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Contributors

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REPORT OF MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR 1918.

GODALMING,

January, 1919.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

This, the last year of the Great War has been one fraught with difficulties and dangers of every conceivable kind.

The difficulties have been efficiently dealt with by your Council one by one, with the hearty co-operation of the entire community ; consequently the dangers have been minimised as much as possible and we trust that the worst is now over.

That the Vital Statistics should be affected is not surprising and we find the death-rate considerable higher than usual.

Births in 1918.—Total 147. Males, 77 ; Females, 70 ; Illegitimate, 14. Birth-rate, 14·89 per 1000. For comparison, in 1917 : Total 113. Males, 67 ; Females, 46 ; Illegitimate, 11. Birth-rate, 12·52 per 1000. For the purpose of estimating the birth-rate, the population of the Borough is placed at 9866.

Deaths in 1918.—Total 142. Males, 63 ; Females, 79. Death-rate, 16·04 per 1000. In 1917 : Total 113. Males, 59 ; Females, 54. Death-rate, 13·63 per 1000. For the purpose of estimating the death-rate, the population of the Borough is placed at 8851.

Infant Mortality.—In 1918 : 14 Babies under one year died, giving an Infant mortality-rate per 1000 births, of 95·23. In 1917 : 12 deaths gave an Infant Mortality-rate of 106 per 1000 births.


Causes of Death.

Influenza and Broncho-pneumonia...	...	...	...	3 cases
Broncho-pneumonia ...	...	...	...	2 "
Tubercular meningitis ...	...	...	...	3 "
Gastro enteritis ...	...	...	...	1 case
Eudocardilis ...	...	...	...	1 "
Immaturity ...	...	...	...	2 cases
Prolonged and difficult birth ...	...	...	...	1 case
Specific disease ...	...	...	...	1 "

Infectious Diseases in 1918.

Scarlet Fever ...	...	...	...	20 cases
Diphtheria ...	...	...	...	3 "
Pulmonary Tuberculosis ...	...	...	...	10 "
Other Tuberculoses ...	...	...	...	5 "
Erysipelas ...	...	...	...	1 case
Measles ...	...	...	...	24 cases
Rubella ...	...	...	...	15 "
Cerebro-spinal meningitis ...	...	...	...	1 case
Ophthalmic neonatorum ...	...	...	...	1 "
Puerperal Fever ...	...	...	...	1 "

The scarlet fever cases were scattered over the latter half of the year and were very mild in type.



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Influenza.—There have been three distinct epidemics of Influenza in the Town causing 30 deaths in the Borough during the year.

The first outbreak was in January and February ; this we thought at the time to be severe as there were several cases with broncho-pneumonia and five deaths, but the comparison was nothing in severity to the epidemic commencing in October.

The second attack commencing in June was of a mild type and was only responsible for two deaths in the Borough.

The final epidemic was of quite a different type to the other two and was probably the severest Godalming has ever experienced.

We had warning of what to expect from the disease arising in the camps in the vicinity, and strenuous efforts were made to ward off the plague.

The disease, however, had become practically universal, and Godalming had to pay its toll.

This illness commenced about the second week of October and it may even now be said to be smouldering.

Between Oct. 12th and Dec. 31st, 23 deaths occurred from Influenza in the Borough of Godalming.

A Broncho-pneumonia of a particularly septic type, and due to the presence of a streptococcus or pneumonococcus, was a frequent complication. Death sometimes occurred even before the lung became solid, and in these cases death was due to toxic poisoning. The cases of Influenza unaccompanied by complications were very severe in type and the prostration was considerable.

The infection spread rapidly, and as the whole household was usually soon down with the illness, nursing and attention were frequently inadequate. The scarcity of doctors was felt and everyone had to take a share of neglect.

The deaths occurred chiefly among young adults, usually strong and robust, the average age of those who succumbed being 37 years.

Only three of 23 patients who died could be said to have been organically unsound before they were attacked.

Had it been possible to centralize the pneumonia cases in some hospital, where adequate nursing could have been given, many lives might have been saved.

The Housing Question.

The number of houses inspected during the year has been 157, of these the owners of 144 were called upon to cleanse, limewash or carry out general repairs.

A scheme for the erection of 58 new cottages is now before your Council. As the need is great I trust that the scheme will be passed and put in hand as speedily as possible.

The slaughter houses, cow sheds, milk shops, lodging houses, workshops and bakehouses have been inspected and supervised during the year.

I have regretted the frequent necessity of condemning meat and fish during the year, but this was preferable to the consumption of bad food.

Godalming Water.

Dr. Thresh's report dated January 27th, 1919, on samples of water forwarded for analysis states that "the Godalming waters supplied to the consumers are pure and wholesome."

During the last four years it has been impossible to undertake any improvements for safeguarding the water supply at the Borough Road from flood-water except by the system of chlorination.

Chlorination may be said to have been very successful and the reports of the Analyst of the water supplied to the consumer have been consistently satisfactory.

As, however, the safety of a public water supply is of vital importance, it is advisable that we should not rely solely on supplying an "antidote to pollution," but that a determined effort should now be made to prevent any flood-water from contaminating our sources at the Borough Road.

For this purpose I have recently brought before your Committee certain suggestions, the first and most important of which is that Mr. Rea's meadow should be purchased by the Corporation as soon as possible.

There are several excellent reasons for acquiring this land—

- (1) To have complete control of the meadow ;
- (2) To undertake alterations for safeguarding the shallow sources ;
- (3) To provide space for filter beds ;
- (4) To connect up the Corporation properties ;
- (5) As a possible source for future water supply.

In the interest of safety I trust that your Council will carry out the recommendation.

I remain,

Your obedient Servant,

BERTRAM W. BOND,

M.B., B.S. DURHAM.,

M.R.C.S. ENG., L.R.C.P. LOND.,

L.S.A.,

Deputy Medical Officer of Health.

