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Annual Report

AS TO THE

SANITARY CONDITION

OF THE

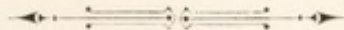
URBAN DISTRICT OF DISS

For the Year 1909.

BY

H. M. SPEIRS, M.D.,

Medical Officer of Health.



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TO THE CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN OF THE

DISS URBAN COUNCIL.

I herewith have the honour to present my **FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT** as your Medical Officer of Health.

1.—District.

(a) PHYSICAL FEATURES.

(b) GEOLOGICAL FEATURES.

These remain the same, and as they were given in detail last year, I shall not report on them this.

2.—Chief Occupation of your Inhabitants.

This also has not changed since last year.

3.—House Accommodation.

For the 3,800 of your population, there are some 954 houses, 621 of which you might call cottages whose rent is below £8 per annum.

The four new cottages in the course of construction in Mount Street Road are now finished and occupied, as are also the two new villas in the Walcot Road. This shows that there is a need for a certain class of house in the town.

The plans for the new houses were duly passed by the Council, and all have been connected to the public sewer.

Most, in fact I might say all, the houses in the town have gardens or yards of some sort.

While on this point, I would like to say that I have had it in mind since I have been your M. O. H. that there are certain common public yards in the town that would be very much better for being asphalted, and I think it would be to your advantage, certainly from a sanitary point of view, to have this done.

I might suggest (though I am quite aware this is not my province) that the primary cost be borne by the landlords in each case, and then the Council take them over as highways for the future, and do them with asphalt at such seasons as the town paths are done. You have the necessary machinery and it would not add materially to your expense, while it would to your general health, for it is the yards I have in my mind which are the hot beds of infection, and a great deal of this is due to their perpetually filthy state. I do hope you will act on this simple suggestion.

4.—Sewerage.

You are in possession of a most excellent system of water borne sewerage which connects up the whole of the town with the exception of the east end, and the country to the north. With reference to the former of these, I think this might be attended to later when you have your new water scheme working.

I have nothing further to say on this subject than was reported last year, except to remind you that you are not in possession of a Plan of your Sewerage system, and that it would be as well to have one made and kept at the Inspector's Office before your water is laid down.

5.—Rainfall, &c.

This is the first year I have taken the total rainfall, and although you may think we have had enough rain, it is not much above the average, and in fact there were times during the year when there was a shortage.

This paradox can be accounted for by the simple fact that the rain was not obliging enough to fall at night as it usually does in this district, but throughout almost the whole year began about daybreak and left off at sunset, having spoilt the whole day for either work or pleasure.

The Total Rainfall was 26.16 inches.

Rain fell on 193 days.

The most in one day .77 on June 1st.

" " " " week 1.88 Oct. 26th—31st.

" " " " month 4.37 December.

NOTE.—June 1st—6th1.19 inches.

Dec. 1st—7th1.82 "

	INCHES.
January .....	.6
February .....	.75
March	2.45
April.....	1.17
May	1.49
June	3.78
July	2.5
August.....	17.2
September	2.1
October	3.72
November	1.51
December	4.37
	——
	26.16
	——

BAROMETER.—DISS, 1909.

Highest (January 4th).....	30.60
Lowest (November 2nd)	28.20
Mean	29.55
	——

Memorandum.—I have only recorded one reading lower than that on November 2nd, 28.20 inches, viz., on December 9th, 1886, 28.12 inches.—(F.T.)

TABLE I.
Vital Statistics of Whole District during 1909 and Previous Years.
URBAN DISTRICT OF DISS.

YEAR.	Population estimated to middle of each Year.	BIRTHS.		TOTAL DEATHS REGISTERED IN THE DISTRICT.				Total Deaths in Public Institutions in the District.	Deaths of Non-residents registered in Public Institutions in the District.	Deaths of Residents registered in Public Institutions beyond the District.	NETT DEATHS AT ALL AGES BELONGING TO THE DISTRICT	
		Number.	Rate. ^a	Under 1 Year of Age.		At all Ages.					Number.	Rate. ^a
				Number.	Rate per 1,000 Births registered.	Number.	Rate. ^a					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1904	3,760	75	19.9	14	186	42	11.1	4	4	...	46	12.1
1905	3,770	57	16.1	10	175	37	9.8	4	2	1	42	11.1
1906	3,800	78	20.5	4	51.2	43	11.3	3	2	...	41	10.7
1907	3,800	56	14.7	2	36.7	44	8.1	5	1	...	43	11.3
1908	3,800	82	21.5	3	36.5	42	11	3	1	...	41	10.7
Averages for years 1904-1908	3,786	69.6	20.5	6.6	97.08	41.6	10.24	3.8	2	...	42.6	11.1
1909	3,800	56	14.7	5	89.2	54	14.2	1	1	...	52	13.6

^aRates in Columns 4, 8 and 13 calculated per 1,000 of estimated population.

Total Population at all ages, 3,800.

Number of Inhabited Houses, 956. Average number of persons per house, 4.

Area of District in acres (exclusive of area covered by water), 3,625.

There is one institution within the District receiving sick and infirm persons from outside the District, viz., the Hospital, Diss.

6.—Zymotic Diseases.

Under this heading I have to report a record, in that the Zymotic Diseases notified to me were the fewest I have had during my term of office and as far back as I have records; in fact I am almost inclined to say little about it lest we have a time during the present year.

DISEASE.	1909.	1908.	1907.	1906.	1905.	1904.	
Scarlet Fever	1	1	4	48	12	26	Average 26.5.
Diphtheria ... ..	...	1	...	14	5	16	
Erysipelas	2	1	2	5	3	2	
Enteric or Typhoid Fever	1	9	4	...	2	...	
Totals	4	12	10	67	22	44	

This total of four cases is well below the average of 26.5 for the past six years. Further the one case each of Scarlet and Enteric Fever were imported, and with care I am glad to say that it stopped at that one case.

The two of Erysipelas, being as usual in elderly people, and the result of some primary lesion.

We had a pretty thorough searching out with Measles. This was with us at the beginning of the year, and it gradually increased till at length I had to close first the Council and then the Church Schools till over the Summer holiday.

Then with the exception of an odd case or two it seemed to die out, till in November one unfortunate child attended a Bazaar held in the Corn Hall, with the result that all the children and a number of adults who had not had it were stricken at the beginning of the Christmas Holiday.

I am glad to be able to say that as far as I know it is now quite dead.

There were also a few cases of Pertussis (Whooping Cough) and Chicken Pox during the year.

TABLE III.

Cases of Infectious Disease notified during the Year 1909.

URBAN DISTRICT OF DISS.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE.	CASES NOTIFIED IN WHOLE DISTRICT.				
	At all Ages.	At Ages—Years.			
		1 to 5.	5 to 15.	15 to 25.	25 to 65.
Erysipelas	2	...	...	..	2
Enteric Fever	1	...	1	...	...
Scarlet Fever	1	1	...	...	...
Totals	4	1	1	..	2

7.—Zymotic Mortality.

In spite of our own epidemic of Measles this was—Nil.

8.—Deaths (*See* TABLE IV.)

TABLE IV.

Causes of, and Ages at, Death during the Year 1909.

URBAN DISTRICT OF DISS.

CAUSES OF DEATH.	Deaths at the subjoined ages of "Residents" whether occurring in or beyond the District.						
	All ages.	Under 1 year.	1 and under 5.	5 and under 15.	15 and under 25.	25 and under 65.	65 and upwards.
Epidemic Influenza	2	...	...	...	...	1	1
Gastritis	1	...	...	...	...	1	...
Phthisis (Pulmonary Tuberculosis)	4	...	...	...	...	4	...
Other tuberculous diseases ...	2	...	1	1	...	...	...
Cancer, malignant disease ...	8	...	...	...	...	1	7
Bronchitis	2	...	1	...	...	...	1
Pneumonia	2	...	...	...	...	1	1
Alcoholism	1	...	...	...	...	1	...
Cirrhosis of liver	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Premature Birth	4	4	...	...	...	...	...
Diseases and accidents of parturition	1	...	...	...	1	...	...
Heart diseases	3	...	...	...	...	...	3
Accidents... ..	3	...	...	...	...	3	...
Old age	18	...	...	...	...	...	18
Tabes	1	...	...	...	...	...	1
Hemiplegia	1	...	...	...	...	...	1
Intussusception	1	1	...	...	...	...	...
All causes	54	5	2	1	1	12	33

This Table is the blot on my Escutcheon, the number, 54, is the largest I have had in the past six years and, except for the fact that there were 18 from old age as compared with 14 last year, and 8 cases of Cancer as compared with 2, I cannot lay the blame on anything unless it was the dreadful weather we had.

The rate works out at 14.2 per 1000, which is 4 above our average.

Of the total 54, the sexes were equally represented, there being 27 of each.

TABLE V.

*Infantile Mortality during the Year 1909.*DEATHS FROM STATED CAUSES IN WEEKS AND MONTHS
UNDER ONE YEAR OF AGE.

URBAN DISTRICT OF DISS.

CAUSE OF DEATH.	Under 1 Week.	2-3 Months.	5-6 Months.	7-8 Months.	8-9 Months.	Total Deaths under One Year.
<i>(iii) Wasting Diseases:</i>						
Congenital Defects ...	1	...	...	...	...	1
Atrophy, Debility, Marasmus } ...	...	...	1	1	...	2
<i>(c) Other Causes:</i>						
Suffocation, overlying...	...	1	...	...	...	1
Intussusception ...	...	...	...	...	1	1
	1	1	1	1	1	5

Urban District of Diss.

Population estimated to middle of 1909, 3,800.

Births in the year—legitimate, 53, illegitimate 3.

Deaths in the year—legitimate infants, 5.

Deaths from all Causes at all Ages, 54.

9.—Infantile Mortality.*Meaning the Deaths from all causes under the age of 12 months.*

The total number is five as compared with three of last year. Not only is this higher, but unfortunately as our births are fewer, so inversely our rate works out at a higher figure, viz., 89.2 per 1000 children born. True this figure is nothing like so high as it was in 1904, when it was 186 per 1000. Still it is very much higher than I would like to see.

Three of the five were premature,

10.—Births.

This is the lowest rate I have had to note, and is 13.6 below our average ; it is made up of 35 boys and 21 girls, total 56 ; also you will have noted is only two more than our deaths, which is cutting it rather fine.

Of these only three were illegitimate, this I am glad to say being less than last year. It is indeed an ill wind which blows no good.

11.—Excrement Disposal.

I have nothing further to say on this point than was reported last year.

One or two houses have been connected with the town sewer but nothing of importance in this direction can be done till we have our water.

12.—Water Supply.

This remains the same in spite of the determined efforts on your part to remedy it.

Three years ago I reported at some length on the need of a public water supply, and the Local Government Board very properly took it up, and demanded to know what you were doing in the matter, and now I am led to understand that they are the only obstruction to our getting water.

This is indeed a paradox, it is also a pity, for as your M.O.H. I must say that the site chosen by your chosen Engineer is ideal in every way.

First, it is to be practically given to your Council, thus a saving on the rates.

And, secondly, as a site for Water Works it could not be bettered in situation. It is bounded on the south by the cricket meadow, on the west by a road and private grounds, on the north by a factory which in its nature does not manufacture any refuse, and is therefore harmless, and finally on the east by the Secondary School with its playing field,

In fact the site chosen is surrounded on all sides, and cannot be built on or interfered with in any way by the proximity of drains or house refuse in any form.

I hope the L.G.B. will meet your Council and see their way to have the Plans passed, for that the Mere is a source of danger to water which is to be drawn from the chalk at a distance of more than half a mile is more than I can conceive.

Any further sanitary improvement is at a standstill till we do get water, and your Council having received the sanction of the ratepayers to get water, it seems a pity that so small a matter as the site of your well should stand in the way of such a necessary reform.

13.—Supervised Premises.

Your Inspector and I have made a total of 21 visits of inspection, details of which will be seen in Table H.

14.—Schools.

I have nothing further to report on *re* the Schools in the Town except to say that the sooner the County Council see their way to do away with the Attendance prizes which are at present given, the better.

Children are so eager to get these prizes, and they know that no medical certificate will be accepted as an excuse for not being there, that they will drag themselves to school in all stages of infectious diseases, and all I can say is that it will become an annual affair to close the schools for every small outbreak of any Zymotic disease till this point is rectified.

15.—Dairies.

I have nothing of importance to report under this head.

I still think the Milk Supply of the town is all that could be desired,

In conclusion, I have to thank my colleague, Mr. Cooper, for his valuable assistance to me in the year's work; Mr. Taylor, for the Barometer readings, and Miss A. Aldrich for the calculations connected therewith; Mr. Pullen for kindly lending me his notes on the Rainfall, and you, Gentlemen, once more, for your unvarying courtesy to me in the past year.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

H. M. SPEIRS, M.D.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR THE YEAR 1909.

FOR THE URBAN DISTRICT OF DISS,

on the administration of the Factory and Workshop Act, 1901, in
connection with

FACTORIES, WORKSHOPS, WORKPLACES AND HOMEWORK.

1.—Inspection of Factories, Workshops and Workplaces.

Including Inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors or Inspectors of Nuisances.

Premises.	Number of	
	Inspections.	Written Notices.
Factories (including Factory Laundries)	1	...
Workshops (including Workshop Laundries) ...	20	5
Total	21	5

2.—Defects found in Factories, Workshops and Workplaces.

Particulars.	Number of Defects.	
	Found.	Remedied.
Nuisances under the Public Health Acts:—		
Want of cleanliness	2	2
Want of drainage of floors	2	2
Other Nuisances	1	1
Total	5	5

4.—Registered Workshops.

Workshops on the Register (s. 131) at the end of the year.	Number.
	42
Total number of Workshops on Register	42

5.—Other Matters.

Class.	Number.
Underground Bakehouses (s. 101) :—	
In use at the end of the year (with Council's permission) ...	1

