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HEXHAM
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE

Year ending 31st December, 1908.

Hexham :

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Medical Officer's Annual Report

FOR 1908.

NETHERTON,

HEXHAM,

January 5th, 1909.

DEAR SIR,

I have pleasure in bringing to your notice, and that of the Urban District Council, my Annual Report on the Sanitary condition of Hexham for the year 1908, as measured by the death-rate. The climatic conditions of the past year were favourable to health—neither extreme heat in summer nor extreme cold in winter. The rainfall was below the average, without any continuous drought, such as might have endangered your water supply, to the detriment of the public health. The death-rate for the year is, upon the whole, satisfactory, but some of the details are unsatisfactory, and call for your special consideration.

During the year, 135 deaths were registered in your district, 21 of which were in the Workhouse, 6 of which were from outside your area, leaving 129, which give a death-rate of 15·176 on an estimated population of 8,500; 64 were males and 65 females.

211 births were registered, which give a birth-rate of 24·823 on the above-mentioned population; 101 were males and 110 females—8 were illegitimate.

The number of births and deaths are almost the same as in 1907, viz. :—1907, births 202, deaths 132; in 1908, births 211, deaths 135.

AGES AT DEATH.—38 were under 1 year, 9 were 1 and under 5, 3 were 5 and under 15, 10 were 15 and under 35, 29 were 35 and under 65, 31 were 65 and under 80, and 9 were over 80.

CAUSES OF DEATH.—19 were due to heart disease, 30 were due to disease of the respiratory organs, 10 of which were from phthisis or consumption, 12 to bronchitis, 8 to pneumonia or inflammation of the lungs, 16 to disease of the nervous system, 10 to premature birth, 7 to marasmus or wasting, 6 to tubercular disease of various forms other than consumption, 5 senile decay, 5 infective enteritis, 4 influenza, 3 diphtheria, 2 whooping cough, 2 alcoholism, 1 inquest case, 1 laryngitis, 1 returned as dentition or teething, which was not certified, and no inquest was held.

CASES NOTIFIED.—48 cases of infectious disease were notified as follows :—Diphtheria, 14 ; Measles, 6 ; Whooping Cough, 10 ; Erysipelas, 5 ; Membranous Croup, 1 ; Scarlet Fever, 8 ; Phthisis, 3 ; Typhoid Fever, 1, which was imported, and, fortunately, did not spread--against 93 cases in 1907.

HOSPITAL.—Four cases have been treated in the Hospital, 2 of Diphtheria, 1 a suspected case of Diphtheria, and 1 of Erysipelas.

I am asked by circular from the Local Government Board, dated December 2nd, 1908, for certain information regarding the Medical Inspection of School Children. With this we, as a Council, are not concerned, it being under the control of the County Council. The same circular refers to the Notification of Glanders, Anthrax, and Hydrophobia in man. Judging by the past, I do not think such notification would be of any practical use, therefore do not advise the Council to adopt it.

SURVEYOR'S REPORT.—From the Surveyor's report, I find that during the year 387 feet of 3-inch and 714 feet of 2-inch water mains have been laid, as well as a number of new connections made and old services renewed. According to the fortnightly gaugings taken at High Shield, the average daily yield of water from the Ladle Springs has been 297,230 gallons. 370 minor

Sanitary defects have been remedied. A case of Anthrax occurred at the farm at Oakerlands, and one carcase has been condemned as unfit for human food at the Slaughter-house.

Amongst extraordinary work carried out during last year, special mention may be made of the following:—The Inverts of the Culverts to Gilesgate and Cockshaw Runners have been Cemented; Market Street, Church Row, and the Sele Footpath made up with Tarred Macadam in place of the defective Paving. Gilesgate Runner has also been covered in for a distance of 260 feet. This has done away with an apparent nuisance, and has improved the locality. The taking over and the making up of the Dipton and Plover Hill Roads has given much satisfaction to the public. The widening and making up of Haugh Lane will greatly benefit that district. Lowgate has been put into good Sanitary condition. It was hoped to have made it a model sanitary village. Meeting, however, with unexpected, and what appeared to be organised, opposition, we had to fall back upon the powers conferred by the Public Health Act of 1875, and the owners have drained the houses into a proper cesspool. To have attached this small hamlet to the town sewers, at a distance of over $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles, would have been a sanitary blunder. 26 New Houses have been certified as fit for habitation, making a total of 380 since the census of 1901.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.—The Factories and Workshops have all been visited, and found in a satisfactory condition.

DAIRIES, ETC.—The Dairies, Byers or Cowsheds, and Milkshops were, on our inspection, found improved. The various parties concerned evinced a keener interest in their work, realised their responsibility, and expressed a desire to have their business carefully and efficiently conducted.

A death-rate of 15·176 is only favourable when compared with former years. That 38 deaths under one year of age should take place out of 135 deaths and 211 births is disquieting. This gives an infantile death-rate of 184·834 per 1,000 under one year of age, against 84·158 last year. The ages of these at death were as follows:—2 lived from half-an-hour to 11 hours, 12 from 1 day to 23 days, 2, 7 weeks, 22 from 1 month to 11 months.

PLACE OF BIRTH.—4 were in Holy Island, 5 in Gilesgate and Gilesgate Bank, 2 Hencotes, 5 Haugh Lane, 1 Broad Gates, 3 Prior Terrace, 1 Rye Terrace, 1 Bell's Court, Priestpopple, 3 Windsor Terrace, 1 Vine Terrace, 1 Cattle Market, 1 Coach and Horses' Yard, 1 Kingsgate Terrace, 1 Hall Gates, 2 Crescent Avenue, 2 Foundry Lane and Cottages, 1 Tyne Green, 1 Woodbine Terrace, 1 Leazes Cottage, 1 Ridley Terrace.

You will observe that 4 deaths took place in Holy Island, 5 in Gilesgate and Gilesgate Bank, 5 in Haugh Lane, 2 in Foundry Lane and Cottages, 2 on Tyne Green—that is 18, or nearly the half, within a narrow radius, having the same class of house, inhabited by the same class of people. To these might be added the 3 in Prior Terrace and the 1 in Kingsgate, which would give more than the half in a small area. 1 in Bell's Court, Priestpopple, 1 in Cattle Market, and 1 in the Coach and Horses' Yard coming within the influence of your Cattle Market, to which you may add the 1 each in Broad Gates and Vine Terrace, leaving 11 to be distributed over the remainder of the town. It is difficult to account for the great increase this year over last, but it is a fact which must be closely watched in the future.

It is also disappointing to find that the death-rate from Phthisis or Consumption is about the highest in the County. In 1906 we were the highest; last year we were a good second. Our death-rate from Phthisis in 1906, was 2·30 per 1,000. The mean average in the County for the 10 years, 1897 to 1906, was 1·31. At the present time the public mind is much exercised as to Consumption being caused by milk. No doubt it may be spread in this way, and very probably is, and it behoves the dairykeepers and all sellers of milk, as well as those who use the milk, to pay every attention to cleanliness with everything connected with the milk, from the udders and teats of the cattle, the hands of the milkers, the cleanliness of the byers, and the condition of the vessels for the carrying and keeping of the milk. I have failed to detect any case of Consumption caused by milk in Hexham, but I have seen cases caused by not having sufficient milk, and using imperfect substitutes for it.

I have in previous reports stated that Hexham did not appear to have benefitted in the reduction of Phthisis or Consumption from the deep drainage of the sewers to the same extent as sewered towns generally. This is not due to any defect in the sewers themselves, but is mainly attributable to the structural condition of portions of the older parts of the town, in which you have a number of houses without through ventilation, placed in narrow yards, in some instances with the soil abutting against the blank wall, causing dampness, having little light and less sunshine, and in these houses and other tenemented property permitting overcrowding. These must be grappled with with persistent firmness, if this stigma is to be removed. For several years I have had under observation the various vans, shows, and other erections allowed in the Market Place. During last year I have visited and enquired into all such erections. They cannot fail to be a nuisance to the residents, and their very imperfect or total want of suitable Sanitary arrangements must endanger the public health. The inhabitants of the Market Place have just cause of complaint, fully justifying their memorial to the Council some years ago.

CATTLE MARKET.—I must again draw your attention to the Cattle Market, and express my regret that you have not seen your way to suppress it. I fail to understand why such a serious nuisance to those living in Priestpottle Street should be continued, and such a danger to the general public should be sanctioned. No one can visit Priestpottle on sale days without being struck by the congested state of the street, the filthy condition, not only of the Market itself, but the public street, extending to the footpath on the opposite side of the street from the Market stand. What of the inhabitants, where the cattle stand within a few feet of their doors and windows; a class of house, unfortunately, not too well ventilated, where, not only on the Market Days but the day following, you smell the cattle and cattle dung in the kitchen where they are cooking their food, and in the bedrooms upstairs where you have the children, who are compelled to breath this polluted atmosphere several days and nights each week for a certain portion of the year? Would any of you submit to this state of things near

your own homes? Why subject your poorer brethren to it, whose guardians, as to their health in their homes, you are, or, at least, ought to be? The town derives no benefit from the Market; I understand it is a pecuniary loss. No hardship would follow its suppression, as you have two Public Marts within a few hundred yards, with weekly and bi-weekly sales during the year, these marts being provided with all proper Sanitary arrangements. I must respectfully ask you, in the interests of the public health, to reconsider your decision—a decision which has surprised and disappointed me.

On visiting the Surface Well at Lowgate from which the inhabitants get their water, I found it cleaner than I had ever seen it. I must, however, warn you that, as it is only partially enclosed, it may readily become contaminated and a source of danger.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

DANIEL JACKSON, M.D.

To JOHN A. BATY, Esq.,

Clerk, &c.,

Hexham Urban District Council.

Vital Statistics of Whole District during 1908 and Previous Years.

Year.	Population estimated for middle of each year.	Births		Total Deaths Registered in the District				Total deaths in Public Institu- tions in the District.	Deaths of Non residents registered in Public Insti'tns in the District.	Deaths of Residents registered in Public Insti'tns beyond the District.	Net Deaths at all ages belonging to the District.	
		Number.	Rate,	Under 1 year of Age		At all Ages					Number.	Rate.
				Number.	Rate per 1000 Births registered	Number.	Rate.					
I	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1898..	6000	190	31.666	36	184.210	145	24.666	23	11	..	134	22.333
1899..	7000	188	26.857	31	111.702	127	18.142	12	6	..	121	17.285
1900..	7000	177	25.285	29	163.728	154	22.000	24	12	..	142	20.285
1901..	7150	187	26.153	32	170.112	141	19.706	22	11	..	130	18.181
1902..	7500	198	26.400	16	80.808	114	15.200	16	8	..	107	14.133
1903..	7500	211	28.133	25	118.483	144	19.200	20	10	..	134	17.866
1904..	8000	215	26.875	31	144.186	157	19.625	18	9	..	148	18.500
1905..	8000	216	27.000	29	134.259	125	15.625	24	12	..	113	14.125
1906..	8250	212	25.696	22	105.773	139	16.848	25	13	..	126	15.260
1907..	8250	202	24.484	17	84.158	132	16.000	20	15	..	117	14.181
Averages for years 1898-1907	7465	199	26.854	26	136.741	137	18.701	20	10	..	127	17.214
1908.	8500	211	24.823	38	180.094	135	15.882	21	6	..	129	15.176

*Rates in Columns 4, 8, and 13 calculated per 1,000 of estimated population.

NOTE.--The deaths to be included in Column 7 of this Table are the whole of those registered during the year as having actually occurred within the district or division. The deaths to be included in Column 12 are the number in Column 7, corrected by the subtraction of the number in Column 10 and the addition of the number in Column 11.

By the term "Non-residents" is meant persons brought into the district on account of sickness or infirmity, and dying in public institutions there; and by the term "Residents" is meant persons who have been taken out of the district on account of sickness or infirmity, and have died in public institutions elsewhere.

Area of District in acres (exclusive of area covered by water)—5,149.

Total population at all ages.....7,071
 Number of inhabited houses1,298
 Average number of persons per house ..5
 At Census of 1901.

**Cases of Infectious Disease Notified during the
Year 1908.**

Notifiable Disease.	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 upwds
Smallpox	..	Ages not given.				
Cholera	..					
Diphtheria (including Membranous Croup)	15					
Erysipelas	5					
Scarlet Fever ..	8					
Typhus Fever	..					
Enteric Fever ..	1					
Relapsing Fever ..	..					
Continued Fever ..	..					
Puerperal Fever ..	..					
Plague	..					
Measles	6					
Whooping Cough ..	10					
Phthisis	3					
Totals	48					

Isolation Hospital situate in District.

Total available beds, 24.

Number of diseases that can be concurrently treated, 4.

Causes of, and Ages at, Death during Year 1908.

Causes of Death.	Deaths at the subjoined ages of Residents whether occurring in or beyond the District.							Total Deaths whether of Residents or non- Residents in Public Institutions in the District
	All Ages.	Under 1.	1 and under 5	5 and under 15	15 and under 25	25 and under 65	65 and upwards	
Smallpox	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Measles	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Scarlet Fever	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Whooping-cough	2	1	..	..	..	..	1	..
Diphtheria and Membranous Croup	3	..	1	1	..	..	1	..
Croup	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Fever { Typhus	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Enteric	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Other continued	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Epidemic Influenza	4	1	..	..	..	1	2	..
Cholera	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Plague	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Diarrhœa	5	3	..	..	..	1	1	..
Enteritis	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Puerperal Fever	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Erysipelas	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Phthisis (Pulmonary Tuberculosis)	10	..	..	..	1	8	1	..
Other Tubercular Diseases	6	..	2	2	1	1	..	3
Cancer, Malignant Disease	2	..	..	..	1	..	1	..
Bronchitis	12	5	1	..	..	1	5	..
Pneumonia	8	2	1	..	..	5	..	1
Pleurisy	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Other Diseases of Respiratory Organs	2	..	1	..	..	1	..	..
Alcoholism	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Cirrhosis of Liver }	3	..	..	..	..	1	2	1
Venereal Diseases	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Premature Birth	10	10	..	..	..	..	..	..
Diseases and Accidents of Parturition	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Heart Diseases	19	..	..	..	1	6	12	4
Accidents	2	1	..	..	..	..	1	..
Suicides	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Marasmus	7	7	..	..	..	..	..	..
All other causes	34	8	3	..	..	11	12	6
All causes	129	38	9	3	4	36	39	15

