with by them.

(3) CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

The number of Privies is	683
The number of Pail Closets is	6
The number of Water Closets is	489

During the year 1919, 13 new water closets have been erected, and 4 privies have been converted into water closets.

It is essential that the abolition of the privy system and its replacement by the water carriage system be accelerated.

(4) SCAVENGING.

The number of Ashpits is	351
The number of Ashbins is	359

The scavenging is efficiently carried out by the Council's workmen. The refuse from privies and pail closets is removed in covered carts, and deposited on agricultural land. The household refuse is buried.

(5) SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE DISTRICT.

The Sanitary Inspector's reports to me includes the following figures:—

Number of House-to-House Inspections	1567
Number of Statutory Notices	25
Number of Informal Notices	12

The defects, which caused the notices to be served, were remedied.

Number of Houses Fumigated	66
Number of Houses Cleaned	50

(6) PREMISES CONTROLLED BY BYE-LAWS.

There are no lodging-houses, houses to let in lodgings, underground dwellings, nor offensive trades in the district.

(7) SCHOOLS.

The school buildings are satisfactory as regards cleanliness, ventilation, water supply, and sanitary accommodation.

The inspection of school children is under the Administrative Authority of the County Council.

No schools have been closed for the prevention of spread of infectious diseases.

C. FOOD.

(1) MILK SUPPLY.—This is derived mainly from farms situated in the district. On the whole the supply is satisfactory, and the arrangements for distribution adequate.

No steps have been taken with the view of detecting Tuberculosis in cows or milk.

(2) MILK (MOTHERS AND CHILDREN'S) ORDER, 1918.

No action has been taken by the Council under the Order.

(3) OTHER FOOD.

The slaughter-houses are inspected by your Sanitary Inspector, and his report is satisfactory.

D. PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The following infectious diseases were notified during the year 1919:—

Scarlet Fever	70
Measles	7
Diphtheria	14
Pneumonia	31
Erysipelas	17
Whooping Cough	4
Malaria	2
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	1
Tuberculosis	6
	—
Total	152

Scarlet Fever was prevalent throughout the district in October, November, and December. Seventy cases were notified, and 2 deaths resulted.

Influenza was prevalent during the months of January, February, and March, and was the direct cause of 14 deaths.

A supply of Diphtheria Antitoxin is kept at the Council Offices.

E. MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE.

The scheme is under the administration of the County Council.

One case of Ophthalmia Neonatorum was notified during the year 1919. Both of the child's eyes recovered completely.

F. SANITARY ADMINISTRATION.

- (1) STAFF.—One Medical Officer of Health.
One Sanitary Inspector.

- (2) Hospital accommodation for Infectious Diseases. Cases are sent to the Wigan Sanatorium.

Three cases of Scarlet Fever were removed to the Sanatorium during the year 1919.

- (3) LOCAL AND ADOPTIVE ACTS.—Parts 3 and 4 of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act (1907) are in force in the district.

- (4) BACTERIOLOGICAL WORK.—The Council has not yet appointed a Bacteriologist to undertake the examination of Throat Swabs, Blood, Sputum, etc.

G. HOUSING.

- (1) General Housing conditions in the district:—

(a) Number of houses	1593
Number of houses for the working classes	1584
New houses erected during the year	None
New houses in course of erection	None

- (b) Population, 7,519. A large number of the inhabitants work outside the district. It is anticipated that a considerable number will emigrate when houses are obtainable nearer their occupation.

- (2) FITNESS OF HOUSES.

- (a) General standard of housing, fair.
- (b) General defects found to exist in unfit houses.

The most noteworthy defects are want of cleaning and lack of outside repairs.

The Housing Commissioners have decided that the Council need not prepare a building scheme at present.

I would recommend that energetic steps be taken to place the existing houses in a better condition, and to continue the conversion of the privy system to the water carriage system, which work has been in abeyance during the war.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

L. COOKE, M.O.H.

