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Contributors

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Summary

Urban District Council of Farnham.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1913

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

I beg to report that I have received during the year 199 notifications of Infectious Disease, namely: Scarlatina 23, Diphtheria 12, Measles 153, Puerperal Fever 1, Erysipelas 2, Tuberculosis 8. This is a much larger number than in the previous year, and is principally, though not wholly, due to an extensive and very long-continued epidemic of Measles, for if one excludes it from the calculation there is still an excess of 10. Besides these, I have had notifications (as having occurred in the Union, but of cases not belonging to the Urban District), of a small epidemic of 9 cases of German Measles, 2 Tuberculosis, and 2 Puerperal Fever. The accompanying table gives details of the distribution of those belonging to the District.

Month.	Scarlatina	Diphtheria	Measles	Puerperal Fever	Erysipelas	Tuberculosis
January ...	4	...	2	...	1	...
February...	2	...	11	...	1	1
March ...	...	...	9	...	...	2
April ...	1	...	16	...	...	2
May ...	1	...	15	...	...	1
June ...	3	1	27	...	...	1
July... ..	...	1	15	...	...	...
August ...	1	3	29	...	...	...
September	...	...	27	...	...	...
October ...	2	1	...	...	...	...
November	2	1	2	...	...	...
December	7	5	...	1	...	1
Totals ...	23	12	153	1	2	8

Scarlatina. Of the 23 cases 21 were removed to the Isolation Hospital, and all recovered except one. Two were nursed at home and recovered, but a maid servant in the house subsequently developed the disease.

Diphtheria. There were 12, of whom 10 went to the Isolation Hospital, and all did well. Two were nursed at home and also recovered well. Four of the cases occurred in one family, being apparently spread by one of the children who had no clinical symptoms of the disease, but who, when all the household had their throats swabbed, was discovered to have the characteristic bacillus in his throat.

Measles. The epidemic of this was remarkably widespread and lasted a long time. A few cases began to occur in February and March, and from April to September it was never absent. It interfered very seriously with school work, but there never appeared to me to be any time when closing a school would be at all likely to stop its spreading; 93 of the cases were in children between the ages of 5 and 15, and 37 between 2 and 5 years old, but I am glad to say no death occurred, though the number was so large.

Erysipelas. There were only 2 cases, and no death.

Tuberculosis. In this, the second year of compulsory notification, I have received 8 notifications, and 6 deaths have been attributed to this cause. Several of the pulmonary cases are being treated locally under the supervision of the Tuberculosis Officer of the County Council, but the arrangements for sanatorium treatment for the County have not been completed yet.

Epidemic Diarrhœa was almost absent, and there was no fatal case at all.

Influenza. There were very few cases of this, and no death was caused by it.

Whooping Cough and Chicken-pox. There were very few cases and no death. No serious interference with school work was due to them.

Puerperal Fever. One case occurred in the end of December and proved fatal. Precautions were taken to prevent its possible spreading by the midwife who attended her.

SCHOOL INSPECTION.

I have continued my inspection of the Public Elementary Schools and have sent a report on the year's work to the Educational Medical Officer of the County Council.

I paid seventeen ordinary visits to the schools and three special visits in connection with infectious diseases, at one of which I inspected 43 infants, at the Church of England School,

on suspicion that there might be an unrecognised case of Scarlatina, but I did not find one. I wrote 120 warning notices recommending the exclusion of certain children from school who were living in infected homes, mostly in connection with the Measles epidemic. Closure of schools was considered advisable :

- (i.) For seven days in each of the two Church of England Schools for Scarlatina in June, and no further case occurred among its scholars for five months.
- (ii.) For eight days at the East Street Council Mixed School for Diphtheria in December, and no further case occurred among its scholars for a month.

In a third case, at St. Polycarp's, I consented to recommend closure for fourteen days, at the express request of the Educational Authorities, on account of the large number of cases of Measles among its scholars, but it was ineffectual, so far as checking the spread of the epidemic was concerned.

This is an instance of what I believe to be a fact, that closing a school for a short time, when only a *few* cases exist, usually checks the spread of the disease, while if one waits till the disease is well established, closure does not assist in this object.

ISOLATION HOSPITAL.

The work of this Hospital has been carried on as usual ; 31 cases were admitted, all of whom did well, except one case of Scarlatina, which ended fatally. There is ample accommodation to deal with any ordinary year's cases of Scarlatina, Diphtheria, and Enteric Fever, but not of Measles. Disinfection of the patients' clothing and bedding is carried out as a routine practice in all cases removed to the Hospital, and in other cases if it should seem desirable.

The disinfection of houses after a death from Tuberculosis, and the disinfection of schools which have been closed for Infectious Disease, before their re-opening, will also be carried out in future.

WATER SUPPLY.

This has been the same as last year—always plentiful and good. No case of lead poisoning has been heard of, nor have any complaints been received.

MILK SUPPLY.

The bacteriological examination of the milk supplied to consumers in the district, which was carried on in 1911 and 1912, was completed in January, 1913. It has not been continued

since, as the Council were clear that the milk, as supplied, was not of sufficient cleanliness to be at all satisfactory; but, before taking any definite action, they desired to know what further powers would be conferred upon them by the proposed Bill of the President of the Local Government Board, which, it was expected, would have been passed into law. From enquiries I have made during the year I believe a very considerable quantity of milk is brought into the town by rail from long distances away, under which circumstances it is scarcely possible that it can reach the consumers in good condition, considering its extremely delicate composition—at any rate, all through the hot weather—and that of the milk distributed, even from the town or neighbourhood, very insufficient care is taken to keep it clean.

I have received a list of samples of food and drugs analysed by the County Authorities, among which ten samples of milk are noted as having been examined, with the result that one was found adulterated, one prosecution instituted, and one conviction obtained.

BIRTH AND DEATH RATE.

Month.	DEATHS. Town and Union.				BIRTHS. Town and Union.
	Total per month.	Under 1 year.	Tuberculosis	Zymotic Diseases.	
January ...	17	1	3		9
February ...	14	2	1	1	9
March ...	17	2			12
April ...	8	1			15
May ...	18		3		21
June ...	12	1	1		12
July ...	10	1			11
August ...	9		2		11
September ...	13	1	1		12
October ...	10	2			19
November ...	8	1	1		16
December ...	16	2	1	1	10
Outward Transfers	81				22
Inward Transfers	8				3
Total nett for Town (excluding Union)	79	8	5	2	138
Per 1,000 per ann.	10·38	1·05	0·66	0·26	18·13
Ditto in 1912 ...	10·53	1·33	1·07	1·2	19·2
Ditto in 1911 ...	13·58	3·66		2·71	25·93

There has been a still further drop in the birth rate, the

corrected number for the district being 138, giving a rate per 1,000 of population of 18·13, which is the lowest for several years.

The corrected number of deaths has been only 79, which equals a rate of 10·38 per 1,000, which also is the lowest for several years. I am glad to say that, in spite of the large epidemic of Measles, and the number of cases of Scarlatina and Diphtheria, which was greater than in 1912, there have only been two deaths from any of the zymotic diseases, being equal to a rate of only 0·26 per 1,000 per annum. It is also very satisfactory that there have only been eight deaths of infants under 1 year old, giving the very small rate of 1·05 per 1,000 of population, or, 57·9 per 1,000 births registered, as it is usually calculated. These rates have been calculated on a population estimated to the middle of the year of 7,610. I should like to remark that one of the deaths of infants only technically belongs to our district, because the County Medical Officer tells me that he hears from the Registrar General with regard to it that, "It was born in Paddington Workhouse, and that the address given on their slips is that of the Lock Hospital. As this death does not come under paragraph 2 of the rules for transference of deaths given in the footnote to Table I. the death must be regarded as non-transferable, the child having had no residence." So that according to this ruling, a child born in Paddington Workhouse, whose mother is chargeable to Aldershot Union, must not be transferred away from us to its mother's parish, because of the accident of its having been temporarily in our district (namely, the Workhouse), when it died.

INSPECTION OF DAIRIES AND COWSHEDS, AND PLACES WHERE FOOD IS PREPARED.

In my report on Factories and Workshops I have given the result of the Inspector's and my own joint inspection, and in addition, the Inspector reports as follows:—

Inspection of Market.—I have visited the Market on most market-days during the time the auctions were on, and inspected the cattle and pigs therein exposed for sale; these have been found in good condition.

Slaughter Houses.—These have been inspected from time to time during the times of slaughtering, and several improvements and repairs have from time to time been done on my suggestion. The cattle slaughtered therein were found to be healthy and in good condition, and no disease was found in the organs of the meat.

Butchers, Fishmongers, and places where Food is prepared for Sale.—I have from time to time visited and inspected the butchers' premises, fishmongers' shops, pork shops, and

other places where food is deposited or prepared for sale, with a view to securing cleanliness of the premises, benches, machines, instruments, and utensils used in the preparation of food. In two cases I have had occasion to condemn sausage-making machines on account of their age and uncleansableness. In three cases premises were cleansed at my request. Generally, these places are now kept in fair order, and the food therein in a fresh, wholesome state.

Cowsheds and Dairies.—I have from time to time visited these during milking times, and endeavoured to impress upon the milkers the need of cleanliness in milking and in handling the milk, and also the importance of clean vessels and storage for milk and milk vessels, and also of washing the teats and udders of the cows before milking, and also the washing of hands before and during milking. I have been able to get some improvements along these lines, but much more needs to be done to keep the cows clean. In one case I was able to persuade the cowkeeper to provide clean white overalls for the milkers to wear during milking, which is a good thing, as they are, generally, ordinary farm hands, whose clothes are often much soiled with manure and dirt.

SEWERAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

The sewers in the district are regularly flushed and have given very little trouble, except in cases where they have been proved to have been interrupted by misuse, *i.e.*, by solids wrongfully put into them. There have only been two short extensions—one at the rear of Beaver's Yard and the other from Beaver's Villas to Beaver's Kilns.

STORM OVERFLOW AT PUMPING STATION.

The Council were asked by the Thames Conservancy to close a storm-overflow at their Sewage Pumping Station at Guildford Road. This overflow seldom came into operation, and there was no great difficulty in closing the same, which the Council did, after pointing out that the said overflow had been in existence for about twenty years without any serious pollution of the streams or watercourses in the district. The Council have now provided storm-water filters on land purchased for sewage treatment near the Pumping Station, and little trouble has, so far, been experienced in getting rid of storm-water or excessive flow of sewage occasioned by rain falling in the district. The Sewage Farm having been the subject of some very adverse criticism during the early part of the year, I was requested to make a special examination of, and report on it. I did so, and reported on March 11th, 1913, and this report has

been printed and circulated. The allegations were, principally, that the farm must be badly managed, and that it did permit of stench from it being perceptible more than half-a-mile away, which, among other things, must cause deterioration in the value of land in the neighbourhood, and prevent its being developed for building purposes. My observations every two or three days during a fortnight convinced me that there was no mismanagement, or want of good management, and that any smell which penetrated beyond the boundaries of the farm itself was very faint, and quite incapable of being smelt at half-a-mile away, and I produced facts to show that a very considerable number of houses had been built within half-a-mile since the commencement of the farm, and that there was no diminution of the value of land adjoining it. I have visited the farm frequently since under all sorts of climatic conditions, and have no reason to alter or modify any statements or opinions contained in that report.

HOUSE ACCOMMODATION.

To begin with arrears from previous years :

The two cottages at Snailsynch, which were first reported on in 1912, and about which there was considerable delay in getting proper repairs carried out, owing to change of ownership in 1913, have now been very much improved and made reasonably fit for habitation.

The six cottages belonging to the Fruit Preserving Company, in Bear Lane, have still not been finally put in order, but a plan has been put in and agreed upon between the Council and the owners by which the cottages will, I hope, be rendered reasonably fit.

The houses in Beaver's Yard and Potter's Gate have been improved very considerably by the owner, but are still in a state which leaves much to be desired. The owner, however, at a meeting between the Council and himself some time ago, promised to carry out most of the improvements and renovations considered necessary by the Council.

The ten houses in Babbs Mead have been much improved, the most important defects having been remedied, and the owner has promised to amend some further minor defects.

Of the 11 houses in Factory Yard, three have been rendered habitable, and one is under repair now, but the owner has not yet commenced to do anything to the remaining eight in spite of continuing pressure by the Council.

Owing to this considerable number of houses previously reported on, in which the repairs were still unfinished, fresh formal representations were only made with a view to closing in

respect of three houses, viz., two in Park Row and one of the flats in Canadian Cottages. Of the Park Row houses one has been reconstructed and is now in good order; the second has not been repaired, but is not inhabited, and the owner, I believe, is going to renovate it also.

Negotiations with the owner of Canadian Cottages are still proceeding.

Systematic house inspection has been carried on and, as a result, 111 houses have been inspected, either by the Inspector of Nuisances or myself, and the most common defects found were:—

- General structural disrepair.
- Defective drainage.
- Deficiency or absence of dustbins.
- Absence of water laid on in the house.
- Absence of sinks indoors.
- Insufficient means of ventilation.
- Dampness of walls.

This all seems to me to show that the owners of these houses (whose rental is all under £16 per year) very frequently do not keep their property in a fair state of repair. Work to remedy the defects discovered has been carried out in most cases, but in eight the work was not finished, and in one no action had been taken by the owner at the end of the year.

I give the tabular statement which I am asked to send to the County M.O.H. of the work done under the Housing Act of 1909, under certain headings.

A.	Number of houses inspected	...	...	...	111
B.	Number of houses considered so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for habitation				1
C.	Number of houses in Group B which were made fit for habitation without formal representations to Local Authority	...	...	...	0
D.	Number of formal representations to Local Authority with a view to the issue of closing order	...	...	...	3
E.	Number of closing orders made	...	...	...	2
F.	Number of houses represented unfit for habitation which were made fit without closing order	...	...	...	0
G.	Number of houses in which defects were remedied after issue of closing orders	...	...	...	1
H.	Number of houses voluntarily closed by owners				0
I.	Number of houses demolished by owners	...	...	...	0
J.	Number of houses up to £16 rental	...	...	...	320
	Number of houses above £16 and not exceeding £26	...	...	...	unknown.

The Council obtained the loan necessary to enable them to build the 19 new houses mentioned in last year's report, and these are now nearly finished.

MISCELLANEOUS.

It has been decided by the Council to hold a "Health Week" in November, 1914, and preliminary arrangements are being made.

Colonel Chrystie has kindly supplied me with details of the rainfall during the year, which I give below. The total fall has been below the average by 0.76 inches. There seem to have been comparatively slight variations of temperature, the cold having been slight, and the heat also not great, the minimum for the year being 23° Fahr. and the maximum 85°. There was a very long dry period during June, July and August.

RAINFALL.

January	...	3.72	inches	August	...	1.17	inches
February	...	1.02	"	September	...	2.45	"
March	...	3.16	"	October	...	4.13	"
April	...	2.68	"	November	...	2.53	"
May	...	2.27	"	December	...	1.54	"
June	...	0.34	"				
July	...	1.02	"				
				Total		26.03	"

S. G. SLOMAN,

6th March, 1914.

Medical Officer of Health.

The Annual Report of Factories and Workshops, and the Tables of Vital Statistics are submitted herewith.

TABLE I.
Vital Statistics of Whole District during 1913 and previous Years.

Year.	Population estimated to middle of each Year.	Births.			Total Deaths Registered in the District.		Transferable Deaths.		Net Deaths belonging to the District.			
		Un-corrected Number.	Net Number.	Net Rate.	Number.	Rate.	Of Non-Residents registered in the District.	Of Residents not registered in the District.	Under 1 Year of Age.	At all Ages.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1907	6950		182	26.18	167	24.03	75	6	13	71.4	92	13.22
1908	7040		171	24.29	160	22.73	64	8	21	122.2	104	14.77
1909	7130		201	28.19	187	26.22	93	5	7	34.8	89	12.48
1910	7220		151	20.36	170	23.54	85	4	7	46.4	82	11.36
1911	7365	210	191	25.93	180	24.71	80	0	26	136.1	100	13.58
1912	7500	153	144	19.2	165	22.00	90	4	10	69.0	79	10.53
1913	7610	157	138	18.13	152	19.97	81	8	8	57.9	79	10.38

Area of District in acres (land and inland water), 1,114.
 Total population at all ages, 7,365; No. of inhabited houses, 1,662; Average No. of persons per house, 4.43. (At Census of 1911).