

**[Report 1909] / Medical Officer of Health, Chailey (Union) R.D.C.**

**Contributors**

Chailey (England). Rural District Council.

**Publication/Creation**

1909

**Persistent URL**

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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

**MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH**

TO THE

**CHAILEY RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL,**

*FOR THE YEAR 1909.*

# REPORT.

Gentlemen,—During the year 1909 a good deal has been done to improve the sanitary condition of your district, and there has been no epidemic of any infectious disease.

PHYSICAL FEATURES AND GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE DISTRICT vary much in different localities, the most imposing being the line of the South Downs, from whence the water supply of a large part of the district is derived. The great variety of sub-soils in this part of Sussex (even in small areas of a few feet) is very perplexing, and the chance of finding water at any given spot is a matter of doubt, both as to quantity and quality. In some parts of the district a permanent supply of good water is obtained within 10 feet of the surface, and in other places no water is found under 900 to 1,000 feet deep.

THE GENERAL CONDITIONS OF THE POPULATION of the district are good.

THE CHIEF OCCUPATIONS OF THE INHABITANTS are agricultural (especially applied to the production of milk), fruit growing, poultry rearing and brickmaking. The large number of people engaged in tending and milking cows and dispatching milk renders any outbreak of infectious disease amongst them of more than usual importance; but I am glad to say we have never had any outbreak reported as due to milk sent from the district.

HOUSE ACCOMMODATION is generally good. There are many cottages which require repairing, and many where the surroundings should be kept cleaner. The average number of inmates per house in the district is 5.1. Fifteen new houses have been occupied during the year, of which the plans were submitted to you, and they were built under the supervision of your Building Surveyor. One house was condemned as unfit for habitation.

THE WATER SUPPLY.—Some parts of the district are supplied from public sources, but the greater supply is obtained from wells of various depths, and some from rain water tanks. During the year there has not been so much shortage as usual in consequence of the wet season, six inches being recorded in excess of the average rainfall for the last nine years. The quality of

the water varies much through the district. During the year I have had several wells tested for the *plumbo-solvent* action of the water, and in many (especially those situated in the Tunbridge Wells sandstone) lead has been found present, and in some reported to be in poisonous quantities. In my opinion the extra rainfall has altered the chemical composition of the water in some of the wells and rendered it more lead solvent than usual, because lead has been found where it was not present in former analysis. In several cases clinical symptoms have been noticed pointing to lead poisoning. Iron pipes with a lining of white enamel have been substituted for the lead pipes in several cases, and more are to be altered.

MILK SUPPLY.—The character and wholesomeness of the milk produced in the district has maintained its high standard, but the wet season has made work among cows more laborious and reduced the food value of grass. There is very little tuberculosis connected with udders in the district. However, any expeditious and cheap means to test for this disease would be of very great benefit to farmers. The cowsheds have been greatly improved, and the dairies well kept.

OTHER FOODS.—There have been no carcasses condemned during the year, and the premises where foods are prepared, stored and exposed for sale have been well managed. Some slaughterhouses should be kept in a more cleanly condition than they have been.

SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE.—Where sewers have been laid they have worked well generally, and the house drains connected with recently built sewers have been very satisfactory. The proposed new sewer at Barcombe will be a great benefit to the parish. Some system of drainage is urgently needed at Cooksbridge, but it is a very difficult area to deal with. The sewage from the systems at Newick, Firle, Glynde and Ditchling is treated by tank and broad irrigation action.

POLLUTION OF RIVERS.—The past wet season has caused more pollution of rivers and streams than is usual, especially in the flooded areas.

EXCREMENT DISPOSAL.—Except where houses are connected with some public drainage scheme or have a drainage installation of their own, the



general arrangements are either open or closed cesspools, or the so-called earth closets. As I have before stated, I consider there is a danger to public health in cases where there exist only small spaces for the disposal of sewage from cesspools or earth closets often in close proximity to a well.

**REMOVAL AND DISPOSAL OF HOUSE REFUSE.**—This gives little trouble in the district.

**SCHOOLS.**—There was little closing of schools during the year, and no serious epidemic among the children. The condition of most of the school rooms is satisfactory. The County Council undertake the inspection of school children, which is carried out under Dr. Foulerton's control.

**METHODS OF DEALING WITH INFECTIOUS DISEASES.**—Notification has been carried out well. The Isolation Hospital has again proved of great value, and it is satisfactory to note that only two cases of scarlet fever and one of diphtheria were treated at home of all cases notified, and these were well isolated. The rest were admitted to hospital. There is ample accommodation in the hospital; disinfection is generally carried out by your Inspector, Mr. Weller, after removal of patient. During the year six cases of scarlet fever and one of diphtheria were admitted to our Isolation Hospital from the Uckfield District Council.

**TUBERCULOSIS.**—There has been no system of compulsory or voluntary notification generally adopted in the district. There are no special hospitals or wards at the Workhouse Infirmary for the treatment of these cases. Systematic inspections have been made by Mr. Weller and myself, and nuisances have been abated.

Miss Heale has again given me the records of the rainfall at Glebe House, Newick:

	Inches.		Inches.
January .....	1 08	August.....	2 52
February .....	0 28	September.....	4 56
March .....	3 39	October .....	6 60
April.....	1 51	November .....	1 34
May .....	1 35	December .....	5 05
June .....	2 74		
July .....	2 55	Total.....	32 97

The average rainfall in Newick for the previous eight years being 26.56 inches.

It will be seen from the tabular statements (I.-V.) of sickness, births and mortality in the district for the year 1909 that Table I. shows the area to be 49,975 acres and the estimated population from the last census 12,219, the number of births being 227, as against 273 in 1908, giving a birth rate of 18.5. The nett deaths at all ages belonging to the district number 149, giving a death rate of 12.2 per 1,000 of the population. Table II. gives the births and deaths in the separate localities, showing that in the Lewes Sub-Rural District there were 52 births and 37 deaths in a population of 1,685. Chailey Sub-Rural shows a population of 10,534, births 175, and deaths 112.

Table III. gives the number of infectious cases notified during the year, which were 31, ten being diphtheria, of which nine were admitted into the Isolation Hospital; eight of erysipelas; 12 of scarlet fever, 10 of which were treated in hospital.

Table IV. shows the number of deaths in the district, with causes and ages. There were only two deaths from zymotic diseases, one from whooping cough and one from diphtheria. Five are notified from epidemic influenza, four of these being over 65 years of age. Thirteen were certified as dying from phthisis, 12 from cancer and 26 from heart disease, the total number of deaths at all ages and from all causes being 149.

Table V. gives the infantile mortality for the year, the total number under one year being 20; 13 of these died under one month of age, and three between one and two months.

There were 218 legitimate births and nine illegitimate, with 18 deaths among the legitimate infants and two illegitimate. Compared with other years I think the report a favourable one.

I am, Gentlemen, your obedient Servant,

FRANK GRAVELY,  
Medical Officer of Health.

