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Borough of Marlborough.

ANNUAL REPORT of MEDICAL OFFICER of HEALTH FOR 1904.

GENTLEMEN, — I beg to present my annual report for 1904, together with the tables of statistics of birth rates, death rates, the incidence of zymotic disease, and a summary of work done under the Factory and Workshops Act. Copies of all these are sent to the County Council, Local Government Board, and of the latter to the Secretary of State also.

POPULATION. — The population is estimated at 4123; the birth rate is 14.79; the death rate is 14.55; infantile mortality, i.e., deaths of children under one year per 1000 births, 114.75; zymotic death rate, 0.72; phthisis death rate, 0.72; cancer death rate, 1.44. The birth-rate is the lowest for the last ten years, the actual numbers being 34 males and 27 females. The death-rate is higher than the average of the last ten years. The cancer death-rate is again high.

AREA OF BOROUGH. — The area of the borough is 601 acres, and there are 6.8 persons per acre. There are 850 inhabited houses and the average number of persons per house is 4.8.

HOUSE ACCOMMODATION. — This continues much the same as last year, and still leaves much to be desired. No more cottage accommodation has been provided. Four cases of overcrowding have had to be abated. No advantage has been taken of the possibility of taking Corporation property in Blowhorn Street for building purposes.

DRAINAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL. — During the year the outfall works have been completed and are now working on that portion of the sewage of the town which comes from the districts which have been connected. I am very glad to see that great care is being exercised in making these house connections, the house drains all being well disconnected from the sewers and properly ventilated. The complicated arrangement of houses in an old town like Marlborough makes the work very difficult. At the same time it is giving opportunities for dealing with many of the insanitary conditions, about which I have been complaining for many years. Such as the following: — A cesspit privy in connection with a bakehouse premises, now filled in and a sanitary w.c. substituted; another case a w.c. at No. 6, Kingsbury Street, built right into the kitchen and living room.

SEWERS. — New sewers have been provided for the greater portion of the borough, with the following exceptions, where old sewers have been picked up, and where no sewer have been provided at all, viz., old sewers from Union Place and Bridewell Street to the corner of High Street; Kingsbury Street from Highfield to corner of Silverless Street; New Road from below Town Hall to manhole opposite Grammar School; Piggins Lane and Hammonds Yard. Old sewers not yet connected are from the top of Herd Street, Elmswood, to first manhole on new sewer, and Riding School Yard.

SEWERS NEEDED. — No sewers have been provided for Cardigan Road and the Union Workhouse and Hospital. In a special report during 1903 I drew attention to the very insanitary condition of the workhouse sewage disposal and the necessity of providing a new sewer for this district.

FLUSHING TANKS. — Automatic flushing tanks are provided at the following points: — Upcot, Pewsey Road, Sun Lane above Victoria Cottages, High Street, opposite Park, Angel Yard sewer, Kingsbury Street sewer, near Highfield, top of Herd Street sewer, top of Blowhorn sewer, Coldharbour Lane, London Road, Roebuck. Flushing manholes in George Lane and Salisbury Road.

OUTFALL SEWER. — The outfall sewer from Five Ales is of iron pipes.

HOUSE CONNECTIONS. — The number of houses in the borough is 850. Houses have been connected to the sewers by 82 entirely new drains. Eighty houses have been picked up on the old sewers. Besides these the College drain is picked up and also the College Laundry. The new sewer from Presbute House is also picked up. On the old sewers rain water has not yet been separated from the sewers.

On the new sewers as much rain water as is practicable is being separated. The sewage has the ordinary characteristics of domestic sewage. Up to the present the maximum dry weather flow is 26,250 gallons and the minimum 11,250 gallons.

THE DRAINAGE WORKS. — The sewage passes through a screen before entering the collecting tank. The maximum screenings have been three barrow loads per day, the minimum half a barrow load. This in the future is to be buried in shallow dug trenches; I would suggest an arrangement so that it could be deposited direct from the screen into a wheeled receptacle, so as to prevent continual pollution of the ground, which will become an intolerable nuisance in summer weather. The capacity of the septic tanks is as follows: — The permanent low water level of each is 45,000 gallons—90,000 gallons for the two. Between the low level and the high level of the two tanks there is a further storage capacity of 45,000 gallons. There are eight filter beds in groups of four. The area of each bed is 878 sq. ft., making a total area of 7,024 sq. ft. Each filter bed takes half an hour to fill; rests for one and three-quarter hours, and takes quarter of an hour to empty. The filtrate from the beds, which is irrigated over the land, is very good and clean. The average number of filter beds treated at present per day has been 3½. The maximum number, after a thunderstorm, is 8. All the beds are now working well. There is a storm water overflow which comes into action when the sewage is diluted to six times the estimated average dry weather flow. This has not at present been used. There are also storm water drains, with weirs to be fixed so as to come into action when the sewage has reached the same dilution at the Town Mill and Pewsey Road. I am indebted for the above figures to Mr. J. W. Brooke, the Borough Surveyor.

SCAVENGING. — The house refuse is removed once a week. The refuse is deposited in all sorts of uncovered receptacles by the side of the street pavement. I have, year by year, suggested that the refuse should only be put into proper covered dust bins before being carried into the street, and I am still of the opinion that the present method constitutes a danger to the public health. The refuse ought to be collected more frequently in the summer time and the collection ought to be finished at an earlier hour in the morning.

WATER SUPPLY. — Continues satisfactory in quality and quantity.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS. — The number inspected is the same, viz., 47. In one steam power has been discontinued. In all the air space is sufficient for the numbers employed and no serious sanitary defects have been found. In one a sanitary improvement has been carried out, and in others when the new sewers come into use it will be necessary to make sanitary improvements.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE. — There have been fewer cases of infectious disease in the borough than in any year for the last twelve years. The one case of scarlet fever was removed to the Isolation Hospital, which was in use at the time for cases of scarlet fever from the rural district. All the arrangements for the management and nursing of the patients were excellent and no extra nursing had to be obtained. The hospital is in excellent order, both as to the wards, disinfecting apparatus, and out-houses. As I have before pointed out, the disinfectant is not suitably constructed for an infectious diseases hospital, as the infected articles have to go in at the same door as that through which the articles, when disinfected, come out. Some better means of obtaining hot water is badly needed, instead of by the two geysers, which are quite useless.

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT. — One seizure of unsound meat was made and the meat destroyed. No legal action was taken.

I remain, gentlemen, yours faithfully,

THOMAS H. HAYDON, M.O.H.,
B.A., M.B., B.C., M.R.C.S.

