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**Contributors**

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THE  
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL  
OF THE  
SEDFIELD UNION.



# Annual Report

OF THE  
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH  
FOR THE  
Year Ended December 31st, 1900.

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Stockton-on-Tees:

J. SHARP, PRINTER AND STATIONER, 7, SILVER STREET.

1901.

*To the Chairman and Members of the Rural District  
Council of the Sedgfield Union.*

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to bring before you my Third Annual Report concerning the health and sanitary condition of the Sedgfield Rural District, for the year ending December 31st, 1900, and in doing so I wish to state that in all the following calculations no account is taken of the Durham County Asylum, as that is a separate Public Institution, and for the purpose of forming a correct estimate of the health of your district, such returns could not fairly be included.

VITAL STATISTICS, which have been defined as the science of figures applied to the health history of communities, are chiefly dependent upon the data supplied to us by the census returns and those of your registrars of births and deaths; from which we are able to arrive at an estimate of the population and deduce the different rates therefrom, such rates for the year 1900 are calculated upon an estimated population of 19,288.

You will notice that the forms filled in with the records of statistical data that accompany this report differ from those of previous years; this alteration has been carried out at the suggestion of the Incorporated Society of Medical Officers of Health. I feel that this Society before multiplying these already too complicated returns, its energies and those of our legislators would have been first, better employed in the amendment of the evils of our present unsatisfactory system of death certification, glaring instances of which I brought to your notice in my last



annual report; for, what with the undue publicity and cheapness of the medical certificate, uncertified deaths and inquests without medical evidence, these death returns cannot contain that approximation to the truth which is essential before making deductions upon matters so vital.

THE MORTALITY from all causes reached a total of 361 deaths, being an increase of 28 on the previous year, comprising 191 males and 170 females. Regarding this increase, I regret to state that those of tender years figure too largely—nearly half of the total being children under five years of age.

The RATE of MORTALITY is 18·6 per 1000, being precisely the same rate as that for the whole County.

BIRTHS registered during the year numbered 746, a decrease of 23 compared with the previous year, and giving a birth rate per 1000 per annum of 38·6, which, though lower than in 1899, is still higher than that of the County, which is returned at 35·0 per 1000 per annum of the population.

The decline of your birth-rate is on a par with a state of affairs, according to the figures of Holt Schooling, a member of the Royal Statistical Society, which has been going on steadily during the last quarter of a century; for during the years 1874-1878 the birth-rate for England and Wales was 35·9, and the death-rate 21·5, but in the years 1894-1898 it had progressively fallen to 29·8 and the death-rate to 17·5, so that the growth of the population has only been maintained by the diminished death-rate.

THE INFANT MORTALITY—That is deaths of children under one year of age—reaches the unpleasant total of 128, and gives a death-rate per 1000 births of 158·1, this is decidedly too high, but even at that it compares favourably with the rate for the County, which, though showing a decided improvement on last year, is still 167 per 1000 births.

The following are the classified causes to which these deaths have been assigned:—Impaired Viability due to Premature Birth, Protracted and Difficult Labour, and other Congenital Conditions, 55 ; Cerebral Affections, 28 ; Pulmonary Diseases, 20 ; Gastric and Intestinal Derangements, 13 ; Zymotic Diseases, 10 : Unclassified, 2.

This large infant mortality rate is the blackest spot on all our health records, and I fear it is likely to continue until the care and training of the body becomes as much a part of our national system of education as that of the mind.

INFANT LIFE INSURANCE.—That this is an evil which undoubtedly contributes some share in the production of this high death-rate no careful and unbiassed observer will deny, but since the welfare of an infant is so easily prejudiced by overt acts of omission rather than those of active commission, the difficulties of the onus of actual proof of crime are practically insuperable, but I feel confident if the present system was entirely abolished infant life would gain in security, and no hardship would be incurred, for the decent burial of an infant is of so inexpensive nature that none but those with ulterior objects could feel the want of it.

LONGEVITY.—Thirty-one persons reached the age of seventy years and upwards, but only eight were returned as octogenarians and there were no nonogenarians.

ZYMOTIC DEATH-RATE.—This is based on the total number of deaths occurring in a district during the year due to the seven principal Zymotic Diseases, viz. :— Small-pox, Measles, Scarlatina, Diphtheria, Whooping Cough, Fever (Typhus, Typhoid, and other or doubtful forms of Continued Fever) and Diarrhoea.

The mortality from these causes numbered 38, and gives a death-rate of 1·97 per 1000, being slightly higher than that of the County rate of 1·72 for the same year.



THE NUMBER OF NOTIFICATIONS received show a marked increase of 63 on the previous year—no less a total than 305 being recorded, of which total Scarlet Fever is most unpleasantly prominent with 230, then come 43 from Erysipelas, 25 from Enteric Fever, and 5 of Continued Fever, with 2 of Diphtheria.

The deaths from these causes altogether amount to 13—six each from Scarlet and Enteric Fever respectively, and one from Diphtheria.

There were in addition 25 deaths from Zymotic Diseases which are not included in the Schedule of the Notification Act, namely, 8 from Measles, 4 from Whooping Cough, and 13 from Diarrhoea.

SCARLET FEVER I regret to state is most prevalent, no less than 230 cases having been notified during the year, being an increase of 40 cases on the previous year.

Trimdon Township heads the list with 98 cases and three deaths, closely followed by Cornforth with 92 cases and one death, Ferryhill 30 cases and two deaths, Bishopton and Sedgfield six and four cases each respectively, but no deaths.

The disease continues to be in the majority of instances of a most mild type, thus adding to the difficulties of detection and efficient isolation; and your Council must be congratulated on the steps you have taken to provide an Isolation Hospital, as it is only by the free use by the public of such institutions that any hope of effectually coping with this disease can be looked for, and I must urge you, now that so suitable a site has been fixed upon, to suffer no unnecessary delay in its completion.

DIPHTHERIA.—I am pleased to record that only two cases of this disease were notified—one being from Ferryhill Township and the other from Bishopton; the case in the Ferryhill Township terminated fatally.

ENTERIC OR TYPHOID FEVER shows a slight decline in the number of notifications—25 having been received, which compares favourably with 26 cases in 1899, and 43 cases in 1898.

Of the 25 cases notified in 1900, two occurred in the Sedgefield Township, three in the Cornforth, and 20 in the Trimdon Township.

CONTINUED FEVER shows a marked decline in the number of notifications received—only five being recorded, of which four occurred at Trimdon, and one at Cornforth, and there were no deaths from this disorder.

MEASLES have been epidemic in the Sedgefield and Trimdon Townships, in the former of which it became necessary to close the Schools, but I cannot say this had much effect in staying the progress of the epidemic, as there is a very common opinion that this ailment is one of the natural episodes of child life, and feeble attempts are made to avoid it; nevertheless it caused eight deaths, two at Sedgefield, and six at Trimdon.

WHOOPIING COUGH.—This distressing affection, while at no time has it been epidemic yet it has never been absent from the district and caused four deaths—one at Ferryhill, one at Cornforth, and two at Trimdon.

ERYSIPELAS shews a slight decline in the number of notifications—43 having been received instead of 58 in 1899; Cornforth, as usual, claims the lion's share with 24 cases, Trimdon and Ferryhill 6 each, Bishopton 1, and Sedgefield 2, and there were 4 cases at the Durham County Asylum.

INFLUENZA.—This disease has shown a marked decline both in the number and the severity of the cases recorded—only five deaths being attributed to it, and these were chiefly old people.



PHTHISIS PLUMONALIS.—The deaths from this disease show a decrease of two compared with 1899, 19 deaths having occurred from it, giving a death-rate of 0·93, which compares favourably with that of the County rate of 1·14 per 1000.

RESPIRATORY DISEASES.—The deaths from these causes show an increase of 13 on the previous year, 53 cases having been recorded, and the death rate approaches that of the County rate of 3·33, being 2·85.

INJURIES were the cause of eleven deaths, nine of which were of an accidental nature, and two suicides.

THE GENERAL SANITATION of your district continues to improve, no less than 3064 nuisances have been abated, 66 houses dealt with under the "Housing of the Working Classes Act of 1890," and your closing order obtained; but in the vexed question of scavenging there have been many complaints; and as this class of work is so lightly esteemed by contractors I fear the necessity will arise of taking the matter into your own hands, which in my opinion would be the best solution of the difficulty.

BUILDING BYE-LAWS.—Since these came into operation a marked improvement has been established; further Urban powers are, however, required to effect many most necessary improvements of the streets of Colliery Villages.

#### NUMBER OF HOUSES ERECTED AND RECONSTRUCTED.

TOWNSHIP.	Erected.	Reconstructed.
CORNFORTH ... ..	2	0
SEDFIELD ... ..	6	0
FERRYHILL ... ..	3	0
CHILTON ... ..	1	22
TRIMDON ... ..	22	10
BISHOP MIDDLEHAM ... ..	2	0



COMMON LODGING-HOUSES.—These have had proper attention and are satisfactory; the average number of lodgers frequenting them weekly being 179.

WATER SUPPLY.—The water has shown much improvement during the year, the Bradbury and Sedgefield Townships now having a most efficient supply from the mains of the Weardale and Shildon Water Company.

SEWAGE WORKS.—These have worked satisfactorily, and a commencement has been made at Coxhoe, but nothing has been done with reference to Sedgefield, to which I drew your attention in my last annual report.

COWSHEDS.—These have been regularly inspected, and as a rule kept fairly well.

In conclusion, I wish to tender my thanks to all the medical gentlemen practising in your district, and to the County Medical Officer, and to your Surveyor, Mr. Snowdon, to whom I am much indebted for assistance rendered to me in the execution of my duties.

I am, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

FREDERICK HUNTON, M.D.,

*Medical Officer of Health.*

SEDGEFIELD,

*February, 1901.*

TABLE OF DEATHS during the Years 1878 to 1900 inclusive, in the Rural Sanitary District of Sedgefield.

<sup>a</sup> Incorporation of Low Spentwood with the Spentwood Urban District, with an area of 234 acres, and a population of 1044.

\* Explosion of "ice dump" at Trinidad Orange Cullery, 68 killed.



o **EXHIBITS** during the Years 187

YEAR	Males	Females	BIRTHS			DEATHS			Mortality from a
			Total	M	F	Total	M	F	
1878	15660	1410	412	823	178	177	355	108	98
1879	15882	341	395	636	132	136	262	184	98
1880	16164	318	347	665	168	145	313	108	65
1881	16336	310	357	667	143	159	302	92	40
1882	16382	320	315	635	236	193	379	197	61
1883	16382	320	315	635	236	193	379	197	61
1884	16382	320	315	635	236	193	379	197	61
1885	16382	320	315	635	236	193	379	197	61
1886	16382	320	315	635	236	193	379	197	61
1887	16382	320	315	635	236	193	379	197	61
1888	16382	320	315	635	236	193	379	197	61
1889	16382	320	315	635	236	193	379	197	61
1890	18046	348	344	692	189	176	365	114	72
1891	18346	399	372	771	205	181	386	128	35
1892	18431	382	363	745	206	156	363	115	22
1893	18640	375	342	717	189	182	374	136	60
1894	18849	376	342	718	192	184	326	122	51
1895	18223	378	360	728	197	177	374	147	94
1896	18432	352	382	740	178	167	345	122	60
1897	18641	387	344	731	147	166	313	110	27
1898	18860	348	356	704	178	164	342	118	53
1899	19079	382	382	767	170	163	333	119	42
1900	19288	370	376	746	191	170	361	128	59

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