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

Contributors

Mirfield (England). Urban District Council.

Publication/Creation

1897

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Mirfield Urban District Council.

Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the Year 1897.

To the Mirfield Urban District Council.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1897.

GENTLEMEN,

It is my privilege once again to present you with an Annual Report of the number of Births registered in your District; also an account of the Deaths; together with the amount of preventable Sickness; and to try to point out what useful Sanitary work has been done, and where in the near future your efforts should be directed. Sanitary work must be always progressing, and I hope you will all agree with me that the numbers for 1897 are most satisfactory; they appear to me to point out conclusively that the work performed by the Council and its Officials is beginning to tell; but a great deal more requires to be done before you can stay your hand from spending money.

Population. I am estimating the population to the middle of June, 1897, at 12,110. A slight reduction has been made, as the navvies engaged on the new Railway have all left.

Births. During the year 317 births (165 males, 152 females,) have been registered. This is the largest number since 1887, the number then being 337, and 74 above the average of the last 10 years. In the tabulated list below you will see the number for the last 10 years. The birthrate for the year is at the rate of 26.17 per 1,000; for England and Wales it is 29.7.

In 1888	308	In 1893	308
" 1889	270	" 1894	256
" 1890	270	" 1895	262
" 1891	261	" 1896	239
" 1892	263	" 1897	317

Deaths. During the year 166 deaths have been registered, (87 males, 79 females) 63 less than the preceding year, and 44 below the average of the last 10 years. The deathrate for the year is at the rate of 13.74 per 1,000. For England and Wales it is 17.4. You will see by the tabulated list below that in this year the great decrease in the mortality has been between the ages of 5 years and 25, though as you will see in all the periods of life the figures are more favourable.

Tabulated list of deaths since 1888 according to age as requested by the Local Government Board—

	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1897	T'tls
Under 1 year	48	49	42	42	66	43	41	38	44	39	452
1 year and under 5 years	26	44	32	39	15	20	24	26	39	23	288
5 years " 15 "	15	18	8	15	7	13	10	11	17	5	119
15 " " 25 "	11	9	17	13	15	15	21	8	18	5	132
25 " " 60 "	60	48	51	78	49	64	61	72	61	52	596
60 " and upwards.	36	59	67	72	64	47	38	45	50	42	520
Totals ...	196	227	217	259	216	202	195	200	229	166	2107

Infants. The deaths of 39 infants during the year is 6 below the average of the last 10 years. The infant deathrate is at the rate of 3.22 per 1,000 deaths; and 81.26 per 1,000 births registered as against 184.10 in 1896.

Phthisis.

This disease, which is considered more or less a preventable one, has caused 11 deaths, 7 below the average of the last 8 years. From the numbers given below it looks as if this disease is steadily, and we hope surely decreasing. I may here mention that I consider that the dwellings of Mirfield, being spread over such a wide area, help to diminish the risk of this disease, and I hope the Council will always continue to urge upon persons building cottages, the necessity of having plenty of space around them, as the Microbes of Phthisis will not flourish in pure air.

In 1890	...	25 deaths.	In 1893	...	20 deaths.	In 1896	...	14 deaths.
" 1891	...	15 "	" 1894	...	27 "	" 1897	...	11 "
" 1892	...	16 "	" 1895	...	19 "			

Pneumonia, Pleurisy, Bronchitis.

The diseases of the Respiratory System have caused 34 deaths, 15 of these being children under 5 years of age. Although the number is the same as in 1896, the per centage of deaths is greater than in that year, as you will see by the following table.

In 1890	...	...	46	out of	217	deaths.	In 1894	..	...	43 out of 195 deaths.
" 1891	*(Influenza year)*		79	"	259	"	" 1895	...	...	44 " 200 "
" 1892	...	...	56	"	216	"	" 1896	...	...	34 " 229 "
" 1893	...	...	52	"	202	"	" 1897	...	...	34 " 166 "

Deaths not certified.

There has been one death uncertified.—An infant 3 months old.

Inquests.

There were 15 Inquests held during the year as against 17 in 1896, & 20 in 1895. I am pleased to note there has been a greater number of Post Mortem Examinations as compared with former years, for without these examinations the real cause of these sudden deaths cannot be accurately ascertained. *e.g.*—1.—A Man aged 43 years found dead in bed, the verdict was "Dyspepsia aggravated by neglect of himself". 2.—An Infant 12 weeks old "Debility from premature birth, &c." 3.—An Infant 7 months old "Convulsions about 20 minutes, &c." 4.—A Woman aged 57 years, knocked down by a vehicle on the Highway, "Rupture of Spleen," post mortem revealed the correctness of the Diagnosis. 5.—A Boy aged 14 years fractured his skull by falling off the scaffold at Calder Bridge constructed for the new Railway. 6.—A Man aged 55 years injured on the head by a trap door falling on him, he lived 10 weeks. 7.—A Man aged 53 years found dead in the field, cause of death attributed to Bronchitis and Heart Disease. 8.—A child aged 3 yrs. 6 months burnt by her dress catching fire, lived 31 hours. 9.—A Woman aged 49 years, Chronic Rheumatism aggravated by neglect. 10.—A Woman aged 34 years, Cerebral Hœmorrhage came on while helping to move a piece at a Woollen Mill, lived 13 days, a post mortem was held. 11.—A Man aged 56 years was found hanging, his feet touching the floor, verdict Temporary Insanity. 12.—A Man aged 49 years, died from Pneumonia as a result of accidentally falling into the River Calder. 13.—A Man aged 55 years, died suddenly in bed, verdict probably Heart Disease. 14.—A Man aged 52 years, died suddenly on his way home. P.M. disclosed Disease of Heart & Bloodvessels, Liver & Kidneys. 15.—A Woman aged 38 years, Heart Disease.

Zymotic.

The deaths due to the Zymotic class are 22, comparing favourably with 1896, and 4 below the average of the last 10 years. You will see there has been a diminution in the deaths from Scarlet Fever, Measles, & Diphtheria, but an increase in those from Diarrhœa.

	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	Total
Smallpox ...	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Scarlet Fever ...	11	7	0	2	1	3	0	1	13	2	40
Measles ...	0	22	0	11	0	0	0	10	15	0	58
Typhoid Fever ...	2	3	2	4	0	2	0	0	2	1	16
Continued Fever ...	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	1	0	7
Diarrhœa ...	1	2	0	2	3	7	4	4	2	8	33
Diphtheria ...	1	3	5	6	0	0	3	2	4	2	26
Membranous Croup ...	0	1	6	2	1	0	1	1	1	0	13
Erysipelas ...	0	2	1	3	3	0	1	0	0	0	10
Pyœmia ...	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Puerperal Fever ...	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	2	5
Whooping Cough ...	4	12	5	3	5	4	6	0	8	7	54
Total	19	53	19	37	17	17	16	18	47	22	265

Infectious Diseases Notification Act.

During the year 95 cases have been notified, as against 339 in 1896—of these 95 cases, 19 were children under 5 years of age. The following list will show you the number of cases and deaths in each year since the adoption of the Act in 1890:—

	1890		1891		1892		1893		1894		1895		1896		1897	
	Cases	*Deaths*	*Cases*	*Deaths*	*Cases*	*Deaths*	*Cases*	*Deaths*	*Cases*	*Deaths*	*Cases*	*Deaths*	*Cases*	*Deaths*	*Cases*	*Deaths*
Smallpox	0	0	0	0	11	1	9	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scarlet Fever	10	0	41	2	23	1	39	3	13	0	32	1	339	13	66	2
Diphtheria	8	4	16	6	5	0	0	0	6	3	8	2	26	4	10	2
Membranous Croup ...	6	5	3	2	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	4	1	2	0
Typhoid Fever ...	13	4	4	4	2	0	3	2	3	0	17	0	14	2	5	1
Continued Fever ...	0	0	3	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Puerperal Fever ...	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	3	2
Erysipelas	4	1	11	3	16	3	4	0	10	0	9	0	10	0	9	0
Cholera	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total ...	41	14	79	20	60	7	55	6	34	5	68	4	394	22	95	7

I will once more call your attention to the diminishing number of deaths in proportion to the cases notified—

In 1890—	14	deaths in	41	cases, or	1	death in	2.95
" 1891—	20	"	79	"	1	"	3.95
" 1892—	7	"	60	"	1	"	8.57
" 1893—	6	"	55	"	1	"	9.16
" 1894—	5	"	34	"	1	"	6.98
" 1895—	4	"	68	"	1	"	17.0
" 1896—	22	"	394	"	1	"	17.90
" 1897—	7	"	95	"	1	"	13.4

Smallpox. There have been no cases during the year. As mentioned in my last Report, the systematic neglect of vaccination will some day, not far distant, be a cause of great anxiety and expense to the Council.

Scarlet Fever. This Fever seems to be endemic amongst us. As you will see from the above table it has been more or less prevalent for the last eight years. I do not think enough care is exercised by the parents; the men ought to have their clothes disinfected *after* the removal of the patient to the Fever Hospital, and *before* they go to their work; this applies equally to all the members of the family in which the illness occurs; if this were done it would in all probability prevent a second case in the same house. Of the 66 cases there has been one from Eastthorpe; 19 from Lower Hopton; 10 from Upper Hopton; 12 from Battyeford; 5 from Knowle; 11 from Northorpe; 2 from Lee Green; 2 from Towngate; 3 from Church Lane: of these 13 were notified in January, 6 in March, 7 in April, 1 in May, 1 in July, 2 in August, 9 in September, 9 in October, 11 in November, and 7 in December. You will see that nearly half the cases have occurred in Hopton, but to that I shall allude again.

Diphtheria & Membranous Croup 12 cases and 2 deaths, as against 30 cases and 5 deaths in 1896. These occurred in the following places and months:—2 in June—1 in Lower Hopton, and 1 in Eastthorpe; 1 in July at Lower Hopton; 2 in August at Upper Hopton; 2 in September at Upper Hopton; 3 in October—1 at Lower Hopton, 2 in Dark Lane; 2 in December at Upper Hopton. Hopton again claiming 9 out of the 12 cases, and Upper Hopton 6 out of the 9.

Typhoid & Continued Fevers. 5 cases and 1 death during the year, as compared with 14 cases and 2 deaths in 1896. These 5 cases appeared in the following parts of the District, viz:—1 at Northorpe in January; 1 at Eastthorpe (Lowlands) in February: 1 at Wellhouse Lane in October; and 2 in November, 1 being at Battyeford, the other at Lower Hopton. The precautions taken in each case prevented any spread of the disease.

Puerperal Fever. 3 cases with 2 deaths. This is a larger number of cases than we have had for some years, and more than we ought to have.

Measles. The District has been fairly free from this disease during the year, never shewing any signs of spreading. We have usually had an epidemic every 2 or 3 years, often fatal amongst very young children. If ever we are to be able to check an epidemic of Measles, it must be by receiving early intimation of the first case. I think you should make notification compulsory in the way I mentioned last year.

Whooping Cough. 7 deaths from this disease, against 8 in 1896. They occurred as follows—1 in January at Lower Hopton; 1 in March at Crossley; 1 in April at Snakehill; 3 in May at Battyeford; 1 in August at Battyeford. Five of these cases were at Battyeford. This disease is not sufficiently guarded against, and with proper care ought not to be so fatal as it is.

Erysipelas. 9 cases, no deaths. All these were over 5 years of age, all adults or nearly so.

Drainage. The drainage of Upper Hopton requires as much speed as possible for its completion. The continued prevalence of Fever and Diphtheria in that District is due in a very great measure to the absence of any drainage from most, if not all the Farms from which the inhabitants draw their milk supply. Contaminated milk is in my opinion a fruitful cause of Fever.

Water. The Water supplied to the Township has been abundant in quantity, and the quality has been better. There have also been fewer complaints of lead poisoning.

Occupation.

I have again drawn out a Summary of the Occupation, Disease, and Ages of Deaths for the year—if this is regularly followed out, we may be able to gather some very useful information as regards the healthfulness or the reverse of different occupations—I will again mark out the deaths from Phthisis & their occupation and compare with 1896 :—

In 1896.		In 1897.	
Coal Miner,	aged 19 years.	Market Gardener,	aged 51 years
Colliery Banksman,	" 42 "	Card Room Tenter, (female)	" 16 "
Railway Engine Cleaner	" 23 "	Railway Engine Driver	" 44 "
Wood Sawyer	" 37 "	Machine Tenter in Woollen Mill (female)	" 35 "
Wood Turner	" 39 "	Carder in Cotton Mill	" 49 "
Farmer	" 51 "	Woollen Card Cleaner	" 41 "
2 Woollen Weavers (females)	" 26 & 17 "	Woollen Spinner	" 48 "
1 do. do. (male)	" 36 "		
Dressmaker	" 22 "		

Occupation.	Age.	Disease.
Colliery Banksman	Æt 43 years.	...Found dead in bed
Quarryman	54 "	...Pneumonia
Grocer	70 "	...Heart Disease
Labourer on New Railway	35 "	...Pneumonia
Maltster's Labourer...	56 "	...Pneumonia
Waggoner...	55 "	...Accident
Shoemaker	68 "	...Bronchitis, &c.
Cloth Fuller	28 "	...Rheumatic Fever
Machine Tenter in Woollen Mill (female)	35 "	...Phthisis Pulmonalis
Mason	44 "	...Bronchitis and Asthma
Coal Leader	53 "	...Found dead in field
Cotton Spinner	70 "	...Disease of Knee
Market Gardener	81 "	..Apoplexy
Overlooker in Woollen Mill	66 "	...Dyspepsia, &c.
Maltster	51 "	...Disease of Heart, &c.
Carder in Cotton Mill	49 "	...Pneumonic Phthisis
Boat-builder	31 "	...Tubercular Enteritis
Road Stone Breaker	63 "	...Bronchitis
Station Master	50 "	...Heart Disease
Iron Broker	72 "	...Cancer
Weaver (male)	62 "	...Jaundice, &c.
Market Gardener	67 "	...Hemiplegia
do. do.	51 "	...Pneumonic Phthisis
Card Room Tenter...	16 "	... do. do.
Master Maltster	61 "	...Pernicious Anæmia
Keel Owner	56 "	...Suicide
Pit Sinker...	66 "	...Bronchitis
Painter	46 "	...Apoplexy
Cloth Finisher	73 "	.. Senile Decay
River Sand Dredger...	49 "	...Pneumonia after falling in River
Blanket Raiser	55 "	...Sudden Death
Railway Engine Driver	44 "	...Phthisis Pulmonalis
Bacon Factor	80 "	...Ulcerative Colitis
Coal Miner	68 "	...Cancer
Railway Labourer	29 "	...Lead Poisoning & Bright's Disease
Blanket Weaver	58 "	...Cancer
Working Maltster	74 "	...Heart Disease, &c.
Woollen Card Cleaner	41 "	...Acute Pnaumonic Phthisis
do. do.	65 "	...Bronchitis
House Painter	52 "	...Disease of Heart, &c.
Green Grocer	54 "	...Bronchitis

Occupation.	Age.	Disease.
Grocer	Æt 42 ,,	...Acute Rheumatism
Auctioneer's Clerk	,, 20 ,,	...Typhoid Fever
Cabinet Maker, &c.	,, 64 ,,	...Heart Disease, &c.
Woollen Spinner	,, 19 ,,	...Caries of Spine
Maltster	,, 68 ,,	...Bronchitis
Currier and Farmer	,, 90 ,,	...Old Age
Woollen Spinner	,, 48 ,,	...Pneumonic Phthisis

Infectious Hospital.

This Hospital was opened for the reception of Scarlet Fever cases on September 21st, and from that date to the end of the year 24 cases were admitted belonging to Mirfield, with one death, viz:—3 in September, 8 in October, 6 in November, 7 in December. This Hospital is supplying what was a great want, viz: the early isolation of cases of Scarlet Fever. At the same time it is not large enough. A Convalescent Room is wanted; also a Ward or two Wards for Typhoid Fever; this not so much for ourselves as for our neighbours at Liversedge, for it appears that while we seem always to have Scarlet Fever amongst us, they seem to have Typhoid. We have also felt the great want of a Private Ward; but all future additions should be of a more permanent character.

During the year a great deal of useful work has been done by your Inspector, he has given me very willing assistance at all times, for which I am very grateful.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

THOS. B. FAIRCLOUGH,

May 14th, 1898. MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.