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**Contributors**

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# ANNUAL REPORT

For the Year, 1909,

For the Urban Sanitary District of Downham Market.

Population (Census 1901) 2473.

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Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in <sup>submitting</sup> ~~submitting~~ to you my Annual Report for the past year.

The area of the district is 1,002 acres, 1d. rate produces £35.

The subsoils are mainly sandstone in the upper part of the district and clay in the lower. The surface level falls gradually towards the west, and the natural drainage of the district is into the St. John's Eau river, which forms the western boundary.

The population I estimate at 2,500.

There are 650 inhabited houses in the district, cases of overcrowding are not common and the housing of the working classes is, on the whole, adequate. Houses of a rather better class than the ordinary artisan dwelling are scarce, and there appears to be a demand for more houses of a convenient type of from £12 to £20 rental. One case of overcrowding was dealt with by the Sanitary Inspector.

The amount of general sickness during 1909 has been small in this as in most other districts; there were several cases of whooping cough during the early part of the year, but no epidemic. The council schools have not been required to close on account of illness during the year. Scarlet fever was prevalent during March and April, chiefly affecting children attending one of the private schools in the town. I satisfied

myself that this could in no way be attributed to any sanitary defects at the school where everything was done in accordance with my instructions to prevent spread of the disease.

### ***Birth-rate.***

Forty-seven births were registered during the year, as compared with 58 the previous year, 5 illegitimate. The birth rate is thus 18·8 per 1,000 births registered, the lowest birth rate since 1901; the average for the previous ten years being 21·6.

### ***Death-rate.***

Fifty-five deaths were registered in the district, 15 being in the workhouse, nearly all of very old persons who practically came in to die; 13 of these were non-residents, this makes our general death-rate appear unduly high, viz. 22 per 1,000; the rate calculated for residents only is 16·8, somewhat higher than the average, which is 15.

### ***Infant mortality.***

The deaths were registered of 5 infants under one year of age—3 from effects of premature birth, 1 from convulsions, and 1 from mal-nutrition; this gives an infant mortality rate of 106·3 per 1,000 births registered, last year it was 120 per 1,000

The Notification of Births Act is not adopted in the district, nor do I think the district populous enough to need it.

The assistance of a district nurse has been procured in the new year (1910), it is to be hoped that her services and advice will be of much use, particularly in connection with infantile complaints and the feeding of infants.

### ***Infectious diseases.***

With the exception of scarlet fever the district has been comparatively free from infectious disease. One case of diphtheria occurred in May and was efficiently isolated at home,

fortunately there were no other children in the house, some defective drains were found on the premises and the sanitary conditions were improved under the direction of the Sanitary Inspector.

### ***Scarlet fever.***

The first case occurred on January 19th, having clearly been contracted at Lynn, the patient only came home because he was ill and was then found to be suffering from scarlet fever, he was carefully isolated and every precaution taken. I do not think any subsequent cases had any connection with this one. On March 1st two cases were notified in Priory terrace, in different houses, both children were day pupils at the same school and constant companions; I could find no suspicious cases at the school, no child peeling, and none lately absent through illness; the day pupils were all kept away and the school isolated. On March 2nd one boarder at the school was affected, one day pupil and this child's brother (3 cases in all). On March 5th a boy at the workhouse was discovered in a peeling condition and had evidently had the disease some weeks previously though he had never been noticed in any way ill and had not complained; all the workhouse children were then isolated and kept from attending school and in a few days three other cases developed there. In all 17 cases occurred between March 1st and April 24th, five houses only (excluding the workhouse) being affected. Disinfection, and destruction of articles which could not be disinfected, was carried out under the superintendence of the Sanitary Inspector. The infection in this epidemic was clearly from case to case, no transmission of infection by milk, etc. could have been suggested, because the houses first affected were supplied by different dairies. In future, according to your instructions, I shall give a written order for the destruction of infected material which cannot be disinfected.

With the exception of two cases of erysipelas no other case of notifiable disease occurred in the district.

There is no Isolation Hospital available for this neighbourhood and anything like efficient isolation in the houses of the poor is an impossibility.

### ***Phthisis and Tubercular Disease.***

Only one death was registered from pulmonary phthisis during the year, and one from tuberculous. Two cases among paupers were notified, both in the workhouse infirmary one of these being the above registered death. There is no system of voluntary notification.

The following were the chief causes of death during the year.

Senile Decay....	....	14
Heart Disease	....	6
Cerebral Hæmorrhage		5
Bronchitis	....	5

### ***Water Supply.***

That from the public wells has been satisfactory in quality and quantity; the Marham water supplied to the town by the Wisbech Water Works Company is not yet available for the whole district, and is not laid on to as many houses as would derive benefit from it; those occupiers who possess good well water are naturally not anxious for the extra expense, hence the mains of the company are not yet widely distributed about the town. An arrangement with the company by which the streets might be periodically flushed from the hydrants was found not to be practicable.

### ***Drainage.***

The rainfall has been so considerable during the year that no acute trouble has arisen from the existing ditches carrying the sewage. The first scheme for sewage treatment and disposal which was laid before the L. G. B. was the subject of a local inquiry held by that board on April 16th; much opposition was made to the scheme, chiefly on account of the site, and it was not approved by the L. G. B.; consequently

another and more comprehensive scheme, necessitating pumping of the sewage, has been prepared by Messrs. Elliott & Brown, the engineers concerned, and after decision as to site of pumping stations by your council, awaits inquiry by the L. G. B. An analysis of the mixed sewage, in three samples as asked for at the April inquiry was carried out at your direction by Dr. Rideal, of Victoria Street, S.W., and showed the "strength" to be "average"; the engineers therefore consider that the cost of analysis will be saved many times over in the saving of expenditure in new works.

Part III. of the Public Health Acts, Amendment Act, 1907 has not been adopted. The number of closets in the district is as follows:—

Water closets	....	500
Vaults	....	96
Earth closets	....	27

The first and last only are now erected, many vaults have lately been done away with and water carriage substituted.

The following information concerning slaughter-houses and meat inspection is required by the L. G. B.

There are 12 slaughter-houses in the district, 8 licensed 4 registered, which have all been periodically visited, and one case of insanitation dealt with. No action has been taken under the Sale of Food and Drugs Acts, and no carcasses condemned for tuberculosis. There are no special arrangements made by the council for the inspection of meat, the sanitary inspector has had special instruction in meat inspection but has no certificate; the slaughter-houses are not specially visited at times of slaughtering, but the inspector has made frequent inspections of meat exposed for sale, and none has been condemned during the year.

### ***Refuse Disposal.***

The work of the public scavenger with dust cart three mornings a week has been satisfactory and results in much

less nuisance from accumulations on ash pits, etc. Systematic inspections of the district have been made both by the inspector and myself in the course of our other duties.

#### ***Dairies and Cowsheds.***

There are five registered dairies and cowsheds which have been periodically inspected, and there has been no cause for serious complaint in this connection; suggestions for improvements in course of construction have been cordially met by the owners. The bye-laws in force were adopted in 1899 from the model regulations of the L. G. B. and deal adequately with drainage, ventilation, lighting, cleansing, etc. I am unaware of any action taken by your council to cause dairy cows to be inspected by a veterinary surgeon.

#### ***The Schools.***

A complete new system of drainage has been put in, new closets with automatic flush, and the Marham water laid on both for flushing, lavatory purposes and drinking, the new drains, installed at considerable expense, are excellent, with inspection chambers at every junction and the work well done. I consider the sanitary condition of the schools very satisfactory, a good water supply and good drainage. I included a full account of the school conditions in my last annual report which it is unnecessary to repeat. Lighting and ventilation are still capable of improvement. The health of the children has been decidedly good during the year. Suspicious cases of illness should now be notified to the School Medical Officer, (Dr. Nash) by the head teacher on special forms, this may serve to check epidemic disease. Medical inspection of the children has been carried out by the assistants of the school medical officer.

#### ***Factories and Workshops Act.***

Inspections have been made of 28 factories and workshops on the register; 10 bake-offices (none underground); and the homes of 9 outworkers. No action has been required under the act.

The usual Statistical Tables follow.

Vital Statistics of the whole District during 1909 and previous years.

Year	Population estimated to the middle of each year.	Births,		Total deaths registered in the District.				Total Deaths in Public Institutions of the District (Workhouse)	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	under 1 year		At all ages					Nmbr.	Rate
				Number	Rate per 1000 Births registered	Number	Rate					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1899	2670	52	19.4	9	173	50	18.7	12	14	...	36	13.4
1900	2670	53	19.10	9	169	48	17.9	13	10	...	28	14.2
1901	2472	44	17	4	100	43	17.3	8	5	...	38	15.3
1902	2473	61	24.6	5	81	60	24.2	15	12	...	48	19.4
1903	2486	57	22.9	4	70	44	17.6	17	16	...	28	11.2
1904	2488	50	20.09	9	180	63	25.3	20	15	...	48	19.2
1905	2500	56	22.4	4	71	40	16	18	16	...	24	9.6
1906	2500	52	20.8	9	173	49	19.6	19	17	1	33	13.2
1907	2500	57	22.8	9	158	66	26.4	25	21	1	46	18.4
1908	2500	58	23.2	7	120	47	18.8	12	10	...	57	14.8
Averages for years 1899-1908	2525	54	21.1	6.9	129.4	51	20.1	15.9	13.6	.2	41.4	14.8
1609	2500	47	18.8	5	106	55	22	15	13	...	42	16.8

## Cases of Infectious Diseases notified during the year 1909

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES	CASES NOTIFIED IN WHOLE DISTRICT.						
	At all ages	At Ages—Years.					
		Under 1	1 to 5	5 to 15	15 to 25	25 to 65	65 and upwards
Small pox ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Cholera ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Diphtheria (including Membranous croup)	1	...	1	...	...	...	...
Erysipelas ... ..	2	...	...	...	...	1	1
Scarlet fever ... ..	18	...	2	14	2	...	...
Typhus fever ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Enteric fever ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Relapsing fever ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Continued fever ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Puerperal fever ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Plague ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Totals ... ..	21	...	3	14	2	1	1

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

CAUSES OF DEATH 1	Deaths at the subjoined ages of "Residents" whether occurring in or beyond the district.							Total Deaths whether of residents or non- residents in public institu- tions in the District
	All ages 2	Under 1 year 3	1 and un- der 5 4	5 and un- der 15 5	15 and under 25 6	25 and under 65 7	65 and upwards 8	
Scarlet fever ... ..	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
Phthisis, Pulmonary Tuberculosis	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Other tuberculous diseases	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Cancer, malignant disease	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
Bronchitis... ..	7	...	1	...	...	3	3	1
Pneumonia ... ..	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
Alcoholism, Cirrhosis of liver	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
Premature birth ... ..	3	3	...	...	...	...	6	...
Heart diseases ... ..	5	...	...	...	...	2	...	1
Accidents ... ..	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
Cerebral Hæmorrhage	5	...	...	...	...	...	5	1
Senile decay ... ..	6	...	...	...	...	...	6	9
All other causes ... ..	10	2	...	...	...	4	4	1
<b>ALL CAUSES</b> ... ..	<b>42</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>15</b>

The following are from the Sanitary Inspector's records

Defective closet traps remedied—30  
 Stable manure caused to be removed—23  
 Ash pits emptied—19  
 Defective drains remedied—16  
 Dirty pig stys cleansed—9  
 Dirty houses „ —3  
 Dirty yards „ —3  
 New traps put in—15  
 Cases of pigs within the prescribed distance—7  
 Insanitary slaughter-house—1  
 Complete new sets of drains—13  
 Disinfecting private houses—8 School—1

My thanks are due to the Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor for much help and willing co-operation, to the latter especially in connection with collection of samples and recording rates of flow for the sewage analysis.

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours obediently,

EDWARD G. WALES, M.A., M.B.,

January 20th, 1910.

Medical Officer of Health.



