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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

OF THE

RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

OF THE

SEDDGEFIELD UNION,

for the YEAR ENDED


DECEMBER, 31st., 1897.



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THE
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL
OF THE
SEDFIELD UNION.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMAN,

It is again my pleasing duty to lay before you my twentieth Annual Report of the Health and Sanitary condition of the Sedgfield Rural District for the year ended December 31st., 1897.

The Mortality exclusive of the 167 deaths of Inmates of the Durham County Lunatic Asylum, amounts to 313, of whom 147 were males, and 166 females.

The Births registered during the year were 731, and of this number 387 were males, and 344 females.

The Vital Statistics are calculated on an estimated population of 18,641, the Inmates of the County Asylum being deducted, and due allowance made for the incorporation of Low Spennymoor with the Spennymoor Urban District.

The Rate of Mortality is 16.7 per thousand, being with one exception the lowest death-rate during the twenty years that I have acted as your Medical Officer of Health. It may not be uninteresting to note the great disparity in the rate of mortality that exists between the Colliery and Agricultural Divisions of the Sanitary District. The rate in the Sedgfield and Bishopton Medical Districts (Agricultural) is 10.5 per 1000, whilst that of Ferryhill, Cornforth, and Trimdon Medical Districts where the Industrial pursuits are chiefly Limestone and Coal mining, it amounts to 17.8 per thousand.

The Birth Rate amounts to 39.3, which is somewhat below the average of former years.

The Infant Mortality is 110, and the death rate 150 per thousand births, which is attributed to the following causes, viz :—Impaired Viability due to Premature Birth, Protracted and Difficult Labour, and other Congenital Conditions, 47 ; Cerebral Affections, 22 ; Gastric and Intestinal Derangements, 21 ; Pulmonary Diseases, 11 ; Zymotic Diseases, 4 ; Injuries, 1 ; Unclassified, 4.

Longevity. Forty-eight persons reached the age of 70 years, or 2.5 per thousand per annum, 37 being septuagenarians and 11 octogenarians.

The Zymotic Class of Diseases still continues to prevail throughout the District, and contributes largely to its mortality 41 deaths having occurred, with a death-rate of 2.1 per thousand.

The Number of Notifications received amount to 279 and include 159 cases of Scarlatina, 4 of Diphtheria, 2 of Croup, 28 of Typhoid Fever, 38 of continued Fever, 1 of Puerperal Fever, and 47 of Erysipelas ; whilst 21 of those had a fatal termination, 6 resulting from Scarlatina, 1 from Diphtheria, 9 from Enteric Fever, 3 from Continued Fever, 1 from Puerperal Fever, and 1 from Erysipelas. There were also 20 deaths from Zymotic Diseases not included in the Schedule of the Notification Act, viz :—Measles 2, Whooping Cough 3, Diarrhoea 8, Rheumatic Fever 3, and Influenza 4.

Scarlatina has been exceedingly prevalent during the year and of the 159 cases notified, 87 occurred in the Trimdon Division, 55 in Cornforth, 13 in Ferryhill, and 4 in Sedgefield.

Of the 6 deaths resulting from this cause, 5 occurred at Trimdon, and one at Cornforth.

An outbreak occurred at the Hardwick Garden House, Sedgefield, from an unknown source but by isolation its further extension was arrested.

Diphtheria. Of the four cases notified, 2 occurred at Cornforth, 1 at Ferryhill, and 1 at Trimdon. One case terminated fatally at Cornforth.

Enteric or Typhoid Fever, the incidence of which was most marked at the Trimdon Colliery villages, where 23 cases occurred. Four cases also occurred at Metal Bridge, in the Ferryhill Division. Eight cases at Trimdon, and one case at the County Asylum had a fatal termination.

Continued Fever also prevailed chiefly at the Trimdon Colliery villages. Of the 38 cases notified, 29 occurred at that place, from which no death resulted, whilst 9 cases occurred at Cornforth, 3 of which terminated fatally. The continued prevalence of Enteric and Continued Fever at Trimdon and West Cornforth can only be attributed to over-crowding, and the unsanitary surroundings.

Measles has been exceedingly prevalent throughout the District during the year, the cases were however of a mild type and only 2 deaths resulted.

Owing to an out-break of this disease at Bradbury I deemed it necessary to close the Bradbury and Mordon School.

Whooping Cough has been less prevalent with a corresponding decrease in the mortality, three deaths having resulted from this cause and its complications.

The disease was imported into Sedgefield from the City of Durham, and affected 3 families before it came under my observation, when by close isolation its further spread was arrested.

Influenza is credited with being the cause of 4 deaths. The cases which have come under my observation were not of a typical character, and the disease does not appear to have assumed an epidemic form.

Phthisis Pulmonalis is somewhat below the average of former years, 23 deaths being attributed to this cause, 5 of which occurred in the Sedgefield Division, 7 in Ferryhill, 4 in Cornforth, 6 in Trimdon, and 1 in the Union Workhouse.

Pulmonary Diseases have been the cause of 36 deaths, with a death-rate of 1.9 per thousand, which is the lowest within my experience, to record, and which may be attributed to the exceptionally mild and genial weather, which we have enjoyed during the greater part of the year.

The General Sanitation of the District is considerably improved by the Council becoming invested with the requisite powers by Order of the Local Government Board for the Scavenging of Sedgefield, Cornforth, Ferryhill, and Chilton townships. Many of the old midden privies have been abolished, and privy ashpits or pan-closets substituted, and I would strongly advise an extension of this method of removal.

The Council having adopted Part III of the Public Health Act (Amendment Act), 1890, the draft bye-laws of which are now in the hands of the Local Government Board, and may shortly be expected to come into operation, will enable the Council to effect a great improvement in the sanitary condition of the District.

The number of statutory notices served for the removal of nuisances amount to 216, whilst 3,957 nuisances have been abated.

Legal Proceedings were taken against the owners of 310 houses under the Housing of the Working Classes Act, and Closing Orders made, whilst Orders were also obtained against the owners of 6 houses under the Nuisance Clauses of the Public Health Act, 1875. Sewer extensions during the year, amount to 3,100 yards, viz:—in the Ferryhill township, 1650 yards; in Cornforth township, 1,400 yards; in Trimdon township, 650 yards, and in Chilton township, 400 yards. House Drainage has also been materially improved throughout the District.

Sewage Disposal Works. At Ferryhill village half an acre of land has been leased, and purification works erected thereon in the shape of a Cosham's patent circular tank capable of treating 10000 gallons of sewage daily, to which aluminoferric is added, and the effluent passed over the irrigation area.

At East Howle a Cosham's patent tank has been erected capable of dealing with 15,000 gallons daily, and treated in a similar manner as Ferryhill, with the effluent passing over an acre of irrigation area.

At both these places the works are complete, and have been in operation for some months past, and the process seems admirably adapted to your district. The effluent from both works, when passed into the stream, is perfectly free from smell, clear and in my opinion harmless.

At West Cornforth Disposal Works, are in course of erection also upon the Cosham tank system, but in this case the tanks are rectangular in form, and capable of dealing with 50,000 gallons daily, the effluent from which will pass over an irrigation area, 3 acres in extent.

At Trimdon Grange and Trimdon Colliery a scheme of disposal works has been passed, also on Cosham's patent and with rectangular tanks to deal with 150,000 gallons daily, with an irrigation area of 3 acres. The land has been leased, and the contract let, so that at an early date these works will also be proceeded with.

Water Supply has been maintained in good condition, and several extensions made during the year.

The Common Lodging Houses have been regularly inspected, and found to be fairly well conducted; the average number of Lodgers frequenting them weekly amounted to 201.

The number of vagrants admitted to the Casual Wards of the Workhouse amounted to 3346, against 3879 the year previous.

Building Operations include 33 new houses erected, and 114 reconstructed, viz :—in the Trimdon Township 23 new houses have been erected, and 84 reconstructed; Cornforth Township, 6 new houses erected, and 24 reconstructed; Sedgefield Township, 3 new houses erected, and 4 reconstructed; Ferryhill Township, two houses reconstructed; and Chilton Township, 1 new house erected.

Cowsheds and Dairies have had their proper share of attention, and continue to be kept in a satisfactory condition.

In conclusion I beg to tender my grateful acknowledgements to the several medical gentlemen practising within the District for their great kindness and courtesy, and also to Mr. Snowdon your Surveyor, and his assistant, to whom I am greatly indebted for the assistance they have rendered in the execution of my duties.

I am,

Mr. Chairman, and Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

Geo. R. Sheraton,

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

*Sedgefield,
January 15th., 1898.*

Table of Deaths during the Years 1878 to 1897 inclusive, in the Rural Sanitary District of Sedgefield.

[illegible]

* Explosion of "steer dumpy" at Trinidad Grange Colliery, 98 killed.

