

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

Contributors

Chorley (England). Rural District Council.

Publication/Creation

1894

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BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL


BOROUGH OF CHORLEY.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH'S REPORT.

1894.

S. FOWLER, "GUARDIAN" OFFICE, CHORLEY.

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CHORLEY,

APRIL, 1895.

TO THE CHORLEY TOWN COUNCIL.

GENTLEMEN,

I am pleased to be able to present to you in my Annual Report for the year ending December 31st, 1894, a more favourable record of Vital Statistics than I could do in my Report for the year 1893, the Death-rate being markedly lower in 1894 than in the preceding year.

Eight hundred and forty-seven (847) Births were registered during the year, from which I calculate a Birth-rate of 34·33 per thousand upon an estimated population of 24,700 in July, 1894. The Birth-rate throughout England and Wales was 29·6 per thousand, the lowest rate ever recorded, and nearly five per thousand less than that obtaining in your Borough.

The Birth-rate in Chorley in 1894 was slightly below that obtaining during the last few years, and markedly less than that which occurred fifteen years ago, viz., 39·00 per thousand.

I have compared the number of Births, Birth-rates, and estimated population for the last five years in the first table, Table A.

TABLE A.

Year.	Estimated Population.	Number of Births.	Birth-rate.
1894	24,700	847	34·33
1893	24,100	859	35·64
1892	23,600	836	35·00
1891	23,160	800	34·54
1890	22,800	741	32·50

The number of Deaths registered in 1894 was five hundred and four (504), from which, upon the same estimated population in the middle of the year, I calculate a Death-rate of 20·40. In the preceding year, 1893, five hundred and sixty-one (561) Deaths were recorded, yielding a rate of 23·27 per thousand.

From Table B you will be able to see that the Death-rate in 1894 is considerably below that of any of the four preceding years, and especially below that of 1893 and 1890.

TABLE B.

Year.	Estimated Population.	Number of Deaths.	Death-rate.
1894	24,700	504	20·40
1893	24,100	561	23·27
1892	23,600	501	21·23
1891	23,160	493	21·28
1890	22,800	599	26·27

The Death-rate throughout England and Wales was only 16·6 per thousand, being the lowest rate ever recorded—that of 1888, the next lowest, being 18·1. You will see that, whilst the Death-rate in Chorley has so markedly decreased, it is still very considerably higher than the average obtaining throughout the country.

In Table C, I have compared the deaths in each quarter of 1894, with those occurring in the same quarters of the four preceding years.

TABLE C.

Year.	First Quarter.	Second Quarter.	Third Quarter.	Fourth Quarter.	Total.
1894	125	128	109	142	504
1893	109	98	175	179	561
1892	178	112	97	114	501
1891	135	124	114	120	493
1890	183	142	109	165	599

Here you will notice that the number of deaths in the first and second quarters of 1894 exceeded that of the corresponding quarters of 1893, whilst there was a marked decrease in the third and fourth quarters. In the third quarter of 1893 there was an unusual prevalence of Diarrhœa and Measles, and in the fourth quarter of that year Influenza and its sequelæ were very fatal. The decreased mortality in the corresponding quarters of 1894 is chiefly attributable to the fact that these diseases were not unusually rife during those quarters.

I now arrange the deaths under the several Wards in which they occurred, and compare them with the numbers recorded in the same Wards in each of the four preceding years.

TABLE D.

Sub-Divisions.	1894. Number of Deaths.	1893. Number of Deaths.	1892. Number of Deaths.	1891. Number of Deaths.	1890. Number of Deaths.
North Ward	102	105	97	110	112
South Ward	96	121	120	110	154
East Ward	126	162	128	119	129
West Ward	134	134	110	102	156
Workhouse	46	39	46	52	48
Totals	504	561	501	493	599

The marked decrease in the number of deaths in 1894 as compared with 1893, occurred in the South and East Wards. A slight decrease obtained in the North Ward; exactly the same number of deaths in the West Ward—though, as this Ward is so rapidly increasing in population, there was a relative decrease; whilst the Workhouse yielded a slightly increased number of deaths.

The ages at which the deaths were registered is shown in Table E, and the number of deaths at each period is compared with similar statistics obtaining in the four preceding years.

TABLE E.

Sub-Divisions.	Mortality at subjoined Ages.				Totals.
	Under 1 Year.	1 and under 5	5 and under 25	25 and upwards.	
North Ward ...	23	19	9	51	102
South Ward ...	35	17	12	32	96
East Ward ...	32	23	14	57	126
West Ward ...	29	26	11	68	134
Workhouse ...	—	1	2	43	46
Totals in 1894 ...	119	86	48	251	504
Totals in 1893 ...	182	66	48	265	561
Totals in 1892 ...	144	53	35	269	501
Totals in 1891 ...	134	57	37	265	493
Totals in 1890 ...	150	114	48	287	599

Here you will notice there has been a marked decrease in the number of deaths occurring in infants under one year of age, as compared with that recorded in 1893 especially, or indeed in any of the four preceding years. In my annual report for 1893 I commented on the very high infantile mortality occurring in that year, and I am glad to be able to record a distinct improvement.

In 1893 thirty-four (34) per cent. of the whole number of deaths, excluding those in the Workhouse, occurred in infants under one year of age; whilst in 1894 only twenty-six (26) per cent. of the deaths registered were under that age. I trust that this improvement will continue.

Whilst the infantile mortality has been so satisfactorily diminished, that of children between one and five years of age was decidedly higher in 1894 than in 1893. The numbers of deaths in persons between five and twenty-five were the same in the two years, and those at the age of twenty-five and upwards were somewhat less in 1894 than in the preceding year.

Reverting to the infantile mortality, the per centage of deaths under one year of age to registered births was 14 per cent. Throughout England and Wales the per centage was 13·7 per cent. I believe that the infantile mortality of Chorley has never so nearly approached the average of England and Wales as it has done in 1894.

In Table F, I arrange the deaths occurring in each Ward under the respective diseases to which they were due ; and also compare the total number of deaths in the Borough from each cause with those occurring in the three preceding years, and the average mortality of the previous decade.

TABLE F.

DISEASES.	Deaths in North Ward.	Deaths in South Ward.	Deaths in East Ward.	Deaths in West Ward.	Deaths in the Workhouse.	Total in 1894.	Total in 1893.	Total in 1892.	Total in 1891.	Average of 10 years 1881—1890 inclusive.
Small Pox	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
Scarlet Fever	2	1	4	3	—	10	5	1	5	5·7
Diphtheria	2	1	—	1	—	4	—	2	—	·8
Croup	2	3	8	3	—	16	8	6	4	6·8
Enteric	4	1	—	3	—	8	7	9	6	7·6
Other Continued Fevers	—	—	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	·9
Puerperal Fever.....	1	—	1	1	—	3	2	4	1	2·0
Erysipelas	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	6	1	2·0
Measles	2	—	—	3	—	5	22	—	1	8·0
Whooping Cough	—	1	3	—	—	4	3	22	3	6·3
Diarrhœa and Dysentery	4	3	2	4	—	13	42	15	11	15·0
Rheumatic Fever	1	—	—	—	—	1	1	1	1	1·8
Phthisis	5	6	9	8	2	30	40	37	33	38·5
Bronchitis, Pneumonia, and Pleurisy	18	17	34	24	10	103	99	97	109	100·9
Heart Disease.....	6	11	11	7	1	36	28	37	31	28·0
Injuries	8	1	3	5	2	19	13	14	12	11·1
All other Diseases	47	51	50	72	31	251	288	249	275	248·5
Totals	102	96	126	134	46	504	561	501	493	483·9

The decrease in the mortality of 1894, as compared with that of 1893, was most marked in the deaths due to Measles, Diarrhœa, and Causes not otherwise specified, and to a less extent to Erysipelas and Phthisis. On the other hand Scarlet Fever, Diphtheria, Croup, Bronchitis, Heart Disease, and Injuries were the chief diseases which caused a greater number of Deaths in 1894 than in 1893.

The Death-rate from the seven principal Zymotic Diseases was 1·42 per thousand as compared with that of 3·27 in 1893, 2·12 in 1892, and 1·12 in 1891. The diminished Zymotic Death-rate in 1894, as compared with 1893, was wholly due to the decreased mortality from Measles and Diarrhoea ; and as compared with 1892, chiefly to the smaller number of Deaths from Whooping Cough.

The Zymotic Death-rate throughout England and Wales was 1·76 per thousand, considerably higher than that obtaining in Chorley. The lower Zymotic Death-rate is more remarkable, inasmuch as Scarlet Fever was more prevalent in Chorley in 1894 than usual, and the number of infectious cases reported to me was the highest on record since the adoption of the Infectious Diseases Notification Act.

The numbers of cases of each Zymotic Disease reported to me are given in the next table (Table G), and are compared with the returns of such cases in the three preceding years.

TABLE G.

[illegible]

No case of Small-Pox was reported in the Borough during 1894, whilst ten (10) cases occurred in 1893.

Scarlet Fever was unusually prevalent in 1894, and several cases were reported in each month. This disease was equally rife in all the Wards, except the North, where but few cases occurred. The infected houses were fumigated, disinfectants supplied, and the clothing, bedding, &c., were passed through the Disinfecting Apparatus. Ten (10) deaths were registered from this disease, or 6·6 per cent. of the cases reported.

Fifty (50) cases of Typhoid and other Continued Fevers were reported, more than half of which occurred in the months of January and February. North Ward yielded the greatest number of cases. Nine (9) deaths were registered from this Fever, or 17·3 per cent. of the notified cases.

Diphtheria was reported in seven (7) instances, of which four (4) died, or 57 per cent.

Sixteen (16) deaths occurred from Croup, only six (6) of which were notified to me as instances of Membranous Croup. The Death-rate from Croup was unusually high in 1894.

One hundred and seventy-four (174) houses were fumigated and disinfected after the occurrence of Zymotic disease, and two thousand three hundred and twelve (2,312) articles of clothing, bedding, &c., subjected to disinfection in the Disinfecting Apparatus, which has worked very satisfactorily during the year.

The erection of a Hospital for Infectious Diseases has not been proceeded with in 1894, as the Provisional Order to form a Joint Hospital Board was not confirmed until August, and did not come into operation until the close of the year. The Mayor and four other members chosen by your Council, the Chairman of the Chorley Rural District Council, and three members elected by that Council, and two members from the Urban District Council of Leyland, and one from that of Adlington, now form that Board.

The Provisional Committee chosen by the several Authorities held several meetings in 1893 and 1894, and different localities were visited to find a suitable site for the erection of a Hospital. I am glad

to be able to report to you that one of these sites has been decided upon by the Joint Hospital Board, and a contract to purchase entered into. I trust that before the end of the year the Hospital will be erected, and thereby means of isolating cases of Infectious Diseases afforded to your officers where sufficient isolation cannot, as in many cases, be obtained at home.

I am sure that the absence of an epidemic of Small-Pox in or near Chorley has been, in no inconsiderable part, due to the fact that every case of that disease has been, immediately upon notification, removed from home and conveyed to one or other Hospital devoted to Infectious Diseases, and I feel equally sure that a proportionately satisfactory result might be obtained in the case of other Infectious Diseases.

I beg again to recommend the Council to proceed with the erection of a Destructor for the refuse and garbage which, in a town of the size of Chorley, cannot be satisfactorily disposed of by means of tips. This subject has been frequently under discussion by you, but hitherto the difficulty of procuring a suitable site, &c., has resulted in the matter being deferred.

The Sewage Works at Common Bank Farm are now approaching completion. The Precipitating Tanks are finished, and the Filter Beds are ready for the laying of the filtering material. There remains to complete the work the erection of the Mixing House and Sludge Press.

I trust that in a very short time the process of precipitation and filtration of the sewage will be in active operation, and a practically perfect system of purification regularly carried out, instead of the very insufficient land irrigation that has been the only method used hitherto.

Plans have been made by your Surveyor for draining Heapey-road and conveying sewage into small precipitation and filtering tanks. The work has not, however, been proceeded with. I recommend that there be no further delay in carrying out the work, as, at present, the sewage runs into an open ditch, and is both a nuisance and likely to prove injurious to health.

Cowling also remains without any proper system of sewers. This district ought to be attended to as early as possible.

A considerable number of new streets have been sewered during the year. Nine (9) inch pipe sewers have been laid in Westminster-road, Avondale-road, Hamilton-road, Pilling-lane, and Corporation-street; twelve (12) inch pipe sewers in Hampson-street, Avondale-road, Devonshire-road, Hamilton-road, Springs-road, &c.; and eighteen (18) inch pipe sewers at Weldbank and Southport-road. The work in this department has been very heavy, as building has been very actively carried on, especially in West Ward.

In my last annual report I recommended the employment of a Building Inspector to act under your Surveyor in order to ensure that the plans passed by the Council are carried out in their entirety, and that no imperfect sewerage or other sanitary defect is overlooked during the construction of new houses. I am glad to say that you have appointed Mr. Robt. Waring to undertake that duty under the superintendence of your Surveyor.

The Slaughter-house has been regularly visited by your officers. I have examined twenty-eight (28) carcasses, and have been obliged to condemn twenty-five (25) of these as quite unfit for food, viz.:—Eight (8) cows; three (3) calves; five (5) sheep; and nine (9) pigs; the total weight of the meat so condemned being 6,094 lbs. The Slaughter-house has been much improved, especially in the pig-killing department, and by the formation of additional sheep pens.

Twenty (20) persons have been summoned for chimney firing, and a fine inflicted in each case by the magistrates.

Twenty-five (25) samples of food and drugs have been submitted to analysis by the County Analyst. Four (4) persons were summoned before the magistrates for selling adulterated goods, and fines were inflicted in each instance.

The work of your Nuisance Inspector has, as usual, been carried out with zeal and efficiency. I give in Table H a list of the various sanitary defects remedied and nuisances abated under the direction of your Inspector.

TABLE H.

Defective Drainage of Houses remedied	80
Slopstones disconnected from Sewers	9
Cesspools altered to Water or Earth Closets	1
Overcrowding in Houses abated	1
Filthy Houses and Houses infected with Fever fumigated and whitewashed	186
Filthy Yards, Passages, and Closets cleaned	56
Defective Closets and Urinals altered	48
Stables, Shippons, &c., defective as regards ventilation, drainage, &c., remedied	11
Pigs and Poultry kept so as to be a nuisance removed ...	24
Other Nuisances dealt with... ..	42
 Total	 458

I have the honour to be,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

JAMES A. HARRIS, M.D. (Lond.),

Medical Officer of Health.

