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**Contributors**

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GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present to you my Sixth Annual Report, on the Health of the Rye Rural Sanitary District, for 1895.

The past year has been remarkable for the small number of cases of Infectious Sickness that has occurred, viz:—

SCARLET FEVER, 4.

ERYSIPELAS, 2.

PUERPERAL FEVER, 1.

Three of the cases of Scarlet Fever, occurred at Beckley, in January; they were of a mild type, and all recovered—no cause of origin was discoverable. The fourth case was at Brede, in August; here it was found that the patient had been staying at Sandhurst, where the malady was prevalent.

The two cases of Erysipelas occurred—one in Brede, and one in Icklesham, in April and September respectively.

The case of Puerperal Fever was fatal: it occurred in Northiam, in July—the two women in attendance were warned not to go near another case for two months.

It is a noteworthy fact, that not a single case of Diphtheria has occurred during the year.

Influenza was again epidemic in the early part of the year, and is accountable for 8 deaths; it continues to occur sporadically.

No schools were closed on account of Infectious Disease.

All houses where there has been any Infectious malady, are fumigated with Sulphur; in most instances this is done by the Sanitary Inspector himself, or if this is not possible, according to his directions. Carbolic Acid is freely supplied to all Infectious cases. In order that there may be no delay in procuring disinfectant, a supply of Crude Carbolic Acid in two-ounce bottles (sufficient to make a gallon of a 1 in 40 solution) is kept at each village post office.

There is no provision made in the shape of a hospital for the isolation, and treatment of cases of Infectious Disease. This is a matter of regret, when we consider the risks we run, of having epidemics introduced into the district from without, on account of the large annual influx of immigrant hop-pickers from London, Brighton, Hastings, Maidstone, and other places; and also to the fact, that the Harbour of Rye, which is within the Rural Sanitary District, carries on a trade with various foreign ports, such as—Rotterdam, Cherbourg and the Baltic. I am well aware that the question of expense (in view of the considerable requirements of the Local Government Board) is a very serious one, but still hope, that by co-operation with the Rye Urban Authority, some solution of the difficulty may be arrived at.

The Water Supply of the district is derived from deep wells, surface wells, springs, and collections of rain water, it is generally abundant, and organically pure, and of about 14 degrees of hardness, although this is exceeded in places.

Winchelsea is the only part of the district which is provided with a constant supply laid on to the houses. It is a matter for great congratulation, that the insufficient supply—about 3,000 gallons—obtained from the shaft sunk at the S.W. corner of the hill, has now been supplemented by about 8,000 gallons per diem, of water obtained from the Newgate spring, and this, I believe, is ample for the requirements of the place. When we remember that almost all the water needed in the town—up to three years ago—had to be brought in budes, a distance of a mile, it will be seen what an inestimable boon this should prove to the inhabitants.

In July, complaint was made that some houses in Northiam were without a proper supply of water; a General Survey of the village showed that water was obtained from wells, of an average depth of 40 feet, and that four premises were without any supply. The Sanitary Authority served notices on the owners to have wells provided, this has been done in three instances, and it is to be hoped that the fourth will not be long delayed. At the instigation of the Parish Council of Brede, two ponds have been dug out, cleaned, (and should be fenced round) for the collection of rain water, and form a substantial addition to the previous—rather scanty—well supply.

Cesspools are in common use throughout most of the district; the principal difficulties that arise in connection with them, are—

- (1) They are usually too big, and are therefore not emptied often enough
- (2) The practice of draining the sink water into them.
- (3) Allowing rain water from the house yards, etc., to get in.
- (4) Allowing the liquid contents to overflow into sewage gutters, and sometimes into the water table.

Where the sink water has not been drained into the cesspool, it has frequently been deliberately drained into the water table.

The objects which we have had in view, and which are gradually being obtained, have been—

- (1) To diminish the size of the cesspools, and have them more frequently emptied.
- (2) To render them water-tight.
- (3) To cut off the sink water and let it run into a pail, which can be carried away and emptied on the garden as often as is necessary.

There is a complete system of sewerage and sewerage disposal (by subsidence and irrigation) at Winchelsea, which works well.

Part of the Parish of Peasmarsch has also a scheme of sewerage and sewerage disposal. The introduction of surface water into the sewers here, militates against complete success, by causing backward pressure and overflow in times of heavy rain. My fear that a 9 inch pipe would not provide a sufficient depth of run for the sewage alone, has fortunately, not been verified by the result.

Northiam is drained by a system of sewerage with four separate outfalls; at each outfall there is a large cesspool which overflows on to meadow land. I am bound to say, that the advantage obtained by these cesspools is not apparent. One drain in this parish, which became blocked during the year, was found to be an old brick drain which was put in many years ago, and was not part of the system provided by the Sanitary Authority. This was cleaned and repaired by the Authority, and the work charged to the interested parties.

The main sewer in Icklesham Street is joined just below the School by another sewer which runs down Parsonage Lane; owing to insufficient fall this latter became blocked, and had to be relaid at a greater depth, for a distance of 165 yards, with 9 inch *Doulton* pipes, it now works well. A row of cottages opposite the Robin Hood, at Icklesham, whose overflowing cesspools and generally unsatisfactory Sanitary arrangements have been a source of constant annoyance and danger, are now to be provided with a proper sewer as soon as arrangements can be come to with the owner and occupier of a meadow, whereon it is proposed to dispose of the sewage.

There is no provision made for the systematic removal of refuse.

I know of no stream used as a sewage conduit or polluted by sewage.

The Parish Councils of Udimore and Icklesham are taking steps to enlarge the graveyards at Udimore and Rye Harbour respectively—both being now full.

There are no offensive trades and no factories or workshops in the district.

The Sanitary Inspector has frequently visited the Bakehouses, Slaughterhouses, Cowsheds, and Dairies, and has found their condition satisfactory.

It has not been found necessary to condemn any meat as unfit for human food, although the butchers' shops have been regularly inspected.

The cottages taken generally throughout the district, are in good repair, and fit for habitation. A marked improvement is observable in those erected during the last ten years, especially in the matter of bedroom accommodation. All new cottages should have at least three bedrooms, and in one of these—at any rate—a fireplace should be provided for use in times of illness.

The Infectious Diseases Notification Act has been in force since January 11th, 1894.

No bye-laws have yet been made or adopted, but it is to be hoped that steps may be taken to remedy this.

During the year, the Sanitary Inspector has regularly and systematically visited all parts of the district. He has only kept a record of those visits which have led to some action, and which are tabulated below, but which, by no means represent the whole of the work done—

Cesspools and collections of Sewage	14
Drain and Sewers ... ..	10
Cases of Infectious Sickness ...	12
Polluted Wells ... ..	1
Insanitary House ... ..	1
Water Supply ... ..	2
Heaps of Refuse ... ..	2
Insufficient Privy Accommodation	1

The troubles in connection with cesspools and collections of sewage, were such as I have pointed out in the paragraph on sewage and sewage disposal.

The drains which were found defective, were the Peasmarsch and Icklesham sewers already alluded to, and numerous house drains.

The cases of Infectious Sickness have already been commented on.

The Polluted Well was at Broad Oak, Brede, the cause of pollution was a leaky cesspool; this was emptied and cemented, and the well cleaned out.

The 2 instances of Defective Water Supply, were at Northiam and Brede, and have been noticed in the previous part of my report.

The Insanitary House was due to flooding of a cellar at Icklesham.

Heaps of Refuse at Northiam and Peasmarsch were removed.

The Insufficient Privy Accommodation was at Beckley—another was built.

There was no case of over-crowding.

I estimate the population at 7,597, compared with 7,704 at the 1891 census.

There were 118 deaths, but 9 of these were people belonging to the town of Rye, who died in the Workhouse, so that in making a corrected death-rate we have only 109 to deal with.

This gives a death-rate of 14.44 per 1,000.

Four deaths from Zymotic diseases (all diarrhoea)—.53 per 1,000.

Ten deaths from Phthisis—1.3 per 1,000.

Ten deaths from Respiratory diseases—1.3 per 1,000.

Eight deaths from Influenza—1.05 per 1,000.

There were 195 Births—Birth-Rate of 25.7 per 1,000.

Twenty deaths of Infants—Infant Mortality of 108.1 per 1,000 Births.

In conclusion, I should like to congratulate the Members of the Sanitary Authority on the completion of the Winchelsea Water Supply; the relaying of the defective portion of the Icklesham Sewer; the appointment of a Surveyor; the gradual abatement of long existing nuisances; and the general improvement in the Sanitary state of the district.

I would ask them seriously to consider the question of adopting the Model Bye-Laws of the Local Government Board, to have plans of all the works under their control, prepared and hung up in the Board Room, where they would be easily accessible to Members and their Officers.

The question of an Isolation Hospital too, is one that will have to be faced someday, and I think it would be wise to take time by the forelock, and again consider how best to deal with this matter.

I HAVE THE HONOUR TO REMAIN,

GENTLEMEN,

YOUR OBEDIENT SERVANT,

ERNEST W. SKINNER, M.D. & C.M.,  
M.O.H.

To the Chairman and Members of the  
Rural District Council of Rye.

THE

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT COUNCIL,

OF RYE.

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REPORT

OF

DR. E. W. SKINNER,

Medical Officer of Health.

FOR THE YEAR 1895.