

[Report 1897] / Medical Officer of Health, Leigh U.D.C.

Contributors

Leigh (Lancashire, England). Urban District Council.

Publication/Creation

1897

Persistent URL

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Leigh Urban District Council.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

For the Year ended December 31st, 1897.



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TOWN HALL, LEIGH,

March 7th, 1898.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE
LEIGH URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Gentlemen,—

I beg to submit to you my Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary Condition of your District for the year ending December 31st, 1897.

During the year 690 deaths (males 356, females 334) were registered in your District, giving a deathrate of 19·16 per 1,000 on an estimated population of 36,000.

Thirty-two deaths occurred in the Workhouse and one at the Sanatorium belonging to your District, giving a total corrected deathrate of 20·08 per 1,000, against 21·1 per 1,000 for the preceding year.

Eighteen deaths were uncertified and 33 inquests were held, certifying death as due to injuries 12, natural causes 9, misadventure 2, suicide 4, drowning 4, suffocation and burns each 1.

The deathrate from the 7 principal zymotic diseases being 2·6 per 1,000, against 3·3 per 1,000 for the preceding year.

The number of births registered was 1,282 (males 679, females 603), giving a birthrate of 35·61 per 1,000, against 36·9 per 1,000 for 1896, when 1,300 births were registered.

The excess of births over deaths for the year being 592. Of the 1,282 births 251 died during their first year, being at the rate of 195 deaths per 1,000 births—the rate for the preceding year being 178 per 1,000. The rate for the whole of England and Wales for 1897 being 156 per 1,000 births. The excessive infantile deathrate for this District is referred to under the heading of Diarrhœa.

The number of deaths in the respective Wards was as follows :—

WARD.	Number of Deaths.	Deathrate.	Population.
St. Mary's ...	156	21·51	7,250
St. Thomas's ...	98	19·21	5,100
St. Joseph's ...	96	20·87	4,600
St. Peter's ...	75	22·05	3,400
St. Paul's ...	84	18·87	4,700
Central ...	68	12·95	5,250
West ...	73	20·27	3,600
South ...	40	19·04	2,100
Total ...	690		36,000

The following table gives the mortality at various ages :—

WARD.	Under 1 year	1 and under 5	5 and under 15	15 and under 25	25 and under 65	Over 65	At all Ages.
St. Mary's	62	36	4	9	32	13	156
St. Thomas's	36	15	2	2	25	18	98
St. Joseph's	36	14	5	7	28	6	96
St. Peter's	28	17	4	1	18	7	75
St. Paul's	32	11	1	9	24	7	84
Central	21	8	3	0	22	14	68
West	27	13	1	5	19	8	73
South	9	9	2	2	10	8	40
Total	251	123	22	35	178	81	690

The District was entirely free from Small-Pox during the year.

SCARLET FEVER

Caused 2 deaths, one belonging to the Central Ward and one at the Sanatorium belonging to St. Mary's Ward. During the year 71 cases were notified and of these 38, or more than half the number, were treated at the Sanatorium. This compares very favourably with the preceding year, when 106 out of 398 cases notified, or less than a third, availed themselves of this means of isolation. As patients and relatives become less prejudiced against the Sanatorium, this institution will be the means to a very large extent of checking any outbreak of Scarlet Fever.

The Scarlet Fever cases were distributed as follows :—

St. Mary's Ward	...	8 cases	...	0 deaths.
St. Thomas's	„	10 „	...	0 „
St. Joseph's	„	8 „	...	0 „
St. Peter's	„	14 „	...	0 „
St. Paul's	„	13 „	...	0 „
Central	„	5 „	...	1 „
West	„	8 „	...	0 „
South	„	5 „	...	0 „

The rate per cent. of deaths to cases being 2·8.

DIPHTHERIA

Caused 1 death, belonging to St. Joseph's Ward. Four cases were notified and were distributed as follows :—

St. Joseph's Ward	...	1 case	...	1 death.
St. Peter's	„	1 „	...	0 „
Central	„	1 „	...	0 „
West	„	1 „	...	0 „

MEMBRANOUS CROUP

Caused 3 deaths, four cases being notified.

TYPHOID FEVER

Caused 3 deaths, 2 belonging to St. Joseph's Ward and 1 to St. Paul's Ward. Thirty-two cases were notified, against 65 for the preceding year, and were distributed as follows:—

St. Mary's Ward	...	6 cases	...	0 deaths.
St. Thomas's	„	3 „	...	0 „
St. Joseph's	„	5 „	...	2 „
St. Peter's	„	5 „	...	0 „
St. Paul's	„	8 „	...	1 „
Central	„	5 „	...	0 „
West	„	0 „	...	0 „
South	„	0 „	...	0 „
Total	...	32	...	3

The rate per cent. of deaths to cases being 9·37 against 18·4 for 1896.

The Sanatorium has not been available for the treatment of this disease during the year. Each case was visited, pails and disinfectants supplied, and where sanitary defects were found they were at once attended to. In no case was the water or milk supply suspected as the cause. My remarks under the heading of Diarrhoea *re* privy middens and surroundings, apply equally to Typhoid, and the same defects are an undoubted factor in the production of this disease.

PUERPERAL FEVER

Caused 3 deaths, 8 cases being notified. Two midwives were warned to cease attending cases for a month on this account.

ERYSIPELAS

Was the cause of 6 deaths, 70 cases being reported.

MEASLES

Was prevalent throughout the greater part of the year, and caused 37 deaths, 36 being under 5 years of age. The Pennington Church Schools were closed in March on this account. Handbills were distributed containing instructions and precautions to be taken, but I am afraid little or no notice is taken of the importance of isolating the infected patient in cottage houses.

WHOOPING COUGH

Caused 7 deaths, being less prevalent than during the preceding year, when 13 deaths were recorded from this disease.

DIARRHOEA

Was the cause of 65 deaths, 61 of these being of children under 5 years of age. The highest mortality occurred during the month of August when 38 deaths were registered. Of this number 33 were under 1 year, 4 under 2 years and 1 over 70 years of age. The infantile mortality from this cause is very excessive, and it is in the main due to the large number of children being artificially fed. The deathrate is further influenced by want of cleanliness—personal and domestic,—insanitary surroundings, such as privy middens where the contents are allowed to accumulate for months, and in many cases until overflowing, thus polluting the subsoil which, during the heat of summer, gives off poisonous gases and microbes which contaminate the food, especially milk, kept in the adjoining pantry or kitchen. Hence, the importance, from a health point of view, and especially of children, of the frequent removal of this filth, and of well-kept and well-paved yards and back passages.

PHTHISIS OR CONSUMPTION

Caused 41 deaths, against 37 for the preceding year and 48 for 1895.

Diseases of the Respirator Organs as

BRONCHITIS AND PNEUMONIA

Caused 174 deaths against 170 for the preceding year and 199 for 1895.

INFLUENZA

Was more or less prevalent throughout the year, causing 5 deaths—the same number as last year.

HEART DISEASE

Caused 32 deaths.

Twenty-four deaths were due to Injuries, and 290 deaths were referred to Un-classified Diseases.

During the year the Factories and Workshops have been inspected, and the number of Sanitary Conveniences increased, in some cases to double the previous accommodation ; and, in one case, Water Closets have been put down in place of privies.

The Slaughter-houses have been specially reported upon, and your Council have under consideration the erection of Public Abattoirs.

The Bake-houses, with the exception of neglect to limewash in a few cases, were found satisfactory.

During the year 22 houses were condemned as unfit for habitation, 7 were closed and 9 demolished.

The Paving of Back Streets and Passages has been largely dealt with during the year.

The Water Supply has been satisfactory. A sample of the Town's Water was analysed by Dr. Campbell Brown and reported good. Two wells were closed, the water in each case, on analysis, being found unfit for human consumption.

During the year the nuisance at Common Lane has been abated.

Complaints were made of a nuisance arising from Stock Platt ditch. This was found to be due to the accumulation of sewage owing to a defective sewer. This was remedied, the ditch cleaned out, and the nuisance abated.

There have been frequent complaints with respect to the removal of nightsoil, and of the nuisance arising therefrom which cannot be otherwise than offensive and injurious to health under the present system, which is very unsatisfactory. I would suggest that a more modern system be adopted, and that your Council in future decline to pass any plan shewing the old fashioned privy midden.

Mr. Jackson, your Sanitary Inspector, has supplied me with the following list of nuisances and sanitary defects dealt with during the year.

SUMMARY OF NUISANCES FOR YEAR ENDING
DECEMBER 31, 1898.

Nuisances reported to Committee	266
„ abated	244
„ still under notice	22
Houses disinfected after infectious disease	96
Canal Boats inspected	101
Number dealt with for infringing Acts and Regulations	10
Smoke observations taken	45
Notices served	38
Notices served on contractors for removal of nightsoil...	1950
Notices served on owners and occupiers	234
Letters written to owners and occupiers	131
The following insanitary conditions have been dealt with during the year :—	
Defective house drains	172
Foul ashpits made dry	26
Privies and ashpits removed	26
„ „ repaired	26
New privies and ashpits erected	42
Houses repaired	55
Defective sink pipes and gullies	75
Filthy houses	37
Defective roofs	38
Damp houses	28
Insanitary yards	47
Defective spouting...	70
Defective water closets	25
Wells closed	2

I enclose Tables A and B required by the Local Government Board and County Council.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

JAMES KING,

Medical Officer of Health.

