

[Report 1894] / Medical Officer of Health, Ruthin R.D.C.

Contributors

Ruthin Town (Clwyd, Wales). Rural District Council.

Publication/Creation

1894

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RUTHIN RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

MEDICAL OFFICER'S ANNUAL REPORT.

Ruthin, April, 1895.

GENTLEMEN,—I have the honour of presenting to you my fourth annual report of the sanitary work done in the district for the year ending December 31st, 1894, together with the usual statistical tables relating to rates of births, deaths, and sickness for the same period.

The number of births registered throughout the district was 218, giving a birth rate of 22.7 per 1,000 per annum, as compared with 22.8 per 1,000 per annum for the previous year. The average birth-rate for England and Wales for the year 1894 was 29.6.

The number of deaths were 145, being at the rate of 15.1 per 1,000 per annum, as compared with 17.8 per 1,000 per annum for the previous year. The average death rate for England and Wales for 1894 was 16.6. The number of deaths under five years was 33, being at the rate of 3.4 per 1,000 per annum, as compared with 5.9 of the previous year. Among infants under one year there were 28 deaths, being in the proportion of 128 per 1,000 births. The average infant mortality for England and Wales during 1894 was 134 per 1,000 births.

Of persons over 65 years, 60 deaths occurred, being at the rate of 6.2 per 1,000 per annum. The number of deaths from zymotic disease was 6, giving a death rate of 6 per 1,000 per annum, as compared with 8 for 1893.

The number of uncertified deaths was unusually high viz., 26, of which 13 occurred in Llanellidan sub-district, and 5 in Llanarmon sub-district. Death in these cases was attributed principally to infantile convulsions.

From these statistics the following facts will be observed.

1st, the birth-rate keeps at much about the same figure from year to year, and although considerably above the death-rate it falls short of the average for England and Wales. This is accounted for by the fact that, in an agricultural district such as this, the younger adult portion of the population migrate to the towns, collieries, etc.

2nd, the death-rate was lower than the previous year, and also lower than the average for England and Wales.

3rd, the death-rate from zymotic disease was lower than the previous year and less than half the average zymotic mortality for England and Wales, during 1894.

The causes of death from zymotic disease were as follows:—1 scarlet fever, 2 croup, 1 diphtheria, and 2 typhoid.

Considering that scarlet fever was extremely prevalent in several parts of the district, especially in the Llandyrnog sub-district, it is satisfactory to observe that only one case resulted fatally, and that to some extent was due to neglect. All the cases were reported to you at the monthly meeting of the Authority, and every attention was given to such precautionary measures as isolation and disinfection.

Under the Infectious Diseases Notification Act the following cases were reported: 36 scarlet fever, 2 croup, 2 typhoid fever. In the case of scarlet fever increased prevalence is usually associated with diminished average severity of attacks as measured by the proportion of deaths to attacks. Such has been the case in this district, for the epidemic was of an unusually mild type. The outbreak was principally associated with some of the elementary schools in the Llandyrnog sub-district.

In my inspection of the district I found a considerable number of fever cases not notified, and I remonstrated with the parents. When

this duty is neglected the District Council should exercise the statutory powers conferred upon it for the protection of the public health by taking legal proceedings against the offenders. The importance of early notification can hardly be exaggerated, as in this way what might turn out to be a severe epidemic can be arrested in its inception.

In the course of the year a vast number of cases were brought before the Sanitary Authority, including damp and dilapidated dwellings, pollution and insufficiency of water supply, deficiency of privy accommodation, bad drainage, and certain sanitary defects in connection with some of the elementary schools. These will be more fully described under the respective sub-districts.

Owing to the hearty co-operation of the Education Department a new impulse has been given to school sanitation, and if this co-operation continues the elementary schools in the district will ere long be brought to a reasonably healthy condition.

RUTHIN SUB-DISTRICT.

Death rate 8.5 per 1000 per annum; birth rate, 19.7 per 1000 per annum.

Several houses were repaired and some built at the instance of the Authority. An excellent supply of water has been brought to Fron Segur, in the Efenechtyó Parish.

The condition of both Llanychan and Llanbedr schools is satisfactory, with the exception of the water supply which is sadly deficient.

GYFFYLLIOG SUB-DISTRICT.

Death rate, 17.3 per 1000 per annum; birth rate, 26 per 1000 per annum.

The Alms-houses at Pont-y-faen, Gyffyllog, although frequently brought under the notice of the Authority, are still in the same damp and unhealthy condition.

A death from typhoid fever occurred at Cefn Iwrwch Mawr. The patient came from Cardiff and died the next day.

The Gyffyllog School Board have decided to build a classroom and to convert the present small classroom into a cloakroom. A cloakroom is also to be built at the Clocaenog School.

LLANDYRNOG SUB-DISTRICT.

Death-rate, 12.9 per 1000 per annum. Birth-rate, 13.5 per 1000 per annum. Although the death-rate is lower in this sub-district than in any of the others, the rate of sickness was higher. Notwithstanding the great prevalence of scarlet fever, no case terminated fatally. During the year several houses which had been condemned were rebuilt and others repaired.

The conditions of Llandyrnog village, as regards drainage, pigstyes, and privies, was repeatedly under the consideration of the Authority, but now steps are being taken to finally abate the nuisances.

LLANDYRNOG SCHOOL.

This is now in a much more satisfactory condition, and plans have been submitted and approved of for extensive alterations in the Gellifor school. Owing to the prevalence of scarlet fever, the latter school was ordered to be closed for two periods of 14 days.

WATER SUPPLY.

After much discussion and indefinite postponements, the District Council have now practically decided to carry out the Llangwylan Scheme in its present or modified form. The clerk has been instructed to draw out a lease, and to have it completed forthwith. Certain financial difficulties alone stand in the way of proceeding with the scheme. A strong section of the council being resolutely opposed to the exclusion of the landlords from contributing towards the initial expense, but having gone so far, in all probability these obstacles will soon be surmounted.

LLANRHAIADR SUB-DISTRICT.

Death-rate, 15.2 per 1000 per annum. Birth-rate, 26 per 1000 per annum. Extensive improvements have been carried out in dwellings in this sub-district, especially in the following

places in Llanynys parish, &c., viz:—Bryncaredig, Penybryn, Hengoed, Tanyrhengod, Maeshynod, Felin Meredith, Hwylfa, Byrdir and Tanyriwen.

The plan suggested for the water supply of Pentre, Llanrhaidr, has been carried out, but service pipes should be provided so as to avoid the inconvenience of carrying water from the trough, which is in a somewhat inaccessible field.

LLANELIDAN SUB-DISTRICT.

Death-rate, 19.6 per 1000 per annum. Birth-rate, 23 per 1000 per annum. Of the 42 deaths in this district, 15 were in infants under 5 years, and of these 8 were uncertified, and were rightly or wrongly attributed to convulsions. Five of the other 27 deaths were uncertified, and occurred in persons over 75 years.

Some excellent improvements have been carried out in connection with some of the elementary schools in this sub-district, viz:—In the Llanellidan school, cloakrooms have been built, the ventilation has been improved, a drain has been constructed as suggested in a previous report, and the place has been supplied with pure water from the Leyland Arms. The privies are all to be improved so as to do away with the present cesspool.

Water has also been brought to the Llanfair school, and the contract has been let for the erection of a cloakroom, classroom, and privies.

A cloakroom has also been made at the Pentrecslyn school, and the board have decided to get the place supplied with pure water either from a neighbouring stream or from the Cricor reservoir.

Notwithstanding the pressure brought to bear upon the managers of the Derwen school, nothing yet has been done to carry out the suggestion of the Authority. The walls are damp, the privies utterly unsatisfactory, and the water supply sadly deficient.

The water supply of Pfoit, Cefnsgair, and Hafod Fedlwyn, in the parish of Llanellidan, has been much improved, and we are still endeavouring to get the Nantelwyd estate to carry out the scheme recommended for the supply of Werhenaid, Hafotty, Siamber Wen and Porehiogo.

The houses in the neighbourhood of Graig-ady-wynt are still unprovided with water. This is quite inexcusable, as Col Hughes is ready to supply the property owners with water from the Cricor reservoir upon very reasonable terms.

LLANARMON SUB-DISTRICT.

Death-rate, 13.2 per 1000 per annum. Birth-rate, 24.7 per 1000 per annum. Two deaths from croup occurred at Perthyrach. They were sporadic cases, and could not be traced to any definite source.

A death also occurred at Llandegla from scarlet fever. This was easily traced to some mild cases in some of the neighbouring cottages.

The elementary schools in this sub-district also have been improved. At Llandegla two cloakrooms have been built, and the small classroom is not used as previously.

In the Llanferres school a cloakroom has been made, but the privies are still unsatisfactory.

It was not deemed necessary, during the year, to take any legal proceedings, and I think that the council are acting wisely by approaching the work in a progressive and conciliatory rather than in an aggressive spirit.

Now that the Parish Councils have come into operation it is to be hoped that by suggestions to, and co-operation with the District Council and its officers, the sanitary work of the district can be carried out still more efficiently than in the past.

I have the honour to be gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

J MEDWYN HUGHES, M.B.,
Medical Officer of Health.



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Printed and Published by W. & A. G. BARNES, 11, South Street, London, E.C. 4, 1892.