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ASHFORD URBAN DISTRICT.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

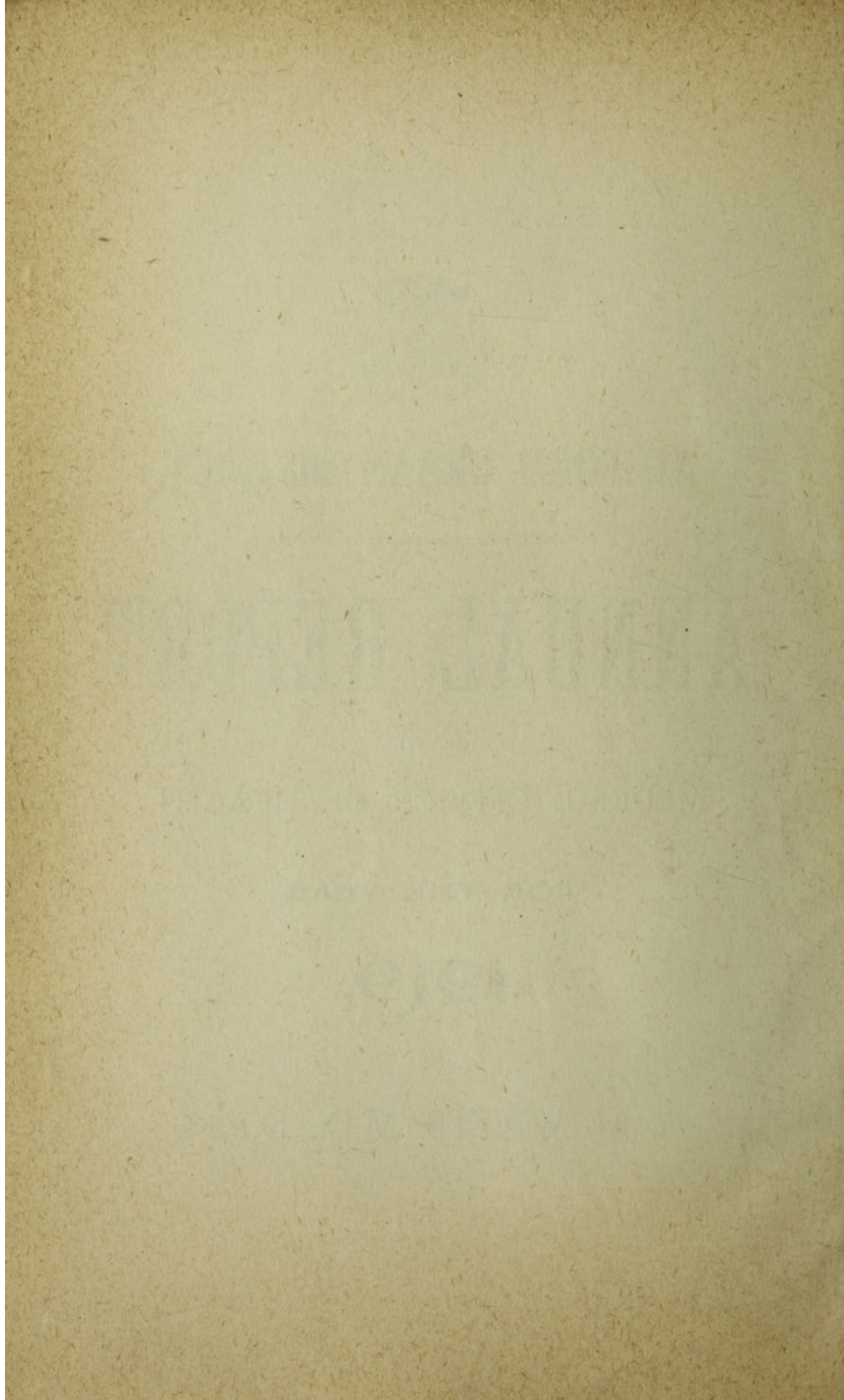
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH,

FOR THE YEAR

1919,

BY

A. M. WATTS, M.D., D.P.H.



ASHFORD,

KENT,

January, 1920.

*To the Chairman and Members of the Ashford Urban
District Council.*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit herewith my report on the Public Health and Sanitary Condition of your District for the year ending December 31st, 1919.

I have compiled it upon the lines indicated in the Memorandum of the Ministry of Health and with it is incorporated the report of the Inspector of Nuisances.

I am, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

A. M. WATTS.



NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE DISTRICT.

Population Census, 1911 13,668

Estimated by the Registrar-General, 1919—For Birth Rate, 14,805;
for Death Rate, 14,212.

Physical features and general character of the District.

It consists chiefly of the Town of Ashford which stands on the River Stour and is 52 miles from London.

The highest part of the district is on the Maidstone Road where the height above sea level is 260 feet. The lowest part at the southern end of the Town is about 120 feet above the sea and is on the level of the River Stour.

The subsoil consists of the Lower Greensands in the Northern part of the District, while in the Southern part in the neighbourhood of the River it is alluvial.

The area is 2,850 Acres.	Assessable Value, £69,945.
Rateable Value	(Agricultural Land £2,364 10s.
	(Buildings £73,913 10s.

Ashford is a market town with a large Cattle Market; the work of some of the inhabitants is connected with Agriculture, but by far the greatest number of the working class is employed by the South Eastern and Chatham Railway Company. There are also an Underwear Factory, Saw Mills, Flour Mills, Printing Works, Saw Sharpening Works, Brick Works, a Tannery, Steam Laundry and Wheel Works, which employ altogether about 760 persons.

The Hospital accommodation for the District consists of the Ashford Cottage Hospital, supported by voluntary contributions from the inhabitants of Ashford and the surrounding Villages. 602 patients were admitted during the year. 22.49 beds were continually occupied at a cost of £106 15s. 3d. per bed per year. The total expenditure was £2,402 3s., compared with £2,224 1s. 11d. for the year 1918.

The Poor Law Institution of the West Ashford Union within which the Urban District is situated is at Hothfield, some three miles from the Town, and contains accommodation for 191 persons; of these 56 are provided for in the Infirmary; 32 vagrants can be also admitted and 13 children accommodated in the Children's Home.

Two District Nurses work in the Urban District, one provided by the Ashford District Nursing Association and the other by the Royal Surgical Aid Society.

Vital Statistics for the year 1919.

Estimated	for Death Rate	14,212
Population	for Birth Rate	14,805

Number of Births Registered in the District.

Legitimate ... 205	} 220.	Birth Rate 14.85.
Illegitimate ... 15		

This is the lowest for many years. Highest number of births since 1904 was 331 in the year 1908.

Number of Deaths registered in the District, 182. Net number of Deaths found by adding the number of Deaths belonging to the District, but registered elsewhere and subtracting the number of Deaths registered in the District, but not belonging to it. 184.

Death Rate 12.94.

Infant Mortality.

Deaths of Infants under one year of age.

Legitimate 13.

Illegitimate —

Deaths of Infants under one year of age per 1,000 births, 59.

Year.	Net No. of Births.	Birth Rate.	Rate of Infant Mortality.
1904	281	20.7	99
1905	307	22.08	62
1906	316	22.48	101
1907	305	21.32	94
1908	331	22.72	54
1909	295	19.90	90
1910	274	18.15	59
1911	262	19.16	142
1912	260	18.86	50
1913	273	19.68	84
1914	289	20.7	44
1915	267	18.80	101
1916	328	21.73	85
1917	280	18.29	103
1918	275	18.65	72
1919	220	14.85	59

Total Deaths registered in the District.		Net Deaths.	Death Rate.
1909	153	158	10.65
1910	137	138	9.14
1911	182	185	13.66
1912	153	166	12.04
1913	171	170	12.25
1914	154	161	11.53
1915	187	211	14.85
1916	188	201	14.5
1917	145	181	13.2
1918	213	223	16.9
1919	182	184	12.94

Birth-rate, Death-rate and Infant Mortality rate for the year 1919.

	Birth Rate per 1,000 Total Population.	Death Rate per 1,000 Civilian Population.	Infant Mortality Rate.
England and Wales -	18.5	13.8	89
96 Great Towns including London	19.0	13.8	93
14 Smaller Towns - -	18.3	12.6	90
London - - - -	18.3	13.4	85
Ashford - - - -	14.85	12.94	59

The above figures show that in the Ashford Urban District the Birth Rate is very low, in fact, the lowest recorded, and consequently a serious matter for the town, but on the other hand the Infant Mortality Rate is low and this is fortunate as the Birth Rate is so low. The Death Rate may be considered satisfactory.

In the years 1870-2 the Birth Rate in England and Wales was 35.3; in 1908 it had fallen to 26.5; while last year it was only 18.5 per 1,000.

Causes of Death in the Ashford Urban District in the year 1919.

1	Enteric Fever	—
2	Smallpox	—
3	Measles	2
4	Scarlet Fever	—
5	Whooping Cough	—
6	Diphtheria	5
7	Influenza	9
8	Erysipelas	—
9	Pulmonary Tuberculosis	8
10	Tuberculous Meningitis	1
11	Other Tuberculous Diseases	1
12	Cancer and Malignant Disease	35
13	Rheumatic Fever	2
14	Meningitis	—
15	Organic Heart Disease	33
16	Bronchitis	13
17	Pneumonia (all forms)	8
18	Other Respiratory Diseases	—
19	Diarrhoea, etc. (under 2 years)	2
20	Appendicitis and Typhlitis	1
21	Cirrhosis of Liver	1
21a	Alcoholism	—
22	Nephritis and Bright's Disease	4
23	Puerperal Fever	—
24	Parturition apart from Puerperal Fever	—
25	Congenital Debility, etc.	7
26	Violence, apart from suicide	3
27	Suicide	3
28	Other Defined Diseases	46
29	Causes ill-defined or unknown	1
Total		184

The most noticeable feature of the above list is the number of deaths from Cancer and Malignant Disease, viz., 35, as compared with 18 in the year 1914. Unfortunately the number of deaths from these causes appears to be increasing in all districts.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.

Water Supply.

There is a plentiful supply of pure water from the wells and adits on Henwood Farm, situated in the eastern part of the town. The capacity of the adits is about 400,000 gallons.

The following is a copy of the last report received from the County Analyst on a sample of the water taken from the Henwood Water Works.

	Parts per 100,000.
Total Solid Residue	45.5
Chlorine	2.9
Free Ammonia	0.001
Albuminoid Ammonia	0.001
Nitrogen as Nitrates	0.0
Oxygen absorbed $\frac{1}{2}$ hour at 80 deg. F.	0.006
Oxygen absorbed 4 hours at 80 deg. F.	0.010
Nitrates	Absent.
Total Hardness	30.8
Permanent Hardness	8.2
Temporary Hardness	22.6

REMARKS.—This water is of excellent organic quality.

(Signed), F. W. F. ARNAUD,
Public Analyst for the County of Kent.

It will be seen from the above report that the water is "hard."
The supply is continuous.

WATER SUPPLY.

Number of Houses in the Urban District	3,464
Number using Town Supply	3,158
Number using Wells	121
Number using East Ashford Rural District Council's Supply	183
Number using Mid-Kent Water Company's Supply...	2

An Open-air Swimming Bath of nearly one acre of water, varying from two to seven feet in depth is situated by the side of the Great Stour from which it obtains its supply.

The number of persons who during the year availed themselves of the bath is not known to me. The question of the provision of public hot water baths is still under the consideration of the Council. In my opinion they are very necessary.

Rivers and Streams.

Some pollution of the River East Stour which is within the District was caused by the effluent from the Sewage Disposal Works of the East Ashford Rural District Council.

Drainage and Sewerage.

All the houses in the District except 151 are connected with the sewers, most of those which are unconnected are situated in outlying portions of the District, they are provided with water closets and cess-pools, privies, earth closets or pail closets.

The sewerage of the new houses on the Kingsnorth Road and also those known as Millbank Cottages has not yet been undertaken, it is very necessary as I pointed out in my report for the year 1914, that this work should be taken in hand.

The sewage flows from the main portion of the town by gravitation to the works at Bybrook, which are situated on the River Stour just outside the District. The sewage from South Ashford is pumped up into the sewers in the upper part of the Town, whence it flows to the Sewage Works, where, after screening, it is treated with lime and sulphate of alumina in order to cause precipitation. The Sludge formed by this process is pumped into bays the effluent from the tanks being pumped on to land adjoining. The land is under drained and the effluent passes into the Stour.

The area of the original works is:—

Sewage Works, 8.566 acres.

Refuge Tip and Sludge Bays, 2.538 acres.

Area of additional land provisionally purchased on January 2nd, 1918 and now used 7 acres 3 poles 20 perches, provisionally purchased but not now used 11 acres 3 poles 33 perches.

Closet Accommodation.

The great majority of the houses in the District as will be seen by the following figures are connected with the sewers, but unfortunately a very large number of the w.c.'s provided are of the long hopper type and are flushed by hand.

Number of houses in the District, 3,464; wash down, wash out, pedestal, etc., water closets, 1,899; short hopper closets, 341; long hopper closets, 1,655. Of these about 2,250 were fitted with flushing apparatus and about 1,645 were hand flushed.

There were about 73 trough closets and 64 earth and pail closets in use.

Scavenging.

The daily collection of house refuse is carried out, but unfortunately the Council does not possess a refuse destructor and numerous complaints were received during the year as a result of the deposit of refuse in the disused brickfields on the Great Chart Road.

Sufficient covered receptacles are not used by householders for their refuse and a notice was issued by the Council on my advice in the local newspapers during the summer calling the attention of owners and occupiers to their obligations in this respect.

Schools.

The sanitary condition of the schools which is supervised by the Kent Education Committee does not call for any comment.

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER, 1919.

The total number of inspections and re-visits made during the year amounted to 3,315, carried out respectively under the Public Health Acts. The Housing, Town Planning, etc., Act, Factory and Workshops Act, Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshop Regulations, and also other Acts, Regulations and Bye-laws in force within the District.

In carrying out the inspections, every effort is at the time made to improve the sanitary condition of properties affected; all nuisances detected are placed upon record and not allowed to be lost sight of until a suitable remedy has been adopted.

As will be seen from the following details, and the summary at the end of this Report, a large number of insanitary conditions were found to exist, which have been abated, and a good many useful improvements carried out.

It has not been necessary to resort to legal proceedings, although six Statutory Notices had to be served before the necessary remedial works were undertaken by owners of affected property.

Private House Drainage.

The work of testing, relaying and supervising repairs in connection with house drains has received careful attention.

The drainage to seven houses has been re-laid or partly re-laid, and the drains at 75 houses have been cleared and repaired.

Closet Accommodation.

One extra closet has been provided and fitted with a flushing cistern.

Fifteen defective w.c. pans have been removed and replaced by new ones, seven w.c. pans cleansed, and 33 flushing cisterns have been repaired or new ones provided.

Sinks and Sink Waste Pipes.

Ten defective sinks have been removed and replaced by glazed stoneware ones, and 13 sink waste pipes have been renewed or properly disconnected.

Paving of Yards, etc.

The work of paving side passages and small back yards was carried out in three cases, and the necessary gullies provided to carry off the rain and surface water.

Water Supply.

One sample of well water was submitted to the County Analyst who reported that same was fit for drinking purposes.

A sufficient water supply to ten houses has been provided by renewal of service pipes, etc.

Nuisances.

Eighty-nine complaints relating to various nuisances have been received during the year. Each complaint was promptly investigated, and where found to be of a genuine nature, the necessary remedial measures taken.

It will be observed by the Summary attached hereto, that various other nuisances and sanitary defects have been discovered and abated.

Infectious Diseases and Disinfection.

The following works have been carried out when dealing with notifiable infectious diseases.

One hundred and twenty-one cases of Infectious Disease were removed to the Isolation Hospital, viz.:—Diphtheria 83, Scarlet Fever 37, Measles 1.

One hundred and eighty five rooms and 3 schools have been disinfected.

One hundred and ninety-six sets, comprising 1,808 articles bedding, clothing, etc., were removed, disinfected and returned.

The Velox Steam Disinfector has been thoroughly overhauled and a new water pump provided.

In those houses where Infectious Disease occurred thorough sanitary inspections were made, including the testing of drains in all doubtful cases, and if any defects were discovered the necessary works to remedy same have been carried out.

Slaughter Houses.

The twelve slaughter-houses have been periodically inspected, and as a rule were found in a clean and sanitary condition.

A new manure pit has been constructed at one slaughter-house.

Notices were served and the work carried out to re-limewash four slaughter-houses.

Meat and Food Inspection.

A considerable portion of my time has been devoted to the inspection of large quantities of imported and home killed meat. The imported meat is delivered to a slaughter-house in the centre of the Town, and is there allocated to the various Butchers in Ashford and District.

In the latter part of October large quantities of unsound Ham and Bacon were arriving in the Town and on October 25th a circular letter was sent to all Butchers, Provision Merchants, etc., asking them to at once inform me, in their own interest, if any unsound food came into their possession.

In one case it was found that Bacon was washed and smoked first, and then turning out doubtful, I was called in and condemned the same as unfit for human consumption. A letter of warning was sent to this Firm to at once inform me before proceeding to smoke bacon of a suspicious character, and this was afterwards carried out.

The premises at which various foods are exposed for sale or stored, or in the course of preparation for sale, have been frequently inspected, in order to ensure the observance of proper conditions of cleanliness, and that no unsound food is prepared or offered for sale.

Twenty-eight surrenders have occurred during the year and in all cases my inspection was invited previous to exposure for sale.

The following Table gives particulars of the surrenders of Food-stuffs:—

Date.	Subject.	Affection.	Place.	Articles Surrendered.	Weight.			Remarks.
					Tons	cwts.	lbs.	
Jan. 3	Imported Mutton	-	Slaughterhouse	3 sides		1	0	Inspection invited
Jan. 9	do.	do.	do.	7 sides		2	9	do.
Feb. 22	do.	do.	do.	2 legs		5	14	do.
Mar. 14	Imported Beef	-	do.	4 foreqrs. and 1 hindqr.		2	26	do.
Apr. 23	Cow Carcase	-	do.	Whole carcase and organs		4	15	do.
May 22	Imported Sheep Carcase	-	do.	Whole carcase		2	3	do.
May 22	Imported Beef	-	do.	2 forequarters		0	0	do.
1	Dates	-	Store	1 box of dates		3	0	do.
15	do.	do.	do.	1 box of dates		2	20	do.
June 20	Pig Carcase	-	Slaughterhouse	Whole carcase and organs		1	0	do.
20	Imported Mutton	-	do.	5 carcasses		3	6	do.
26	Pig Carcase	-	do.	Whole carcase and organs		1	8	do.
Aug. 1	Imported Beef	-	do.	Parts of		1	13	do.
8	do.	do.	do.	34 forequarters and		1	1	do.
15	do.	do.	do.	5 hindquarters		2	1	do.
Sep 11	Green Hams	-	do.	1 forequarter		6	11	do.
11	Bread	-	Store	9 top pieces		10	26	do.
11	Bacon	-	do.	2 boxes green hams		21	21	do.
11	Meat	-	do.	3/4 loaves			3 1/2	do.
Oct. 11	Cow Carcase	-	Slaughterhouse	Whole carcase and organs		5	0	do.
22	Bacon	-	Shop	Quantity bacon		3	0	do.
Nov. 5	do.	do.	Shop and Store	5 sides and pieces		16	1	do.
8	Green and Smoked Hams	-	do.	Sides, gammon, &c.		7	0	do.
15	Bacon	-	do.	1 box hams and 2 gammons		4	0	do.
15	do.	do.	do.	2 gammons		1	6 1/2	do.
15	do.	do.	do.	Various pieces bacon		2	4	do.
17	do.	do.	do.	do.		1	22	do.
21	do.	do.	do.	do.		1	2	do.
21	Green Hams	-	do.	19 green hams		6	1	do.
Dec. 4	Cow Carcase	-	Slaughterhouse	Whole carcase and organs		8	2	do.
				Total	4	8	13 1/2	

To meet with the requirements of the National Salvage Council all quantities of condemned meat over 1 cwt. have been forwarded to approved Firms for the manufacture of such industrial products as glycerine, pig and poultry food, etc., which were prepared to give adequate guarantees that the material mentioned would not be used for human food.

The total quantity sent amounted to 3 tons 19 cwt., 0 qrs. 14 lbs., and the Council received in payment for same the sum of £15 4s. 4d.

HOUSING, TOWN PLANNING, ETC., ACT, 1909.

During the year I have made special inspections under the Act in accordance with the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910, as follows:—

Number of houses inspected	48
Number of houses in which defects were found	48
Number of houses in which defects were remedied under Section 15	27
Number of houses in which defects were not re- medied on December 31st, 1919	18
Number of houses subject to Closing Orders	1
Number of houses demolished voluntarily	3

All the prescribed entries and records respecting the above inspections have been made in the Record Books, specially provided for the purpose.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

(1) *Inspection.*

The number of premises on the register at the end of the year was:—

	Number.	Inspections.
Factories	37	60
Workshops	79	132
Workplaces	8	8
Bakehouses	12	65
Outworkers' premises	10	17
 New Factories registered ...	 1	
New Workshops registered	4	
Underground Bakehouses in use	2	

(2) *Defects Found.*

	Found.	Remedied.
Want of cleanliness	15	{ 14 1 in hand.
Want of ventilation	2	2
Overcrowding	1	1
Sanitary Accommodation:—		
Insufficient	2	{ 1 1 in hand.
Unsuitable or defective	14	{ 13 1 in hand.
Offences under the Factory and Workshops Act, 1901:—		
Re-lime-washing required to Bakehouses	5	5

There are ten Outworkers on the Register, whose homes have been periodically inspected and found kept in a clean and satisfactory condition.

Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops.

There are 14 Cowsheds, 9 Milkshops, 5 Dairies and 3 Milk Stores in the District, which have been inspected from time to time, and the requirements relating to periodical limewashing, general cleansing and the removal of manure accumulations needed the serving of seven preliminary notices for limewashing, three for removal of manure accumulations and three for cleansing floors.

Six Milkshops have given up the business of selling milk.

An application for the registration of a dairy at No. 30, New Rents, was refused, the premises being unsuitable.

Common Lodging Houses.

One Common Lodging House has been discontinued as such, and there are now two registered Common Lodging Houses in the Town, which have frequently been visited and inspected so as to ensure that the requirements of the bye-laws are complied with.

A new glazed stoneware sink has been put in at one Common Kitchen to replace a defective one.

Rats Orders, 1918-1919.

On the 6th November the Council appointed me Executive Officer under the above Orders for this Urban District.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF DISTRICT.

SUMMARY.

Special Inspections and Investigations of Complaints	674
Miscellaneous Inspections and Re-visits	871
House-to-House Inspections	310
Visits and Inspections in connection with Infectious Disease...	318
House-to-House visits in connection with the Housing Return	
Form of Survey of Housing Needs	2,946
Houses inspected under the Housing and Town Planning Act	48
Re-visit inspections to Houses	151
Slaughter-house Inspections	160
Bakehouse Inspections	65
Factory, Workshop and Workplace Inspections	217
Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops Inspections	103
Meat and Food Inspections	182
Common Lodging House Inspections	16
House Drains to which smoke test applied	115
Samples water submitted to County Analyst	1
Rooms disinfected	185
Schools disinfected	3

The following is a Summary of work which has been carried out under Statutory, Preliminary and Verbal Notices:—

Statutory Notices served	6
Preliminary Notices served	329
House drains cleared and repaired	75
House drains re-laid or partly re-laid	7
Defective gullies removed and replaced with proper ones ...	41
Defective w.c. pans replaced with proper ones	15
Ventilating pipes repaired or renewed	3
Interceptor and F.A.I. provided	1
Defective Inspection Chamber Covers renewed	4
Flushing Cisterns to W.C.'s repaired or provided	33
Offensive Accumulations removed	22
Houses cleansed throughout	5
Sanitary Dustbins provided	9
Cases Overcrowding abated	20
Nuisances from keeping animals abated	13
Defective Guttering and Down Pipes repaired or disconnected	34
Houses provided with a sufficient supply of water	10
Leaky Taps repaired	6
Defective sinks replaced by glazed stoneware ones	10
Sink Waste Pipes renewed or repaired	13
Sink Waste Channels provided	16
Defective Paving to back yards renewed	3
Foul Ditches cleansed	13
Cesspools and Privies emptied	12
Bedrooms ventilated	2

Defective Roofs repaired and rendered watertight	26
New Inspection Chambers provided	1
Slaughter-houses Re-limewashed	4
Manure Pit constructed at slaughter-house	1
Cowsheds Re-limewashed	6
Common Lodging Houses re-limewashed and floors cleansed	2
Interior walls to W.C.'s Re-limewashed	10
Bakehouses Re-limewashed	7
Workshops Re-limewashed	4
W.C. provided at Workshop	1
W.C. Pans cleansed	7
Pail Closets provided	2
Caravans removed	2
Miscellaneous matters	26

Food.

Milk Supply.—The Cowsheds, Dairies and Milkshops have been inspected. There were 14 Cowsheds, 9 Milkshops, 5 Dairies and 3 Milk Stores in use.

Milk (Mothers and Children) Order, 1918.—The Council decided to provide milk, but at the end of the year the necessary arrangement had not been made for carrying out the Order.

A considerable quantity of unsound meat, particularly bacon, was dealt with.

A Public Abattoir has not yet been established in the District, but the Council has passed a resolution in favour of one.

PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

At the commencement of the year there were in the Isolation Hospital two cases of Diphtheria and two of Scarlet Fever.

An outbreak of Diphtheria occurred in the Ashford Cottage Hospital in February and five cases of the disease and three patients from whose throats positive cultivations were obtained were removed to the Isolation Hospital. The Cottage Hospital was thoroughly disinfected and cleansed and no more cases of Diphtheria occurred there. During March, twelve cases of Diphtheria and two of Scarlet Fever were admitted to the Isolation Hospital, but by the end of April only three patients were under treatment.

Only a few cases of Diphtheria and Scarlet Fever were under treatment during the summer months, but in September eleven cases of Diphtheria and four of Scarlet Fever were admitted. Of the cases of Diphtheria one was a boy from the Kent County Council Industrial School, Kingsnorth, and another was a child of one of the officials of that Institution.

During October, November and December the Scarlet Fever and Diphtheria Wards were kept fairly full. On October 21st and 22nd, four cases of Diphtheria were notified in New Street. They were children attending the three departments of the Church of England School. I was fortunately able to discover a "carrier" in the school, and after he had been isolated no more cases occurred.

The cases of Diphtheria notified in November were mostly connected with the Infant Department of the Council School.

The cases of Scarlet Fever in November and December were nearly all children attending the Infant Department of the West Street School, and on my suggestion this department was closed on December 8th by the School Medical Officer and disinfected and cleansed, after which no further cases occurred.

During the last quarter of the year a serious outbreak of Measles occurred in the District. I anticipated this and warned the Council that it was likely to take place. From November 15th up to the end of the year when notification of this Disease ceased the Health Visitor paid visits to families in which cases of Measles had been notified and gave advice to parents. The Council decided not to admit any cases of the Disease to the Isolation Hospital.

Owing to the prevalence of Diphtheria and Measles in the Infant Department of the Council School, this Department was closed on November 14th for a fortnight by the School Medical Officer on my suggestion. The Infant Department of the South Eastern and Chatham Railway School was also closed by him on account of Measles on my suggestion on December 15th.

On the last day of the year the following cases were under treatment in the Isolation Hospital, Diphtheria 10, Scarlet Fever 8.

In connection with the cases of Infectious Disease all the usual precautions were taken to prevent the spread, disinfection being carried out, etc. I paid frequent visits to the schools and also to patients' homes, taking swabs from the throats and noses of contacts when necessary. All but one of the cases of Scarlet Fever and all the Diphtheria cases notified with two exceptions were removed to the Isolation Hospital, and the advantage of having the new Wards in the Diphtheria Block which were erected by the Council in the year 1915 on my recommendation was very evident. These wards were not only appreciated by the patients, but by the doctors and nursing staff.

321 cases of Infectious Diseases were notified in the District during the years, viz. :—

Diphtheria	80
Scarlet Fever	38
Measles	164
Erysipelas	3
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	1
Encephalitis Lethargica	3
German Measles	2
Tuberculosis	18
Pneumonia	3
Malaria	6
Influenzal Pneumonia	3

The deaths which took place in the District from Infectious Disease during the year were :—

Measles	2	Tuberculosis	9
Diphtheria	5	Encephalitis Lethargica ...	2

The number of deaths from Influenza was :—Nine.

The following cases died in the Isolation Hospital :—

Diphtheria seven, of these five belonged to the District.

Diphtheria Antitoxin for use in necessitous cases was supplied to medical practitioners free of charge.

As far as I am aware there were no "return" cases of Scarlet Fever during the year.

Three cases of Encephalitis Lethargica were notified with two deaths.

There was fortunately no serious outbreak of Influenza during the year.

The County Laboratory at Maidstone was of the greatest assistance. A large number of cultivations were examined from "swabs" taken from cases of Diphtheria or from "contacts" or "carriers," in addition to many other bacteriological investigations.

On January 1st, 1919, the two following diseases were made notifiable for a year, viz. :—Acute Encephalitis Lethargica and Acute Polio Encephalitis.

On March 1st the following diseases became notifiable in the District by order of the Local Government Board, viz. :—Malaria, Dysentery, Trench Fever, Acute Primary Pneumonia and Acute Influenzal Pneumonia. At the same time certain powers were given to Local Authorities for dealing with Enteric Fever and Dysentery "Carriers."

At the end of the year Measles and German Measles ceased to be notifiable diseases.

I do not consider the notification of cases of Tuberculosis in the District is as satisfactory as it should be in spite of the fact that failure to notify a case renders a medical practitioner liable to very heavy penalties.

Number of cases of Tuberculosis notified, 18; number of deaths, 9. Number of cases in the District at the end of the year as far as could be ascertained, was 35, but it is very difficult to arrive at anything like a correct estimate.

The Tuberculosis Dispensary of the County Council at Barrow Hill Place continues to do good work.

Smallpox.

No primary vaccinations or re-vaccinations were performed by the Medical Officer of Health during the year under the Public Health (Smallpox Prevention) Regulations, 1917.

Incidence per 1,000 of the civil population of notified cases of Diphtheria.

Year	Urban Districts,		England and Wales.	Ashford.
	England.			
1913	1.41		1.39	3.11
1916	1.53		1.50	1.95
1917	1.31		1.28	3.21
1918	1.29		1.31	1.14

Number of cases of Diphtheria notified among the civil population in three Urban Districts in Kent somewhat similar in size to Ashford, compared with the number of cases notified among the civil population of the Ashford Urban District.

Year.	District A.	District B.	District C.	Ashford.
1913	10	21	34	43
1916	45	33	29	27
1917	16	16	59	44
1918	14	9	73	15
Totals	85	79	195	129

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE.

In the year 1914 the Council adopted the Notification of Births Act, 1907, and appointed Miss Rhoda Thomas, the District Nurse of the Royal Surgical Aid Society in Ashford, as part time Health Visitor. In 1916, during my absence on military service, Miss Thomas was appointed a half-time Health Visitor. She continued to devote half

her time to her duties as Health Visitor, until she terminated her services under the Council on April 21st, leaving the District to be married.

On April 3rd the Council resolved that the Nurse appointed to succeed Nurse Thomas as Nurse to the Royal Surgical Aid Society should be engaged as half-time Health Visitor, and accordingly Miss Ada Fricker was engaged on the following terms:—Salary, £50 per annum, with 4s. per week war bonus; £4 per annum for uniform and £2 10s. bicycle allowance and commenced duty on June 23rd.

On February 27th I recommended to the Sanitary Committee the establishment of a Maternity and Child Welfare Centre. On March 13th I explained to the Committee my proposed scheme for a centre to be opened at 14, Canterbury Road, where the School Clinic of the Kent Education Committee is held.

On April 24th a Maternity and Child Welfare Committee was formed in accordance with the Maternity and Child Welfare Act, 1918, and constituted as follows:—

Members of the Council:—Messrs. Poncia, Kither, Banks, Turner, Bumstead, Mrs. H. T. Watts and Miss Brake.

Co-opted members:—Mrs. Banks and Mrs. B. H. Headley. Mrs. Harrod was afterwards added.

On June 23rd the first meeting of the Committee, was held, rules for the management of the Centre were adopted and the list of the Health Visitor's duties was approved. It was decided that the five lady members of the Committee should form a sub-committee, one of them to be in attendance at the centre each afternoon it is opened.

The arrangements entered into with the Kent Education Committee for the use of three rooms at 14, Canterbury Road each Wednesday afternoon, were as follows:—The payment of £1 per quarter for rent and 2s. 6d. per week for the services of the caretaker.

The Centre was opened on July 2nd, the average number of children who have attended has been 4.3. In order to arouse interest I gave an address to ladies on July 24th, when forty-four were present in the Y.M.C.A. hut; and Miss Berry, the Inspectress of Midwives for the Kent County Council, gave a very helpful talk to some who were interested in the subject of Mothercraft on August 14th.

Since August 20th Glaxo and Cow and Gate Food have been on sale at the Centre, 91 lbs. being disposed of at cost price.

I intended when the Centre was started to obtain the help of voluntary workers as suggested by the Ministry of Health, but the Committee at the meeting on August 26th, expressed the opinion that

it would be much better if only the lady members of the Committee attended at the Centre, so with the exception of Miss Bentley, who has kindly acted as a clerk, no voluntary workers have taken part. I feel that this has been somewhat unfortunate and is one of the reasons why the Centre has not been as successful as it might have been.

The main object of the Centre is the giving advice to parents as to the feeding, clothing and rearing of their children. It is to supplement the work of the Health Visitor in the homes of the people, but it should be understood that this Centre is only one portion of a scheme devised for the purpose of rearing a healthy race.

Everyone whose influence can help in the development of the nation, such as Midwives, District Nurses, School Teachers, Medical Practitioners, Poor Law Guardians, District Visitors, should interest themselves in the work. The assistance of voluntary workers creates an atmosphere of human sympathy and friendship which is eminently desirable.

The giving advice to mothers at the Centre, is, as I said before, only part of a scheme; another very important part is the provision of Maternity Homes or beds in hospitals where confinements can take place and in this connection I may say that the Committee of the Ashford Cottage Hospital has been twice approached by the Maternity and Child Welfare Committee with a view to arrangements being made for the admission of complicated maternity cases, but unfortunately at the end of the year nothing had been settled, in fact the Hospital Committee stated that they had no power to admit such cases. Then with regard to Ante Natal Hygiene, this subject has been considered by the Committee, but no action has yet been taken.

The home visiting by the Health Visitor commences when the doctor or midwife ceases to be in attendance upon the mother usually about the tenth day and is continued until the child reaches the age of five and enters school, when he comes under the purview of the School Medical Inspector.

The following figures are of interest in this connection.

In the Urban District of Ashford during the year 1919, with an estimated population of 14,805, for the Birth Rate there were:—

Births.

Registered (1) Legitimate 205, (2) Illegitimate 15, (3) Total 220.

Notified (1) Live Births 146, (2) Still Births 5, (3) Total 151.

(1) Midwives 97.

(2) By Parents and Doctors 54.

Infant Deaths.

Number (1) Legitimate 13, (2) Illegitimate —, (3) Total 13.
 Rate per 1,000 births (1) Legitimate 59, (2) Illegitimate —, (3) Total 59.

Midwives.

Number practising in the District (1) Trained 2, (2) Untrained 1.

Health Visitor.

Visits paid by Health Visitor during the year:—

To infants under 1 year

To children from 1 to 5 years

Total 412

Visits paid during the Measles Epidemic, 126.

Total number of parents who attended at the Centre during the six months ending December 31st last was 43, and the number of visits they paid was 106.

No action has been taken by the Council with regard to dealing with Unmarried Mothers and illegitimate children.

One case of Ophthalmia Neonatorum was notified and treated at the Maidstone Ophthalmic Hospital with satisfactory result.

At the end of December the Ashford Works Branch of the Royal Surgical Aid Society finding that the services of a whole time Nurse were necessary for its members, gave notice to the Council to terminate the engagement of Nurse Fricker as half-time Health Visitor on January 23rd, 1920.

The Council has three alternatives:—To appoint another half-time Health Visitor, to appoint a whole time Health Visitor, or to delegate its powers under the Maternity and Child Welfare Act and the Notification of Births Act to the Kent County Council, which body has adopted a scheme to come into force on April 1st, in those districts which are supervised by the County Medical Officer, whereby one nurse shall act as School Nurse, Tuberculosis Nurse and Health Visitor, a combination of duties in one official, tending to promote efficiency and prevent overlapping.

With the present low Birth Rate every effort should be made to save infant lives and to rear healthy children.

SANITARY ADMINISTRATION.

(1) *Staff.*

This consists of myself and Mr. Arthur Hollis, A.R.S.I., the Inspector of Nuisances.

I am a part time Medical Officer of Health.

I returned to the District on the termination of my period of service in the R.A.M.C. on February 21st, and Mr. Hollis returned on finishing his period of service in the same Corps on March 1st.

Although a part-time official I have devoted almost all my time to the service of the Council and have not engaged in private practice.

With regard to the future arrangements for carrying on the duties of the Medical Officer of Health, I may perhaps state that in my report for the first quarter of the year 1919, I strongly urged the Council to take all necessary steps to bring about the formation of a joint appointment of Medical Officer of Health by the combination of the Ashford Urban District with the East and West Ashford Rural Districts for the purpose, the official appointed being also School Medical Inspector for the three districts.

This proposal was adopted by the Council, it also received the support of the National Health Insurance Committee for the County, and it was strongly recommended to the Councils concerned by the Kent County Council and the Ministry of Health; unfortunately, however, owing to opposition on the part of certain Local Authorities it did not materialise, and on December 4th the Ministry of Health wrote to the East Kent Joint Committee to the effect that the Ministry had decided to form the following combination, viz., the Rural Districts of East and West Ashford and Elham, the Urban Districts of Ashford and Cheriton, with the Borough of Hythe. It will be seen that whereas the former proposal would have caused the formation of a compact district with the Town of Ashford in the centre where the Medical Officer of Health could have resided and been in touch with the Clerks and Sanitary Inspectors of the three combined districts, it would also have enabled him to carry out the duties of School Medical Inspector in the three districts and act as Medical Officer of the Infant Welfare Centre, the new combination includes such a large area that the Medical Officer of Health will probably have to devote his whole time to the duties of that office and it would appear doubtful whether he will have time to even act as Medical Officer of the Infant Welfare Centre or to supervise the Isolation Hospital, which will mean the appointment of local doctors for these purposes, and another official will be required to act as School Medical Inspector instead of the School Inspection and all the other branches of Public Health Work in the area being in the hands of one man, which is the only way in which it can be efficiently carried out.

One cannot help feeling that a great opportunity has been lost of putting the Public Health Administration of this part of East Kent on a satisfactory basis, and it is a matter of great regret to those who have the Welfare of the Community at heart.

It is possible of course at some future date the combined district above mentioned may be divided and two Medical Officers of Health appointed.

(2) *Hospital Accommodation.*

The Isolation Hospital is pleasantly situated on rising ground about a mile to the north-west of the Town and consists mainly of three blocks. One of corrugated iron is used for Scarlet Fever and has two wards; each ward has a bath room and w.c. attached. There is also a duty room, one bedroom and one side ward, a kitchen, w.c. and pantry. Another consisting of four wards is built partly of corrugated iron and partly of brick. There are two sanitary blocks containing bath rooms, w.c.'s, bed pan sinks, etc., separated from the wards by air corridors.

In this block is a nurse's bedroom, one side ward, also a duty room, kitchen, scullery, pantry and w.c.

The third block which is of corrugated iron and called the Old Hospital, has two small wards, two bath rooms, two w.c's and a small ward kitchen. This block, which adjoins a brick cottage used as a nurses' home, is reserved for cases of Enteric Fever, or any other disease of rare occurrence which may have to be admitted. •

Fire hydrants with hoses, etc., are provided in each block and also chemical fire extinguishers.

The wards are connected by telephone with the nurses cottage which is connected with the Telephone Exchange in the Town.

Accommodation is provided in the Nurses Cottage for six nurses and servants.

There is a laundry, mortuary, coal and wood store, etc.

Gas and water are laid on from the town and there is a large underground rain water tank.

The hospital grounds are about six acres in extent and sufficient is under cultivation to provide vegetables and fruit for the patients and staff.

The sewage is disposed of by means of a system of septic tanks and "soak aways," which appear to act satisfactorily.

The recognised number of cubic feet per patient in Fever Hospitals is 2,000, and according to this the number of beds for which there is accommodation in the hospital is 22. Diphtheria 10, Scarlet Fever 7, Enteric 5, with two observation wards in addition. As a matter of fact there are 35 beds in the wards.

On one occasion there were 29 patients in the hospital during the past year.

I feel that the accommodation provided in the Isolation Hospital is adequate for the needs of the Town, but a Porter's Lodge is badly required and has been recommended on more than one occasion by the Local Government Board. A new mortuary should be also erected near the entrance as the present one is too small and badly situated.

The permanent staff consists of a Sister-in-Charge and three Nurses, a Porter, a Cook, a Wardmaid, who live in, and a non-resident Laundress. It will be seen that a staff of this size is not sufficient if many patients are in the hospital especially if two diseases are being treated as is usually the case. Extra nurses and domestic staff have then to be engaged at considerable expense, moreover, extra help is very often difficult to obtain and unsatisfactory. In my opinion a staff nurse and another wardmaid are required. Men from the Surveyor's Department are employed in cultivating the vegetable garden.

The Porter keeps the grounds tidy and attends to the flower beds, he also works the steam disinfecter, accompanies the ambulance and helps in the removal of patients, and he disinfects the houses of infectious cases in addition to ordinary porter's duties.

The local doctors attend the patients.

It is my duty to supervise the working of the Hospital, but I am not responsible for the treatment or discharge of cases. This is a very unsatisfactory arrangement and has been condemned by the Local Government Board. The administration of an Isolation Hospital is always a very difficult matter, but unless the Medical Superintendent has the entire management of the institution in his hands, including the treatment of patients, it is almost impossible for him to avoid trouble, such as "cross infection" occurring. There are other reasons why one medical man, preferably the Medical Officer of Health, should treat the patients and be paid for doing so.

- (1) The Council would then have someone whom they could hold responsible.
- (2) It is the custom everywhere.
- (3) It means that the patients would have free treatment which I consider they have a right to expect.

- (4) It would obviate the risk now involved of medical men carrying infection from the Isolation Hospital to the patients in the Cottage Hospital, or to private patients.

I may say that the local doctors have on two occasions in 1914 and 1919 notified to the Council that they are in favour of discontinuing their attendance on patients in the Isolation Hospital, mainly for the reasons given above.

During the year the number of patients admitted to the Hospital were:—Diphtheria: Cases ~~780~~ "Carriers" 3; Scarlet Fever, ~~39~~; Measles 1; total 121.

Total number of cases under treatment, 125.

Total number of deaths:—Diphtheria seven. Of these two were admitted from the Cottage Hospital suffering from Tuberculosis. Two had been ill a week before admission. Two died of Diphtheritic Paralysis.

The Velox Steam Disinfector purchased by the Council in 1914 is still in use. It is a high pressure disinfector, heat being produced by the combustion of oil. It works satisfactorily. During the war large quantities of blankets, etc., were disinfected for the Military Authorities.

Small Pox Hospital.

The Ashford Urban Council has a call upon six beds in the Small Pox Hospital of the West Ashford Rural District Council at Bethersden.

Cases of Infectious Disease notified in the Ashford U.D.

Year.	Diphtheria.	Scarlet Fever.	Enteric.	Totals.
1905	4	46	7	57
1906	2	53	6	61
1907	2	35	13	50
1908	5	56	2	63
1909	16	28	5	49
1910	4	27	—	31
1911	24	6	2	32
1912	16	7	46	69
1913	43	12	1	56
1914	106	79	4	189
1915	31	50	—	81
1916	27	32	3	62
1917	44	21	—	65
1918	15	24	4	43
1919	80	38	—	118
Average last ten years				74.6

Cases treated in the Isolation Hospital.

Year.	Diphtheria.	D. Car.	Scarlet Fever.	Enteric.	Measles and German Measles.	C.S.F.	Totals.
1905	1		44	1	—	—	46
1906	—		49	—	—	—	49
1907	—		35	9	—	—	44
1908	2		58	1	—	—	61
1909	7		25	3	—	—	35
1910	4		24	—	—	—	28
1911	20		6	—	—	—	26
1912	10		7	40	—	—	57
1913	41		11	1	—	—	53
1914	99		79	3	—	—	181
1915	31 (30)		47 (37)	—	—	3 (2)	81
1916	28 (27)		33 (31)	4 (3)	1	1	67
1917	43 (39)		22 (21)	—	—	—	65
1918	24 (14)		25 (24)	4 (4)	—	—	53
1919	80 (78)	3 (3)	37 (37)	—	1 (1)	—	121
Average last 10 years							73.2

In brackets cases belonging to the District.

Cases have been admitted in 1915, 16, 17, 18, 19, from West Ashford R.D., East Ashford R.D. and H.M. Services.

3.—Public Health Acts (Amendment) Act, 1907, Part II. (Section 30 and 33) and Parts III. and IV. Infectious Disease (Prevention) Act, 1890. Public Health Acts (Amendment) Act, 1890, are in force in the District.

4.—The Chemical and Bacteriological work during the year 1919 was carried out by the County Analyst and the County Bacteriologist.

Housing.

Probably the most important event which happened in this connection was the coming into force on July 31st, of the Housing. Town Planning, etc., Act, 1919, which imposed new duties on Local Authorities and also gave them new powers.

Each District Council was called upon to send in to the Ministry of Health by October 31st, a report on the Housing needs of its District. In order to obtain an accurate estimate of the number of houses required for the working class in Ashford the Inspector of Nuisances spent about a month with the help of an assistant in obtaining information with regard to over-crowding and other matters. I also tried to obtain all possible information as suggested by the Ministry of Health from employers of labour and any persons or societies who were likely to be able to give me details which together with other particulars in my possession would enable me to form a

fair estimate of the number of houses required in the District for the working class during the next three years if unhealthy areas and houses were dealt with and the growth of the population provided for.

As far as I was able to judge in order to satisfy these needs between five and six hundred houses would be required.

It is well known that in pre-war days there was a shortage of houses in Ashford and this shortage naturally during the war became more acute, the number of working class houses built between January 1st, 1915, and December 31st, 1918, being only nine in the District. It should be noted that before the war and since, men whose employment is in Ashford and who would if houses were available live there, have, owing to the scarcity of houses, had to live in the surrounding villages, so that the population which really ought to be credited to Ashford is larger than the figures given by the Census returns.

Then, again, owing to the shortage, houses which ought really to be closed are allowed to be occupied as the occupiers cannot be turned out into the streets.

The satisfactory housing of the population of a district is a most important matter, how sufficient houses are to be built, is, however, a difficult problem, but from the point of view of health and of morals it is a problem which must be tackled. The chief cause of the spread of Tuberculosis is being more than ever recognised as bad housing conditions, and it is doubtful whether it is worth while spending money on Sanatoria and other means of dealing with this disease, which unfortunately appears to be on the increase, unless overcrowding and insanitary houses are dealt with at the same time.

The Council had a scheme in hand at the end of the year for providing sixty-nine houses for the working class; the land had been purchased at Beaver but the plans had not received the sanction of the Ministry of Health.

After having been considered on several occasions by the Housing Committee, the Report on the Housing needs of the District above mentioned was forwarded to the Ministry of Health at the end of the year without being first brought before the Council for adoption. I am not clear as to the exact nature of the report when it was sent to the Ministry, but I may mention that I stated in that portion of it which I had to fill in that there were three areas in the Town which might have to be dealt with as unhealthy.

In my report to the Council for the third quarter of the year I mentioned the chief provision of the Housing Town Planning, etc., Act, 1919, and advised the Council to take steps to obtain possession of the Army huts in the District with the object of converting them into temporary dwellings for the working class and so relieve the shortage of houses and abate the nuisance caused by overcrowding.

It appeared to me after visiting the huts that about forty-five families might be housed in them.

As far as I knew at the end of the year no action had been taken in the matter.

I.—General Housing Conditions in the District.

(1)	Total number of houses	3,464
	Number for the working classes	2,664
	New houses for the working classes erected during the year or in course of erection	1

(2)	Population	{	For Birth Rate	14,805
			For Death Rate	14,212
	A steady increase should be anticipated.			

- (3) (a) Extent of shortage of houses. Probably about 300 houses required for working class and 25 for better class.

- (b) Measures taken to meet shortage. Plans for 69 houses for working class awaiting sanction.

II.—Overcrowding.

- (1) Extent. 56 houses.
- (2) Causes. Shortage of houses chief cause.
- (3) Measures taken to deal with overcrowding. Temporarily abated in most cases by using living rooms for sleeping purposes.

III.—Fitness of Houses:—

- (1), (a) General standard of housing in the District. Fair.
- (b) General character of the defects found to exist in unfit houses:
- Dampness, Defects due to age and to defective Construction, Deficient Ventilation, Absence of Sinks, Absence of Coppers, Want of Facilities for Storing Food, Hand Flushed Long Hopper W.C.'s.
- (2) Action taken as regards unfit houses. See the Report of the Inspector of Nuisances.

VII.—*Appendices.—Statistics for the 12 months ended 31st December, 1919.*

- | | |
|--|------|
| (1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which complaints were made that they are unfit for human habitation by householders | Nil. |
| (2) Action under Section 17 of the Housing Act of 1909. | |
| (a) Number of dwelling-houses inspected under and for the purpose of the Section | 48 |
| (b) Number of dwelling-houses which were considered to be unfit for human habitation ... | 20 |
| (c) Number of dwelling-houses the defects in which were remedied without the making of closing orders. 28 and 18 in hand at end of year. | |
| (3) Action under Section 28 of the Housing Act, 1919 ... | Nil. |
| (a) Number of orders for repairs issued | Nil. |
| (b) Number of cases in which repairs carried out by the Local Authority | Nil. |
| (c) Number of dwelling-houses voluntarily closed on notice by owner that they could not be made fit without re-construction | Nil. |

In concluding my report I think I may say that since I commenced duty as Medical Officer of Health in 1913 I have worked at a disadvantage; I have not been provided with an office or clerical assistance and although I have always tried to give what I considered very reasonable advice to the Council I regret that it has not been always received by the majority of the members with the sympathetic consideration I think I have had a right to expect.

With regard to the amount of Infectious Disease in the District, under present conditions every town must expect to have its share, although one hopes that eventually it will be almost entirely abolished from our midst, and therefore it is necessary for Ashford to be provided with an efficient Isolation Hospital as owing to the fact that the majority of the inhabitants live in small houses, adequate nursing and isolation for the patients cannot be provided at home.

As to whether Ashford has more than its share of Diphtheria is a matter of opinion, I think it has, and it appears to me the way to reduce the incidence of the disease is to deal with the insanitary conditions which prevail particularly the nuisances connected with the large number of hand flushed w.c.'s which are found in the District.

It should be remembered that prior to 1913, Ashford had not an Inspector of Nuisances, or at least not an officer who could devote his whole time to the duties of that office, and so Mr. Hollis and Mr. Glenday, who acted for him temporarily for four years while he was on military service, have had very uphill work in trying to improve the sanitary condition of the Town.

As regards the housing question, I may mention that I dealt with the matter very fully in my reports for the years 1913 and 1914, and it is to be regretted that more energetic steps were not taken by Councils in the past either to encourage the building of houses for the working class by private enterprise or to provide them with money borrowed for the purpose. However, I can only urge upon the Council now the importance of building houses and taking all possible steps to abate overcrowding. A town with so many natural advantages as Ashford ought to have a good future before it.

If you are not



GEERING,
PRINTER,
ASHFORD.