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Contributors

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NORTHIAM,

5th April, 1921.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE RYE
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present to you my Twenty-First Annual Report upon the health of the Rye Rural District.

The population of the District according to the census of 1911 was 7,146; for the year 1920 it is estimated at 6,702.

The area of the District is 37,257 acres, and the assessable value on a County Rate basis is £41,337.

The District is undulating with slow running streams which drain into the Rother, Tillingham and Brede rivers. Some of the land near the rivers is below the level of the sea at high tide, and is apt to be flooded for long periods during the winter months. The sub-soil is generally clay.

The main industry of the District is Agriculture, and the area occupied by hop-gardens is large, but it has not yet regained its pre-war level. There is a Fishing Industry at Rye Harbour.

The number of deaths in the District during 1920 was 71, which gives the low death rate of 10·6 per thousand. There were no deaths from the common Zymotic Diseases, but two deaths were attributed to Influenza and one death to Encephalitis Lethargica.

Pulmonary Tuberculosis was the cause of three deaths, besides three deaths due to other forms of Tuberculosis.

Cancer was the cause of six deaths; Organic Heart Disease of twenty deaths; and Bronchitis and Pneumonia of nine deaths.

Forty-four of the deaths (61 per cent.) occurred in persons aged 65 years or over.

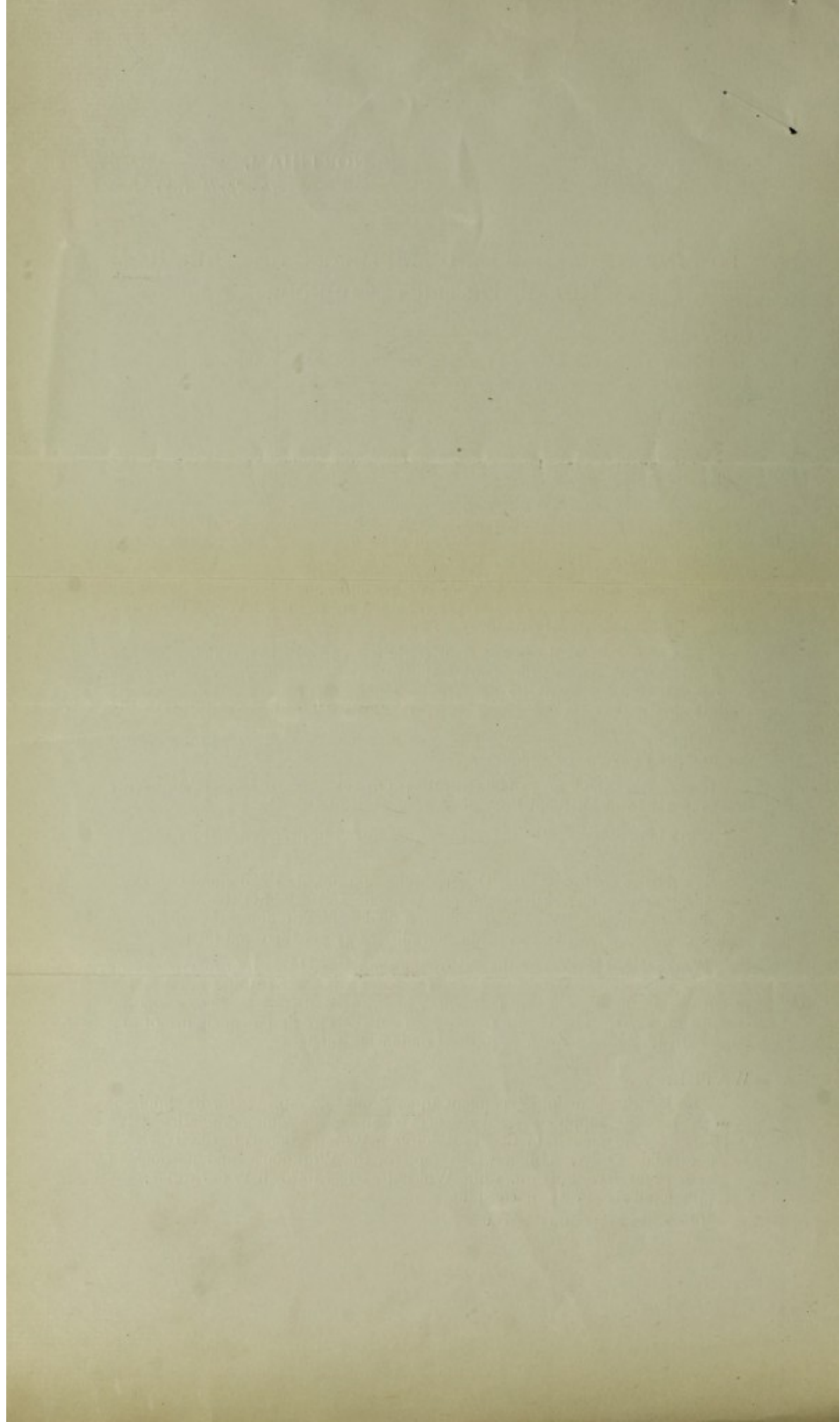
The births credited to the District were 145, out of which number sixteen were illegitimate. The birth rate at 21·6 per thousand is higher than it has been before for a number of years. Six children died before attaining the age of one year, which is equivalent to an infant mortality of 41 per thousand births.

There is no Hospital in the District except the Union Infirmary, but the Rye and District and Winchelsea War Memorial Cottage Hospital will be completed during the present year; it will contain two wards of six beds each, and one private ward. The Hastings and East Sussex Hospital is made use of to a large extent, and cases are sent to the London Hospitals.

WATER.

The District is mainly dependent upon Wells and Springs for its supply of water, and the supply is always deficient during the summer months. Rye Harbour is supplied from the Rye Borough Waterworks, as is the Tower in the grounds of Rye Union which supplies the Workhouse and portions of Playden and Rye Foreign, while Winchelsea has its own Waterworks; the supply in all these cases is constant.

There are no polluted streams.



DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

The Sewerage Schemes in Northiam, Peasmarsh, Winchelsea, Playden, Rye Harbour and Icklesham are working satisfactorily. Sewerage Schemes for Beckley and for Brede are wanted, also an extension of the Icklesham system. The sewage is treated by irrigation and septic tanks, and the Rye Harbour sewage discharges into the sea. The portions of the District not served by Sewerage Systems are supplied with privies, or pail closets or earth closets, and the waste water discharges into ditches. The cleansing of earth closets, privies and cesspools is done by the householders. There is no systematic destruction of house refuse, except at Winchelsea, where there is an incinerator.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE DISTRICT.

The Inspector of Nuisances reports as follows :—" During the year I made the following inspections :—

" WORKING-CLASS DWELLINGS.—324, mostly under Section 17 of the Housing, Town Planning, etc., Act, 1909, a few being in respect of complaints.

" Number of Notices served—Informal, 90 ; Statutory, 10.

" Fifty-two of the Informal Notices and one of the Statutory Notices were complied with."

TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION.—The Huts, Tents, Sheds, etc., provided for Hop-Pickers, were inspected before and during occupation. The number of immigrant hop-pickers was about 580 adults and 300 children ; about half of these were housed in huts, and the remainder in sheds, farm buildings and tents ; some of the farm buildings and tents were not weatherproof, and in some cases the floors were damp. The Sanitary Inspector is now visiting the farms in the district and pointing out to the tenants in what respects the accommodation is inadequate, and an improvement is expected this year.

SCHOOLS.

The Sanitary arrangements and Water Supply of the Elementary Schools in the District are satisfactory, and there has been very little Infectious Disease amongst the Scholars.

FOOD.

A considerable quantity of milk is exported from the District, and the Cow-Sheds and Dairies have been inspected and reported upon by the Inspector of Nuisances. There is no Public Abattoir in the District, and the Private Slaughter-Houses have been used very little during the last few years.

They and the Bake-Houses have been inspected.

The number of Slaughter-Houses in use in the District

		In 1914	Jan., 1920	Dec., 1920
Registered	...	5	4	4
Licensed	...	2	3	3

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

There was no epidemic of Notifiable Infectious Disease during the year. The notifications were as follows :—

Diphtheria—Six scattered cases of a mild type.

Typhoid Fever—Two cases. One in Playden and the other in Winchelsea. In neither case were there obvious sanitary defects, nor could the source of infection be ascertained.

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Encephalitis Lethargica—One case in Beckley.

Polyomyelitis—One case.

Ophthalmia Neonatorum—One case.

Tuberculosis—Three cases. Two Pulmonary and one Glandular.

No cases of locally-contracted Malaria were notified.

Disinfectants are supplied by the Sanitary Inspector for distribution as required, and disinfection of houses and clothing is carried out upon the termination of infectious cases. Diphtheria Antitoxin is generally used by the practitioners in the District, and the cost is defrayed by the Rural District Council. Arrangements are in existence for the examination of swabbings from cases of Cerebro-Spinal Fever and contact cases. The conjoint Isolation Hospital in the Parish of Udimore receives cases of Infectious Disease from the Urban and Rural Districts of Rye—there are two wards of six beds each—and three cases of Diphtheria were received from the Rural District for treatment during the year. In all cases of Tuberculosis the home of the patient is visited, and it is decided whether the conditions are suitable for home treatment, and whether it is probable that other members of the family are affected. There is a Ward in the Rye Union Infirmary set apart for the treatment of cases of Tuberculosis from the Urban and Rural Districts of Rye. There are no other facilities in the District for the Sanatorium Treatment of Tuberculosis, but cases are sent to Sanatoria in other districts.

VENEREAL DISEASES.

Clinics for the free treatment of these diseases are now open at the East Sussex Hospital, Hastings.

SMALLPOX.

There have been no cases in the District. One bed in the Hastings Smallpox Hospital, situated in the Parish of Brede, is reserved for the Urban and Rural Districts of Rye; but some further provision for an epidemic of Smallpox ought to be made, as the number of unvaccinated children gets larger year by year.

There is no Maternity and Child Welfare Scheme in the District. Most of the Maternity cases are attended by the Village Nurses. No cases of Puerperal Fever have been reported.

HOUSING.

I.—GENERAL HOUSING CONDITIONS IN THE DISTRICT.

- 1 Total number of houses, 1,883. Number for working classes, 1,433.
Three houses for the working classes were erected during the year.
- 2 Population, 6,702.
- 3 The shortage of houses is estimated at : 40 for immediate requirements ;
70 to replace unfit dwellings.
A housing scheme for about one hundred houses has been approved,
and building will commence shortly.

II.—OVERCROWDING.

- 1 Extent—a few cases, not of a very serious nature.
- 2 Causes—many of the houses are too small.
- 3 Remedial measures contemplated—more houses to be built, mostly with
three bedrooms.
- 4 No action has been taken during the year in respect of overcrowding.

The first thing I noticed when I stepped out of the car was the cold. It was a sharp contrast to the warm blanket of the car's interior. I looked up at the sky, which was a pale, overcast grey. The air was still, and the silence was heavy. I took a deep breath, feeling the cold air fill my lungs. I walked towards the building, my steps echoing on the wet pavement. The building was a large, multi-story structure with many windows. Some of the windows were lit up, while others were dark. I walked up the stairs, feeling the cold air on my face. I reached the top of the stairs and looked out over the city. The city was a mix of old and new buildings, with some of the old buildings still standing and others being replaced by new ones. I saw a few people walking on the street, but they were far away. I felt a sense of isolation, as if I was the only person in the world. I walked back down the stairs and into the car. I sat in the driver's seat and looked out the window. The city was still there, but it felt like it was a different place. I took a deep breath and drove away.

I had been told that the city was beautiful, but I didn't realize how beautiful it was. The architecture was a mix of old and new, with some of the old buildings still standing and others being replaced by new ones. I saw a few people walking on the street, but they were far away. I felt a sense of isolation, as if I was the only person in the world. I walked back down the stairs and into the car. I sat in the driver's seat and looked out the window. The city was still there, but it felt like it was a different place. I took a deep breath and drove away.

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III.—FITNESS OF HOUSES.

- 1 The general standard of housing is fairly good for an agricultural district, and is improving. The chief defects are bad sanitation and dampness due to brick floors placed directly on the ground, pervious walls and absence of damp-courses ; and delay in executing repairs.
- 2 Action taken. Most of the defects in sanitation are dealt with under the Public Health Acts. Privies in most cases are converted into pail closets ; and sink and waste-water drainage put in order. Repairs necessary to bring houses up to a reasonable standard are dealt with under the Housing Acts.
- 3 Difficulties. The very low rents received, the high cost of repairs, and the shortage of labour in the Building Trade, tend to discourage owners from keeping their cottages in good repair, and the work of bringing cottages up to a reasonable standard can only proceed slowly unless harsh measures are taken. If economic rents were obtained some of the difficulties would be overcome.
- 4 The water supply from wells is, in many parts of the District, liable to be deficient during the summer and autumn. The closet accommodation is mostly pail closets ; privies exist, and are converted into pail closets where they are considered to be a nuisance. Most houses have sufficient garden to enable the pails to be dealt with without any trouble ; but some tenants object to the conversion of the privies to pail closets. House refuse is disposed of on the gardens.

IV.—THERE ARE NO UNHEALTHY AREAS.

- V.—BYE-LAWS for the prevention of nuisance in connection with occupied Tents, Vans and Sheds, are in force in the District ; also separate Bye-Laws for the decent Lodging of Hop-Pickers and Fruit-Pickers. The existing Bye-Laws appear to be adequate.

Appendices.

Housing Conditions.

STATISTICS for Year ended 31st December, 1920.

1.—GENERAL.

1	Estimated population	...	...	...	6,702
2	General death rate	...	...	per thousand	10.6
3	Death rate from tuberculosis	...	...	per thousand	0.9
4	Infantile mortality	...	...	per thousand births	41
5	Number of dwelling houses of all classes	...	...		1,883
6	Number of working-class dwelling houses	...	...		1,433
7	Number of new working-class houses erected	...	...		3

2.—UNFIT DWELLING HOUSES.

1.—INSPECTION.

1	Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	...	...	150
2	Number of dwelling houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910	...	...	112
3	Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	...	...	3
4	Number of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	...	...	83

II.—REMEDY OF DEFECTS WITHOUT SERVICE OF FORMAL NOTICES.

Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers ... 42

III.—ACTION UNDER STATUTORY POWERS.

A.—Proceedings under Section 28 of the Housing, Town Planning, etc., Act, 1919.

- 1 Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs ... 14
- 2 Number of dwelling houses which were rendered fit
 - (a) by owners ... None
 - (b) by Local Authority in default of owners ... None
- 3 Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations of owners of intention to close ... None

B.—Proceedings under Public Health Acts.

- 1 Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied ... 1
- 2 Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied
 - (a) by owners ... 1
 - (b) by Local Authority in default of owners ... None

C.—Proceedings under Sections 17 and 18 of the Housing, Town Planning, etc., Act, 1909.

- 1 Number of representations made with a view to the making of Closing Orders ... 3
- 2 Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made ... 3
- 3 Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the dwelling houses having been rendered fit ... 1
- 4 Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made ... None
- 5 Number of dwelling houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders... ... None

3—UNHEALTHY AREAS.

Areas represented to the Local Authority with a view to Improvement Schemes under (a), Part I., or (b), Part II., of the Act of 1890 ... None

4—Number of houses not complying with the building bye-laws erected with consent of Local Authority under Section 25 of the Housing, Town Planning, etc., Act, 1919 ... None

5—Staff engaged on housing work : Medical Officer of Health and Sanitary Inspector (both part time).

I have the honour to remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

WALTER WYNNE,

M.O.H., Rye Rural District.

