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Contributors

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Salisbury Rural District Council.

Report of the Medical Officer of Health for 1898.

AREA of the DISTRICT in Acres, 55,665. POPULATION of the DISTRICT at the last Census, 12,896.

ESTIMATED POPULATION to the Middle of 1898, 13,125.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit to you my Annual Report for 1898.

The total number of deaths in the district has been 203, and the total number of births 285. Death-rate.

Corrections have, as usual, to be made, which reduces the total of deaths to 155. This, on the estimated population, gives a death-rate of 11·8 per 1,000.

The corrections consist in deducting deaths in the Workhouse and Asylums of persons not belonging to the district, and in adding deaths in the Salisbury Infirmary of persons belonging to the district.

The death-rate is satisfactory; the rate for 1897 being 13·3, for 1896, 11·6, and for 1895, 13·3. The infant mortality rate is usually measured by the proportion of deaths under one year to births registered, and is 64·2 per 1,000, against 97·1 for 1897. The death-rate under 5 years, calculated in the same way, is 38·6. The zymotic death-rate is practically nil.

One death was due to Membranous Croup, and four to Diarrhoea, 18 to Phthisis, 24 to Bronchitis and Pneumonia, 32 to Heart Disease, 6 to Influenza, 7 to Cancer, and only 3 to Injuries or violent death—two of which were cases of drowning. Seven inquests appear to have been held. There is really nothing in this on which to comment.

The number of births, 285, is 24 less than the previous year, but is in excess of the corrected deaths by Birth-rate.
130. The rate is 21·7 per 1,000 of population.

The Notification Act was adopted this year, and the first case notified was on March 8th. Notification.

The total has only amounted to 17:—Scarlet Fever, 1; Diphtheria, 2; Typhoid, 1; Membranous Croup, 1; Puerperal Fever, 2; Erysipelas, 10.

The method of collecting and distributing information of the occurrence of infectious disease has been continued by the County Council, and I have received 42 notices. Salisbury Urban heads the list with Diphtheria 7, Typhoid 3, and Scarlet Fever 1. The rural districts of Devizes, Chippenham, and Bradford have each two cases of Diphtheria.

There are three other cases of Diphtheria, eleven of Scarlet Fever, four of Typhoid, and two of Croup, distributed pretty equally throughout the other districts.

The weather would appear to have been favourable to health. January was dry and mild; February and March were colder, but the rainfall was deficient.

The temperature in the spring was low, but the rainfall for May was in excess of the average. June commenced with low temperature, after which the summer was, on the whole, a warm one, and the rainfall far into the autumn was very deficient.

The temperatures registered here did not equal those of 1893, when 95° was registered on Aug. 19th.

The highest observed here was 87° on August 12th and 14th, and 19th to 21st. There were a good many days with a temperature of 83°. From September 5th to 12th the temperature was from 79° to 86°. This is no more than it was in 1895, but perhaps our attention was specially called to it by the presence of the large number of soldiers at Ford and Homington, both places in this district. The weather continued

mild until the end of the year. On December 18th I note that for the fifth time this month the temperature has not been below 50.°

The warm summer, or the quarter ending September 30th, does not seem to have been favourable to health all over the country, for though the death-rate for Wiltshire was 12.6, the rate for England and Wales was 17.9; the mean rate being 16.6. Diarrhoea was, by a long way, the most fatal disease. The weather was unusually dry as well as hot, the rainfall being only 2.51 inches, or 4.77 below the average.

New houses.

Thirteen houses have been built in the district, and inspected before certificates as to water-supply were granted:—Morgan's Vale 5, Milford 2, Winterslow 3, Downton, Redlynch, and East Harnham 1 each.

Improvements may be classed as follows:—

Parishes or Districts.	Drains made or re-laid.	Wells cleaned or re-covered.	Wells sunk.	Cesspools and privies improved.	Over-crowding.	Pigs removed.
Stratford-sub-Castle ...	2	—	—	—	—	—
Waterloo ...	—	1	—	2	—	—
East Harnham ...	—	1	1	1	—	—
Morgan's Vale ...	—	1	1	—	—	—
East Grimstead ...	—	—	1	—	—	—
Downton ...	1	—	—	1	—	1
Fisherton Without ...	1	—	—	2	—	—
Nunton ...	—	1	—	—	1	—
Laverstock ...	—	—	—	1	—	—
West Harnham ...	—	1	—	—	—	—
Winterslow ...	—	3	—	—	—	—
Farley ...	—	—	—	—	1	—

Water analysis.

Nine samples of water have been analysed, of which only two were found really good. Four were considered fair, and three bad. Action was taken to improve the sources from which these came, and there has been improvement.

Inspection work.

The district has been thoroughly inspected by myself and the Sanitary Inspector, and a table supplied by him is appended.

It has not been found necessary to close any of the schools on account of infectious diseases.

In January the water supply of some cottages at East Grimstead was taken in hand. This had for a long time been a spring, the water of which was good, but was liable to pollution, specially by ducks. It might have been protected, but the owner decided to sink a well. The result has not been altogether successful. About the same time attention was called to the water supply of a group of cottages on the top of the hill at Redlynch. This was derived entirely from a pond, which was sometimes low and generally dirty. In the month of May a well was sunk ten feet deep, and this is now yielding a fair supply.

In January there was a very limited outbreak of Scarlet Fever at Redlynch.

A nuisance often complained of at Stratford was dealt with by laying a drain under the road and carrying the waste water to the meadows.

In the month of March the old complaint was renewed that pigs kept at a distance of 300 yards from the reservoir were a danger to the water supplying the city of Salisbury.

As on the former occasion, the people complaining had mistaken a shed for a pigsty, and were not aware that the odour, if any, was caused by manure placed inside the enclosure of the reservoir.

In April there was a considerable nuisance and risk to health caused by overflowing cesspools at Finchley Cottages, West End, and at Waterloo Gardens. Frequent emptying is all that can be done at West End, but Waterloo, having wells, requires more radical measures. The owners here could, however, hardly be asked to do much while a sewerage scheme is hanging over their heads.

In April and the early part of May slight cases of Erysipelas were common, probably owing to the cold winds. Several of the cases were notified, but it is difficult to see what is gained by notification of this disease.

In July a fatal case of Membranous Croup occurred in Downton. Disinfection was carried out, and a slop-drain trapped and re-laid. There have been several minor improvements in Downton, not the least being the removal of the pigs at "The Bull." The Parish Council called our attention to the fact that some people had to go 150 to 200 yards to obtain water.

In September a report was made on Fairview Terrace, though there was really nothing to report. Cesspools are not exactly things to be recommended, but it is more than doubtful whether the sewerage scheme which has been forced on this row of 34 houses will, with more flushing of the sewers and no water-supply, be any benefit.

The weather at this time was unusually dry, and the dust lay deep on the roads—a condition of things impressed on our memory by the daily passing of large bodies of troops, followed by Lipton's waggons. The water-supply of the district held out well, and the only complaint was from Dean, where the stream had dried up and the mud was offensive. This was thought to be the cause of several cases of Sore-throat which occurred in the village. Just at the end of the year, when the river was flowing freely, there was a more serious epidemic of Sore-throat.

In October a case of Typhoid was reported at West Harnham. The man evidently contracted the disease in Southampton, and came home ill.

In November some attention was given to Nomansland, the furthest point in the district. Broken well-covers and heaps of offensive refuse are not uncommon here, but there has been some improvement.

A case of diphtheria was reported from Nunton. It was not a severe case, and no obvious cause could be found.

In mentioning the ever-green subject of the River Avon last year, I said that the matter was ended as far as we were concerned. This was in consequence of the report of a committee of this Authority, appointed to consider whether any further steps should be taken. River Avon.

An action has now been brought by Mr. Jervoise against the Salisbury Town Council, and there is reason to hope that this body will be compelled to abandon their policy of treating all complaints with "silent contempt."

Tables are appended of Causes of Death, Population, Births, etc.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

JAMES KELLAND,

M.B. Edin., D.P.H. Durham.

Salisbury,

February 10th, 1899.



