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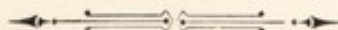
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**Annual Report**  
AS TO THE  
**SANITARY CONDITION**  
OF THE  
**URBAN DISTRICT OF DISS**  
*For the Year 1913.*

BY  
**H. M. SPEIRS, M.D.,**  
*Medical Officer of Health.*



DISS :  
PRINTED BY EDWARD ABBOTT, MERE STREET

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN OF THE  
DISS URBAN COUNCIL.

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

**1.—District.**

PHYSICAL FEATURES.—As reported in full last year.

**2.—Chief Occupation of your Inhabitants.**

One might say that there was no predominance to any particular form of trade, but that the people were occupied in such small business as is to be found in most small country towns.

There are two mat and brush factories, which employ several hundred hands, both male and female (the one is situate just in the bounds of Roydon), also a stay factory, which employs from thirty to one hundred girls, according to the state of trade ; an iron foundry for the manufacture and repairs of agricultural implements, and one or two large maltings.

I should like to note here that the percentage of married women employed in the above factories is small.

**3.—House Accommodation.**

For the 3,800 of your population there are some 963 houses, 623 of which you might call cottages whose rent is below £8 per annum.

I am pleased to note that your Council have taken my suggestion made last year and have decided to become landlords. I only hope you will not hesitate as to the number of houses you build to start with. I am told by two good authorities "that if you build 50 houses they will all be taken before their roofs are on."

The population of your town has remained absolutely stationary during the past fifty years.

From September, 1909, there have been only 22 plans passed for the erection of house property, and of these you could only describe two as belonging to the cottage class.

It has further been shown that many men who work in your area live out of Diss for the want of a house to live in.



And, finally, one has only to watch what happens when someone moves out of a house at say 10s. per week rent, the result can only be described as "general post."

"The suggestion for your Council to make the owners pave certain yards and then take them over as highways has not yet been done, but I hope to see it carried out when the water mains are laid, and one can expect less eruption of the ground." This is a quotation from last year's report, which I think might now be attended to.

#### 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. Of the latter the Council need take no further notice, as the houses are too far apart to need connection with a public system of sewerage. But of the former I fear you will have seriously to consider some scheme, though I must admit there is no violent hurry, as the nature of the subsoil (sand and gravel) would almost allow owners to erect W.C.'s running into open cess-pools.

You have had some correspondence with the L.G.B. on this point during the year, but as the scheme would be a large one, and the result from the point of benefit to the public in the East End small, I do not recommend it as urgent at present.

I have just made an analysis of the sewerage at your Farm and append my results below. It is worthy of note that these samples were taken February 5th, 1914, after a dry January (1.5 in. of rain) and I think the results show that your sewage beds are doing their duty well.

##### THE CRUDE MATERIAL ROUGHLY FILTERED THROUGH COTTON.

*Colour*—Dark Brown.  
*Odour*—Offensive and Ammoniacal,  
*Residue, left on Evaporation,*  
Dark brown, chars on burning,  
*Oxygen absorbed in four hours at a  
temp of 80 degrees, 2 grains per  
gallon*  
*Free Ammonia* — Present in large  
quantities.

##### THE EFFLUENT AS IT PASSES INTO THE RIVER WAVENEY.

Clear.  
Nil.  
Clear Chalk.  
No charring.  
.4 of a grain per gallon.  
Faint trace only

### 5.—Rainfall, &c.

I have no comments to make on the weather of 1913, which I think might well be described as normal.

#### Rainfall in 1913

at The Cedars, Diss, in the county of Norfolk.

Rain Gauge. { Diameter of Funnel 5in.  
 { Height of { Above Ground 9in.  
 { Top { Above Sea Level 108.9ft.

Month.	Total Depth.	Greatest Fall in 24 hours.		Number of Days with .01 or more recorded.
		Inches.	Inches. Date.	
JANUARY ...	2.44	.51	12	18
FEBRUARY..	.57	.21	2	6
MARCH .....	1.76	.26	3	21
APRIL.....	1.42	.60	11	14
MAY .....	2.13	.38	3	11
JUNE .....	.84	.37	9	9
JULY .....	1.45	.34	14	9
AUGUST.....	.97	.42	11	6
SEPTEMBER	2.21	.92	20	12
OCTOBER ...	3.09	.77	26	13
NOVEMBER.	2.05	.59	11	16
DECEMBER.	.53	.13	4	11
TOTAL ...	19.46			146

Objects nearest to the Gauge.

Objects.	Height.	Distance.	Direction.
House ...	30ft. ...	60ft. ...	W.
Cedar Tree	40ft. ...	70ft. ...	N.E.



## BAROMETER.—DISS, 1913.

Highest, February 12th .....	30.6.
Lowest, 4th December .....	28.3.

**VITAL STATISTICS.**

TABLE I.

*Vital Statistics of Whole District during 1913 and previous Years.*  
URBAN DISTRICT OF DISS.

YEAR.	Population estimated to middle of each Year.	BIRTHS.			TOTAL DEATHS REGISTERED IN THE DISTRICT.		TRANSFERABLE DEATHS.		NETT DEATHS BELONGING TO THE DISTRICT.			
		Uncorrected Number.	Nett.		Number.	Rate.	of Non-residents registered in the District.	of residents not registered in the District.	Under One Year of Age.		At all Ages.	
			Number.	Rate.					Number.	Rate per 1,000 Nett Births.	Number.	Rate.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1907	3,800	56		14.7	44	11.8			2	36.7	43	11.3
1908	3,800	82		21.5	42	11			3	36.5	41	10.7
1909	3,800	56		14.7	54	14.2			5	89.2	52	13.6
1910	3,800	88		23.1	42	11			5	56.8	40	10.5
1911	3,769	70		19.3	40	10.6	1	5	3	41.	44	11.6
1912	3,790	72		18.9	50	13.1		7	9	126.7	57	15.0
1913	3,800	70		13.1	35	9.2		6	5	69.4	41	10.7

Total Population at all ages, 3,800.

Number of Inhabited Houses, 963. Average number of persons per house, 4.

Area of District in acres (exclusive of area covered by water), 3625.

There is now no institution receiving sick and infirm people from outside the district. There is no Sanatorium for the treatment of Phthisis in your District.

**6.—Zymotic Diseases.**

DISEASE.	1913	1912	1911	1910	1909	1908	1907	1906	1905	1904	Average 20.8
Scarlet Fever	3	3	...	3	1	1	4	48	12	26	
Diphtheria ...	22	...	2	...	...	1	...	14	5	16	
Erysipelas ...	1	...	2	4	2	1	2	5	3	2	
Enteric or Typhoid Fever	...	...	...	...	1	9	4	...	2	...	
Tuberculosis	2	7	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
	28	10	4	7	4	12	10	67	22	44	

I have not got such a clean sheet to show this year as last.

Report on Outbreak of Diphtheria in Diss during  
November and December, 1913.

The first case to be notified to me was a child living in Mount Street, Diss, and attending the Diss Council School, Infants' Department. At the same time there seem to have been several cases of "sore throat" in that Department, and a mistress from the Girls' Department, who was lent to the Infants, contracted the disease and took it back to her own department before she was notified.

With the exception of two cases in the Girls' Department they have all been from the Infants' Department of the above Schools.

The drains of the Council School were all relaid during the Summer holidays, and the trenches for the same were not filled in by the time the children came back from their holiday. This I reported to you, and was requested to meet the Managers, who denied the statement, so I cannot account for the outbreak in any way.

The Infants' Department was closed from November 15th to December 15th, and when it re-opened no child who had had the disease, or who came from a house where it had been notified, was allowed back until after the Christmas holiday.

The building was thoroughly fumigated with Formalin, and washed down after.

Dr. Nash (the County M.O.H.) visited the School in consultation with me and took swabs from suspects, some of whom proved to be infects and were sent home.

Your Council supplied me with free Serum, so that all could be promptly treated.

With two exceptions the disease has been confined to children, and there have been no deaths.

The last case was notified on December 24th and the epidemic has now died out.



TABLE II.

*Cases of Infectious Diseases notified during the Year 1913.*

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 45.	45 to 65.
Diphtheria (including Membranous croup) ... ..	22	3	16	1	2	...
Erysipelas ... ..	1	...	...	...	...	1
Scarlet Fever ... ..	3	...	2	1	...	...
Pulmonary Tuberculosis ... ..	1	...	...	...	...	1
Other forms of Tuberculosis ... ..	1	...	1	...	...	...
Totals ... ..	28	3	19	2	2	2

### 7.—Zymotic Mortality

records 2 deaths from Pulmonary Tuberculosis, which I am glad to say is below your usual average from the "White Plague," and which, under the National Health Insurance regulations, I hope in future will be nil.

There were also three deaths from Whooping Cough, a pretty severe epidemic of which scourge visited us in the early part of the year. The deaths in all three cases seem to have been due to a form of Meningitis following the cough.



## 8.—Deaths.

TABLE III.

*Causes of, and Ages at, Death during the Year 1913.*

URBAN DISTRICT OF DISS.

CAUSES OF DEATH.	Nett Deaths at the subjoined ages of "Residents" whether occurring within or without the District.								
	All ages.	Under 1 year.	1 and under 2.	2 and under 5.	5 and under 15.	15 and under 25.	25 and under 45.	45 and under 65.	65 and upwards.
Whooping Cough ... ..	3	...	1	2	...	...	...	...	...
Phthisis (Pulmonary Tuberculosis) ... ..	2	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...
Other Tuberculosis Diseases... ..	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Cancer, malignant disease ... ..	3	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	2
Organic Heart Disease ... ..	6	...	...	...	...	...	2	1	3
Bronchitis ... ..	5	1	1	...	...	...	...	1	2
Pneumonia (all forms) ... ..	2	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1
Congenital Debility and Malformation, including premature birth ... ..	5	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Senectus ... ..	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5
Other defined diseases ... ..	9	...	...	...	1	...	...	6	2
<b>All causes ... ..</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>

This table for the year 1913 almost constitutes a record.

The deaths in your district were as low as 35, which gives a rate of 9.2, and when you add 6 deaths of residents outside your district, making the corrected total 41—with a rate of 10.7 per 1,000—it compares favourably with any similar district in the country.

Of this number 14 were female and 27 male.

Cancer accounts for 3 as against 4 in 1912, and 13 reached the age of 65 and upwards, 2 being over 80 and 2 over 90.

**TABLE IV.**  
*Infantile Mortality during the Year 1913.*  
**DEATHS FROM STATED CAUSES IN WEEKS AND MONTHS**  
**UNDER ONE YEAR OF AGE.**  
 URBAN DISTRICT OF DISS.

CAUSE OF DEATH.	Under 1 Week.	1-2 Weeks.	3-4 Weeks.	3-6 Months.	Total Deaths under One Year.
Bronchitis ... ..	...	1	...	...	1
Congenital Malformations ...	1	...	...	...	1
Premature Birth ... ..	1	1	1	...	3
Totals ... ..	2	2	1	...	5

Nett Births in the Year—legitimate 63, illegitimate 5—68.

Nett Deaths in the year of infants 5.

**Gross Deaths from all Causes at all Ages, 41.**

### 9.—Infantile Mortality.

*Meaning the deaths from all causes under the age of 12 months.*

This figure is four less than last year, but is still much too high, though one has the consolation, however poor, that four of them could hardly be described as due to preventible causes.

The rate is 69.4.

### 10.—Births.

The total figure is 70, which is 10 above our average for the past ten years. There were 40 males and 30 females, and 5 were illegitimate.

### 11.—Excrement Disposal and Scavenging.

All of the new houses have been connected to the main sewers where possible. Your Council pays a retaining fee to a scavenger, and the revision of his contract is under consideration.

The question of house refuse is one of our principal troubles in carrying out the House Town Planning Act.

Very few of the houses inspected have proper refuse receptacles, the rubbish being simply dumped on the garden, or worse still, in the yard, to form a breeding ground for flies, etc.



## 12.—Water Supply.

My heartiest congratulations on your water supply, and long may it be as excellent and appreciated as it is at the present moment.

These notes of the working of your water works I have obtained from Mr. Cooper, the superintendent. They are only a rough estimate, as the figures for the whole year are not to hand as this goes to Press.

### WATERWORKS.—DISS URBAN COUNCIL. MONTHLY PUMPING RECORDS.

Month.	Quantity of Water Pumped.	Average Daily Consumption
	Gallons.	Gallons.
January... ..	210,000	6,774
February... ..	219,000	7,821
March... ..	271,000	8,742
April... ..	365,000	12,166
May... ..	492,000	15,871
June... ..	502,000	16,733
July... ..	568,000	18,322
August... ..	544,000	17,548
September... ..	427,000	14,233
October... ..	501,000	16,161
November... ..	472,000	15,733
December... ..	453,000	14,613
Total... ..	5,024,000	164,717
Average per Month... ..	418,666	13,726

	Total Number of Premises supplied from Mains, 31st Dec., 1913.	New Connections during 1913.
Houses .....	143	40
Cottages .....	215	72
Business Premises .....	16	8
Chapels .....	4	3
Schools .....	3	3
Meters .....	2	1
Separate Gardens.....	2	0
Dairies .....	1	1
Fire Hydrants .....	1	1
	387	129

WATER SUPPLY.—Two statutory samples of water have been taken. Both of these were condemned and as yet the wells have not been closed, neither have the owners of property in the area affected exerted themselves to obtain a proper supply. Six other samples were also taken. These were analysed; four were condemned as totally unfit, and two were passed. I hope, as soon as you have settled the vexed question as to what is a reasonable distance, to take more samples of water from wells which I suspect to be polluted.

### 13.—Supervised Premises.

Your Inspector and I have made some 589 odd visits of inspection.

Number of Inspections made by Inspector .....	552
"    "    "    "    "    M.O.H.....	37
INSPECTIONS MADE UP AS FOLLOWS—	
Abatement of Nuisances .....	74
New Drainage.....	59
Infectious Diseases .....	26
Housing and Town Planning Act .....	344
Miscellaneous .....	49
	552

The following Notes of the above are from your Inspector's Report—

ABATEMENT OF NUISANCES.—18 complaints have been made during the year and these, with other nuisances found, have been abated, either by verbal request or by preliminary notice. Only two statutory notices have been issued, one has been attended to and the other is under your consideration.

NEW DRAINAGE.—59 inspections of new drainage have been made, and 27 houses have been either re-drained or repaired and brought up to date. This is an increase of 9 over the number similarly treated during 1912. It is pleasing to note, too, that 27 privies have been converted into water closets. I should like to see the number doubled for the next annual report and each



supplied with a flushing cistern, as I do not consider the hand flushing arrangements at all satisfactory.

**INFECTIOUS DISEASES.**—11 cases of infectious disease have been enquired into during the year—9 of these were diphtheria and 2 scarlet fever. Most of the houses were disinfected after the recovery of the patients; disinfectants were also supplied free of charge to those who cared to avail themselves of the opportunity thus given of taking extra precaution. Further preventive measures were taken in disinfecting 9 rooms at the Council Schools, and scrubbing all woodwork with disinfectant; the w.c.'s, gullies and drains were also flushed with disinfectant.

**DAIRIES AND COWSHEDS.**—There are 10 persons on the Register, 6 being registered as Cowkeepers, Dairymen, and Purveyors of Milk, and 4 as Purveyors only. I have made 8 inspections of Cowsheds and Dairies. The Dairies I have little or no fault to find with, but some of the Cowsheds and Yards are in a deplorable condition, and improvements in the lighting, ventilation, drainage, construction of floors and manure channels, the better condition of the yards and general cleanliness are badly needed. I hope to bring detailed reports before you at an early date with a view to getting these improvements carried out.

**SLAUGHTER HOUSES.**—There are four registered slaughter houses in the district. These are fairly well kept, but some improvements may be effected when the new bye-laws come into force.

#### **14.—House Town Planning Act, 1909.**

Number of Houses inspected .....	104
Number of Inspections made.....	344
Number of Houses reported to Council .....	82
Number of Notices served .....	82
"    "    "    complied with .....	18
"    "    "    partly complied with.....	23
"    "    Houses closed .....	4
"    "    Representations for closure made by M.O.H. ....	15

HOUSING TOWN PLANNING, ETC., ACT, 1909. — This Act accounts for the greater number of inspections. 104 houses have been inspected and a total of 344 inspections have been made. The 104 houses inspected comprise 566 rooms (including business, storage and other rooms), and were occupied by 389 persons, which gives the approximate average number of occupants per house as 3.8. There were 10 cases of overcrowding, which shows nearly 10 per cent. of the houses inspected during the year to be overcrowded. As to the number of rooms in these houses—

4	had	2	living	rooms	and	2	sleeping	rooms
2	"	2	"	"	"	3	"	"
2	"	1	"	"	"	1	"	"
1	"	1	"	"	"	2	"	"
1	"	3	"	"	"	3	"	"

The particulars of living and sleeping rooms in the houses inspected are as follows :—

12	houses	had	1	living	room	and	1	sleeping	room	
20	"	"	1	"	"	"	2	"	"	
1	"	"	1	"	"	"	3	"	"	
4	"	"	2	"	"	"	1	"	"	
33	"	"	2	"	"	"	2	"	"	
20	"	"	2	"	"	"	3	"	"	
1	"	"	2	"	"	"	4	"	"	
1	"	"	2	"	"	"	5	"	"	
1	"	"	3	"	"	"	2	"	"	
7	"	"	3	"	"	"	3	"	"	
4	"	"	3	"	"	"	4	"	"	
<hr/>			<hr/>				<hr/>			
104			187				233			
			}							
			420							

It will be seen from this that there is need for a small class of house with six rooms. Four of the 33 houses with two living and two sleeping rooms were overcrowded, and no doubt many others would be found so if they were carefully measured up. Only 13 of the 104 houses inspected were passed as being reasonably fit and requiring no notice, 63 had no refuse receptacles, 32 had



no proper food stores, and 43 were damp (which varied a great deal). Reports of 127 houses have been presented to your Council, and 127 notices have been served on owners this year, but of the 104 inspected this year 82 notices have been served; 18 have been complied with and 23 partly complied with. 15 houses have been represented to you as being unfit for human habitation, but on your Committee inspecting some of these, they were of the opinion that they could be made habitable, and with the sanction of your Council notices were served accordingly. Four houses have been demolished during the year. It is apparent that owners of property, in a large number of cases, are either very dilatory or intend to ignore the notices, or they want to do just as much work as it pleases them and no more. I will admit there is some excuse for those landlords who are really poor, but if we stand still to consider them we shall most likely be getting a hint ourselves from headquarters. There is a great deal of work to be done yet in connection with the notices already served, and the only way to get it done will be to bring greater pressure to bear on the owners. In those cases where the notices have been complied with, the work has been done in a satisfactory manner. From the number of inspections already made and the hindrance caused by the large amount of re-inspection work, I consider it will be another two years before the inspection of the whole district is complete.

**15.—Form 572.****1.—Inspection of Factories, Workshops and Workplaces.**

Including Inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors or Inspectors of Nuisances.

Premises.	Number of Inspections.	Written Notices.
Workshops (including Workshop Laundries) ...	11	0
Total... ..	11	0

**4—Registered Workshops.**

Workshops on the Register (s. 131) at the end of the year.	Number.
Bakehouses ... ..	5
Boot Repairing... ..	4
Builder, Carpenter, Coachbuilder... ..	6
Dressmaking, Millinery, and Costumes... ..	14
Smith, Motor Repairs, Cycle Repairs, Wheelwright	6
Brushmaking, Matmaking, Tailoring ... ..	5
Mineral Water Works ... ..	1
Stone and Marble Mason... ..	1
Total number of Workshops on Register ... ..	42

**5.—Other Matters.**

Class.	Number.
Action taken in matters referred by H.M. Inspector as remediable under the Public Health Acts, but not under the Factory and Workshop Act (s. 5). Notified by H.M. Inspector ... ..	1
Underground Bakehouses (s. 101):— In use at the end of the year ... ..	1

FACTORY AND WORKSHOPS ACT, 1901.—There are 42 Registered Workshops in your District, comprising the following trades:—Baker 5, Boot Repairing 4, Brushmaking 1, Builder 2, Carpenter 2, Coachbuilding 2, Costume work 1, Cycle Repairing 1, Dressmaking 7, Matmaking 1, Millinery 6, Mineral Water Works 1, Motor Repairs 1, Smith 3, Stone and Marble Mason 1, Tailor 3, Wheelwright 1.

Only 11 Inspections of Workshops were made under the Act, but I am pleased to report that I found the majority of them well kept. No new Workshops were registered during the year. One complaint only was received from H.M. Inspector of Factories; it was of neglect and insufficient sanitary accommodation, and this was attended to immediately.



**16.—Schools.**

The following cases were reported to me by the School Authorities during the past year, the children having been inspected and reported on in each case :—

Measles .....	1
Sore Throat and Diphtheria .....	44
Whooping Cough .....	32
Scarlet Fever .....	2
Indefinite .....	6
	85

The following Table shows for what and when the Schools were closed during the year :

Name of School.	Closed		Cause.
	From	To	
Diss National Schools ...	Nil		
Diss Council Boys' ...	Nil		
Diss Council Infants' ...	17-3-13	Till after Easter. Re-opened 31-3-13 and Closed again till April 28th.	Whooping Cough
	5-11-13	18-11-13	Diphtheria
Diss Council Girls' ...	2-5-13	23-5-13	Whooping Cough and Influenza.
	6-11-13	18-11-13	Diphtheria

I regret that we have lost the services of Mr. Metcalfe as Sanitary Inspector during the year, but congratulate your Council on the appointment of Mr. Bill, who has picked up the various threads of his predecessor's work in a masterly way.

I beg to thank him for his valuable assistance during the year ; also Mr. Taylor for the use of his Barometrical Chart, and you, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen, for your unvarying courtesy to me.

I am, your obedient Servant,

H. M. SPEIRS, M.D.