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**Contributors**

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*With Dr. Cook's Complaints*

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**Downham Rural District Council.**

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**ANNUAL REPORT**

OF

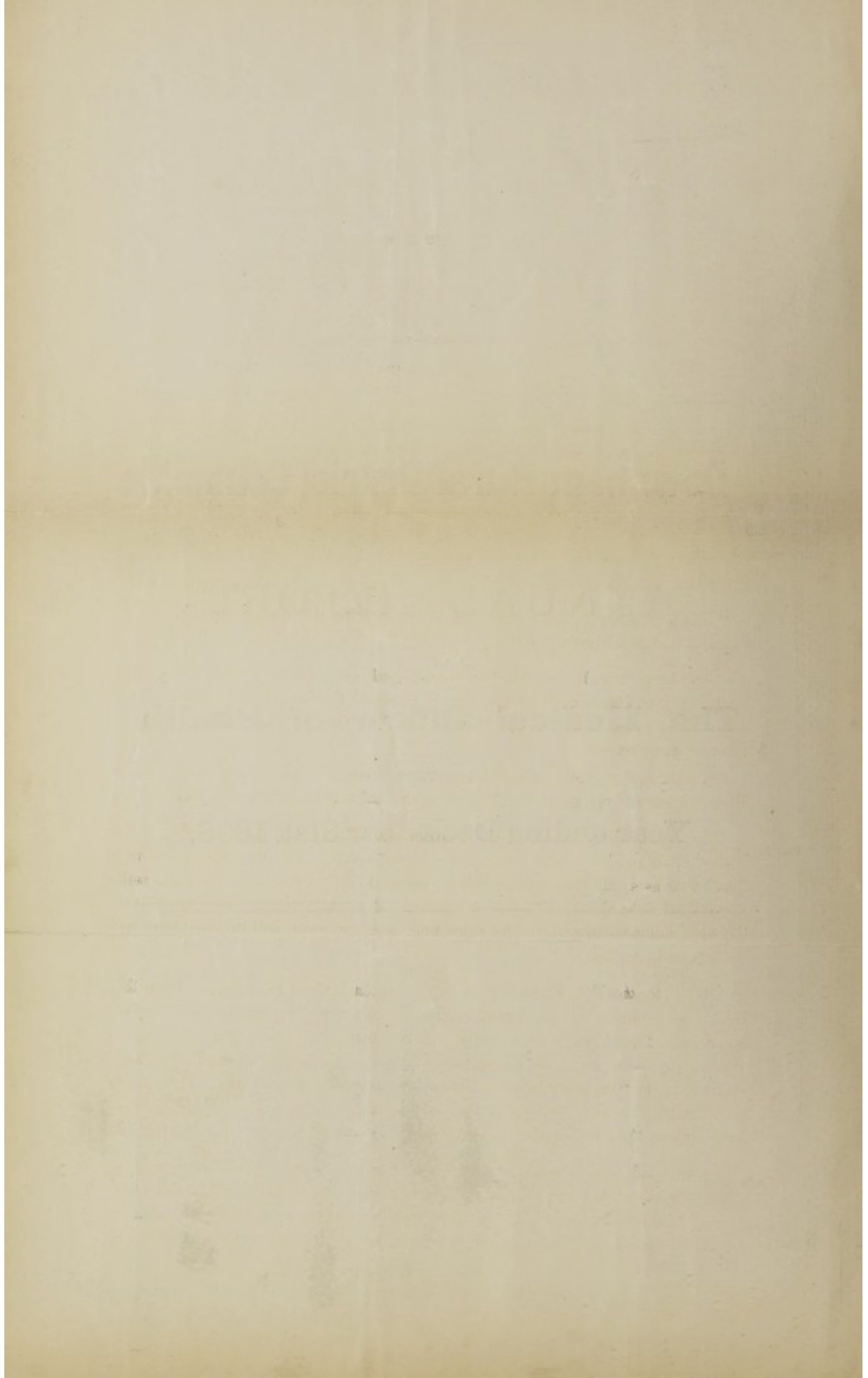
**The Medical Officer of Health**

FOR THE

Year ending December 31st, 1896.

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THE PRIORY,

DOWNHAM MARKET,

29th January, 1897.

**To the Chairman and Members of the Downham Rural  
District Council.**

GENTLEMEN,

I have much pleasure in presenting you with the annual report of the Sanitary conditions and work done during the past year in this District. Although having only held office for nine months, my report, with the consent of the Local Government Board, will take in that of the whole twelve months.

Area of District.

The Downham Rural District comprises an area of 82834 acres, divided into thirty-four parishes and three sub-districts and is situated in the South-West of Norfolk.

The population in 1891 was 15841, and consists for the larger part of those engaged in agricultural pursuits.

The District is divided into two almost equal parts by the river Ouse, and an imaginary line drawn on the map about one mile to the east of and parallel to this river will be found to divide the District into two parts differing widely from each other in many ways.

To the east a gentle rising slope with a subsoil of gravel and chalk; to the West the edge of the great Fen District with a subsoil of dark blue stiff clay.

Water Supply.

In the highland portion of the District the Water Supply is chiefly derived from shallow wells. I have frequently analyzed samples of these waters and have found that as a rule they are fairly pure, except in a few instances where the wells were found to be closely situated to sources of contamination. In some cases it has been sufficient to remove the cause and clean the wells, and in other cases new wells have been sunk.

It is to the Fen District that our attention should be turned. Here the Geological condition of the district forbids any thought of sinking wells, and the inhabitants depend solely upon water collected from the roofs of their houses. If this supply fails, which it unfortunately often does, they are compelled to have recourse to the river water which is utterly unfit for drinking purposes. Fortunately we are fairly free from Typhoid Fever but most of the cases which have occurred have been in the Fen District and were distinctly traceable to the Water Supply.

I am glad that a most excellent start has been made towards improving the Water Supply of the Fen District. In the parish of St. Mary Magdalen every owner of inhabited houses has been instructed to provide a suitable supply of water for the occupants, and the majority of them have complied by fixing Galvanized

Iron Tanks for the storage of rain water. There are perhaps better, although far more expensive, methods of storing water than that which has been adopted here; but I think that when we wish to study the combined interests of both Landlords and Tenants we could not find a more economical or serviceable mode of storing water than by the use of these tanks.

There still remains much to be done, and I would suggest that similar measures to those adopted at Magdalen be taken during the coming year to provide the inhabitants of Stow Bridge with proper means of storing water, so that by taking one part at a time we shall eventually have a more satisfactory Water Supply throughout the District.

Sanitary Work of  
the Year.

The Journal of the Sanitary Inspector for the year shews—

- 3 Houses have been repaired and made fit for habitation.
- 11 Privies repaired.
- 12 New Privies erected.
- 27 „ „ Pail Closets.
- 108 Houses provided with a suitable Water supply, and in addition to this
- 140 Other Nuisances of various kinds have been abated.

It will be seen that a large amount of work has been carried out, and the number of Houses provided with a supply of water is, I believe, a record far in excess of any one year in the history of the District.

I have, during my term of office, made frequent inspections of various places within the District in company with the Sanitary Inspector, and have as a rule found the inhabitants willing to carry out any suggestions that have been made by me.

During the Summer the Road Drain at Fincham which receives a certain amount of Sewage was thoroughly flushed with very beneficial results.

The Scavenger's Cart has been busy throughout the year at Hilgay, and I am glad to say that a great improvement has been made in the sanitary condition of the village. I trust that the arrangement for removal of refuse may be continued with the same satisfactory results.

Zymotic Diseases.

The total number of cases of infectious disease occurring in the district during 1896, was 102.—Deaths, 13.

Scarlatina.

Forty-nine cases of Scarlatina have been notified. This outbreak was confined mainly to two districts. At the beginning of the year it commenced in Downham West, most probably originating from the town itself; thence it made its way to Salter's Lode and that part of Stow Bardolph between Nordelph and Barroway Drove, increasing in severity during the summer months, and breaking out in single cases up to the end of the past year, altogether 29 cases were notified. In the other districts a few solitary cases have been reported. During the second week in November an outbreak of Scarlatina occurred at Southery. This was distinctly traced as having originated outside of this district—twelve cases were reported.

Two distinct outbreaks of Diphtheria have taken place. The first occurred at Hilgay and Southery at the beginning of the year necessitating the closing of the Schools at the first-named place. The next outbreak, which at first appeared to be of an alarming character, occurred at West Dereham, six cases (of which three proved fatal) were reported. Prompt measures were immediately taken, the school was closed and thoroughly fumigated and disinfected, and this disease was happily checked. This outbreak was traced to one family, a child from which attended the day school while recovering from the effects of an illness, the symptoms of which appear undoubtedly to have been of a Diphtheritic nature but which was not notified in any way. Altogether 28 cases of Diphtheria were notified in the whole district.

- Puerperal Fever. One case of Puerperal Fever was reported
- Membranous Croup. Four cases of Membranous Croup were reported.
- Erysipelas. Thirteen cases of Erysipelas were reported, all of these being sporadic.
- Enteric Fever. Seven cases of Enteric Fever have been reported; two of which occurring at Stradsett and Crimplesham acquired the infection outside this district.

The following Table will roughly show the distribution:—

| DISTRICT.                                             | Scarlet<br>Fever. | Diph-<br>theria. | Erysipelas | M. Croup. | Puerperal | Typhoid. |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Downham West with Salter's<br>Lode and Barroway Drove | 29                | 1                | 3          | —         | —         | —        |
| Denver, Etc....                                       | 3                 | —                | 3          | 1         | 1         | —        |
| Hilgay ...                                            | 3                 | 13               | 1          | 2         | —         | 1        |
| Southery ...                                          | 12                | 7                | 2          | —         | —         | 2        |
| Welney ...                                            | —                 | 1                | —          | —         | —         | 1        |
| Fincham ...                                           | 1                 | —                | —          | —         | —         | —        |
| Stradsett ...                                         | —                 | —                | —          | —         | —         | 1        |
| Crimplesham...                                        | —                 | —                | —          | —         | —         | 1        |
| West Dereham ...                                      | —                 | 6                | —          | —         | —         | —        |
| Wimbotsham ...                                        | —                 | —                | 2          | 1         | —         | —        |
| Wiggenhall St. Mary's ...                             | —                 | —                | —          | —         | —         | 1        |
| Tottenham ...                                         | 1                 | —                | 2          | —         | —         | —        |
|                                                       | 49                | 28               | 13         | 4         | 1         | 7        |

Measles.

During the latter part of the year this disease, accompanied with Whooping Cough, has been very prevalent. Appearing first in Wimbotsham it spread in a circular direction to Stow, Barroway Drove, Nordelph, Denver and Hilgay. I therefore felt it necessary to close the Schools at Wimbotsham and Stow Bardolph; and I am glad to say that this step was attended with most beneficial results, especially when we consider that only one death was directly attributed to this Disease.

Measles is in itself very dangerous. In 1895 it caused more deaths in England than any other Infectious Disease except one, and it may also leave the constitution permanently injured, and sow the seeds of many future diseases.

It is, therefore, clearly our duty to take measures to prevent or materially lessen the spread of this disease.

Compulsory notification of this disease not being in force in this district, and the fact that Medical advice is seldom called for by the parents at the commencement of an Epidemic, the first intimation is generally obtained through the school authorities. On being acquainted with a serious outbreak I forbid the attendance at school of children inhabiting invaded houses, and if possible of those in the vicinity of the same. This step of course entails a serious loss to the school authorities, and therefore on learning from them that the school attendance is seriously reduced, I order the closure, first of the Infant department and then, if necessary, of the whole school.

School closure, if resorted to, should not be adopted while there is reasonable prospect of effectively controlling measles by other means, nor on the other hand should it be postponed until prospect of benefit from this measure has well nigh disappeared. If the school authorities in this district, as they have hitherto most kindly done, will continue to give me notice of any falling off of their school attendance through infectious diseases, we shall by adopting the above measures, be enabled to successfully cope with any serious outbreak, either of measles or of any other infectious disease; and moreover, we shall not be obliged to resort to the more expensive measure of making the notification of measles compulsory.

Vital Statistics.

The total number of deaths occurring in the District during the year was 221, to this number must be added the deaths of nine persons belonging to the Rural Sanitary District, but dying in the Union Workhouse, which is situate in the Urban Sanitary District. The number of deaths to be taken into consideration in calculating the death-rate for the year is therefore 230, yielding a death-rate from all causes of 14·51 per 1000.

|                            |       |
|----------------------------|-------|
| In 1891 the death-rate was | 19·06 |
| „ 1893                     | 18·03 |
| „ 1895                     | 17·09 |
| „ 1896                     | 14·51 |

## Zymotic Death Rate

The deaths from the seven principal Zymotic diseases were as follows:—

|                          | No. of Deaths. | Death rate per 1000 living |
|--------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|
| Scarlatina ... ..        | 2 ... ..       | 0·12                       |
| Enteric or Typhoid Fever | 2 ... ..       | 0·12                       |
| Whooping Cough ... ..    | 1 ... ..       | 0·06                       |
| Measles ... ..           | 1 ... ..       | 0·06                       |
| Diphtheria ... ..        | 4 ... ..       | 0·25                       |
| Croup ... ..             | 1 ... ..       | 0·06                       |
| Puerperal ... ..         | 1 ... ..       | 0·06                       |
|                          | Totals 12      | 0·73                       |

Among the various other deaths—

|                  |           |      |
|------------------|-----------|------|
| Phthisis ... ..  | 16 ... .. | 1·01 |
| Cancer ... ..    | 12 ... .. | 0·7  |
| Pulmonary ... .. | 41 ... .. | 2·5  |

## Birth Rate.

The number of Births registered during the year was 408, yielding a birth rate of 25·7, and the number of deaths occurring in children below one year of age being 46, the infantile mortality per 1000 births was 112·7. This is considerably less than in the five preceding years.

In conclusion I have to thank you for the support which I have received since taking over the duties of my office, and for the readiness with which you have adopted any proposals or recommendations made by the Inspector or myself.

I have the honour to remain,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

**GEO. FREDK. CROSS,**

Medical Officer of Health.



The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been elected to the office of Justice of the Peace for the year 1900.

| Name          | Residence      |
|---------------|----------------|
| John A. Cross | St. Louis, Mo. |
| John B. Cross | St. Louis, Mo. |
| John C. Cross | St. Louis, Mo. |
| John D. Cross | St. Louis, Mo. |
| John E. Cross | St. Louis, Mo. |
| John F. Cross | St. Louis, Mo. |
| John G. Cross | St. Louis, Mo. |
| John H. Cross | St. Louis, Mo. |
| John I. Cross | St. Louis, Mo. |
| John J. Cross | St. Louis, Mo. |

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