Copy of Report sent to
The Southwold Urban Sanitary Authority

SOUTHWOLD,

January 1898.

Gentlemen.,

I have the honour to lay before you my Medical Report for the year ending December 31st.1897.

The previous year -1896- was unique in its record and one can hardly expect a similar return this year but still 1897 compares very favourably with the average. The growth of the place still goes on apace, more than 20 new houses were built and taken possession of during the year and many new comers have taken up residence here. The population is undoubtedly increased and might now be put down at 3000 souls but for my statistics I have used that given in my last report viz, 2800 which must place them well within the mark. Before giving the death-rate I will just draw attention to one or two particulars concerning it. The senile mortality is again heavy, 19 deaths above the age of 60 were Re--gistered and 6 of these were over 80. The infant mortality too is heavy this year, 7 under one year being registered - 6 of them as "congenital debility". As regards the adult population in the prime

of life our loss was much above the average, viz 7 between the ages of 30 and 50. The total number of registered deaths was 42 but this needs correction, 3 of the number being visitors and 1 a corpse washed ashore. We have not enjoyed our usual immunity from zymotic disease, having had 5 cases of scarlatina and 4 of diphtheria. The outbreak of scarlatina began in a family in Church Street who had had communication with friends staying at Halesworth where an epi--demic was raging at the time. This was apparently the cause. One other child attending the same school contracted it a little later and also one adult. All these cases were mild. In april the fifth case occurred in another part of the town, close by about the same time 2 other children were attacked with diphtheria and died, all three cases were attributed by the medical man attending them to defective drainage, Since then these houses have been connected with the main sewer and all put in order. The remaining cases of diphtheria occurred, one in May and the other in August. The first was that of a child aged 5, clearly due to defective drainage from a leakage of sewer gas at defective joints - these were discovered and rectified. The second was that of an adult visitor, who came from London suffering from sore throat and doubtless contracted the disease there.

BIRTH-RATE.

The number of births registered was 58, viz:- 28 boys and 30 girls, giving a birth-rate of 20.7 per 1000. This is above the average.

DEATH-RATE.

Of the resident population the number of deaths recorded was 38 viz:- 15 males and 23 females, giving a death-rate of 13.5 per 1000. Besides these 3 visitors died during the year and one corpse was washed ashore.

Deaths under	1 year					=	7
,,	at	1 ,,	and under	5	years	=	2
,,	,,	5 ,,	,,	15	,,	=	1
,,	,,	15 ,,	,,	25	,,	=	1
,,	,,	25 ,,	,,	65	,,	=	10
,,	,,	65 ,,	and upwards			=	17
					Total		38.

Of the deaths occurring within the district of persons not belonging thereto (1) a female of 15 years of diabetes and coma

(2) a male about 30 ,, body of foreign sailor washed ashore

(3) a female of 46 ,, of cancer

(4) a female of 80 ,, of hemiplegia

CAUSES OF DEATH classified as required by the Local Government Board.

Diseases.	Under 5.	Over 5.	
Membranous Croup	1	1	
Phthisis	0	2	
Bronchitis Pneumonia	3	2	
Heart Disease	0	5	
All other diseases	6	18	
	10	28	Total 38.

All other diseases include Congenital debility 6. Old age & decay 9. Parturition 2. Liver, stomach & bladder diseases 4. Delirium Tremens 1. Cerebral disease 2.

NOTIFICATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The Notification Act has been in force in this Borough since 1890, measles and whooping cough not being included. Five cases of Scarlatina and four of Diphtheria have been notified during the past year.

WATER SUPPLY.

The water supply of this town is derived partly from the Water Company's Mains (the water coming from a deep well situated on the Common) and partly from surface wells distributed about the town, chiefly amongst the cottage property. As regards the former, frequent analyses prove it to be a good potable water but a little hard. It is used by a large proportion of the inhabitants - a great many new con--nections have been made in 1897. Those who use the private well water generally claim it to be good but in many cases it must be looked upon with suspicion owing to the near proximity of cesspools, very few of which are cemented. Two or three of these wells have been con--demned as unfit for drinking purposes. A great many disused wells have been discovered during the inspections of the last two years and have been filled up as ordered by your Board.

SANITARY INSPECTION.

This is carried out carefully and well by your Surveyor, Mr W.A.Clingo, to whom my thanks are due not only for the praiseworthy way in which he always carries out my directions but also for the valuable help he gives me in the course of my own inspections, either in house to house visitations or in any special case to which he calls

my attention. I am also indebted to him for many notes he has furnished me with for this report. The Inspection comprises a great deal and is not done in a mere perfunctory manner. The dairies and cowsheds are visited about 4 times a year and he reports great improvement in them. The common Lodging House (known as the "White Horse") is well drained and supplied with water and the accommodation is very fair, the rooms being well aired and the bedding clean. No complaint has arisen regarding the scavenging and the condition of the streets relative to sweeping, cleaning and watering has much improved. There is but one slaughter house, it is well looked after and all offal is carted out of the town daily. He also reports great improvement with regard to the horses, ponies and hackney carriages plying for hire, only one slight complaint being received in the summer. It was necessary to lodge complaint in two or three instances of throwing dumb-well water on the Common; ~~also~~ one case of emptying contents into the sewer: two cases of premises not fit for habitation and sundry other minor offences all of which nuisances were abated, two of the cases being dealt with in an exemplary manner by your Board.

DRAINAGE.

The system in use in this town is the "International" and it has been working now satisfactorily about two and a half years. About 400 connections have been effected and 100 of this number during 1897. Several complaints have been lodged against the main but in e v e r y instance, upon examination, the fault has been discovered in the house drains, blocking occurring through want of proper flushing to pass the syphon either in lodging houses where, after the letting season, they are partly closed or where tenants even go to the length of cutting off the water supply. In the main sewer no blocking has occurred. It is kept in

good order ,receiving constant attention, with periodical flushings. I strongly recommend however that better flushing apparatus be pro--vided, such as a 400 gallon flushing cart with a 6 inch delivery hose as it would greatly facilitate the work and lessen the time now re--quired for it. The precipitating tanks and filter beds of which two are now in actual use are working well and suffice for present needs. The effluent water after filtration is discharged into the Buss Creek and is not perceptible in this body of salt water with its natural ebb and flow. A second mixing tank for dealing with the sludge seems desirable, the one ~~now~~ in use being hardly large enough.

EXCREMENT.

Many cesspools are still in existence although their number is decreasing. The excrement from these is carted out of the town for use on land ~~at~~ Reydon. The sludge from the filter beds is freely mixed with the town ashes and is then removed to farm land at South Cove and district, some 500 loads being thus disposed of in 1897.

MEASURES OF SANITARY IMPROVEMENT NEEDED.

The main sewer having been reported on favorably it remains for me to urge that the house to house inspections be continued with a view to discovering many defects which still exist in different parts of the town owing to want of proper drainage. As already shown in first part of my report 3 cases of disease (two of them fatal) were attributed to this very cause. The remedy lies in connecting at once with the main, with a proper supply of water for flushing purposes. The latter I insist on urgently, waterless waterclosets are an abomination.

DUSTBINS.

I notice with pleasure that the large fixed brick dustbins are gradually disappearing though far too many are still to be found. The portable metal bins are now being extensively used, all the new houses being supplied with them and also much of the cottage property especially where the main drainage has been brought into use. I have already referred to the fixed bins in former reports in terms of strong condemnation. I would urge that all such be got rid of when possible and the small portable bins substituted, as being not only necessary from a sanitary point of view but also an immense saving of time and labour.

ISOLATION AND DISINFECTION.

The outbreak of Scarlatina in the early part of the year, mild though it proved, brought home to us the necessity of providing some suitable place for isolation and disinfection, none such existing at present. The commencement of this trouble occurred in a small cottage where was a large family of children and great difficulty was experienced in isolating the patients.

MORTUARY.

Again this past year have we been confronted with the difficulty of having no mortuary. Another decomposing body was washed ashore and there was no place for its reception but in the town workshop. A small shed suitable for the purpose might be built at the rear of this at small cost and it is very desirable for reasons I pointed out in my last report.

OVERCROWDING.

I referred to this also in my report of 1896 and steps have been taken since to remedy the evil. Notices have been served in two cases of overcrowding lately. It appears to arise from insufficient cottage accommodation for the poorer population, many of whom have large families.

MARSHES.

Some attention has been given during the past year tocleaning out the ditches, but that known as the Californian Marsh as far as the boathouse needs attention as also that along the wall leading to Walberswick owing to the large amount of deposit left by the abnormally high tide of November last.

METEOROLOGICAL DATA.

A systematic record has been kept since 1896 with a view to testing the value of the place as a health resort as regards dryness of atmosphere, equableness of temperature and amount of bright sunshine as these are matters that tell greatly in favour of the general health. As yet of course one has only the records of one or two years to judge from and no real average estimate can be deduced but in course of years these records will prove of great value and in time I hope to see a good station established here. The few data now appended for 1897, which have been carefully and conscientously collected, will compare very favorably with those of other places.

TEMPERATURE:- Mean for the year 49.5, Mean Max 54.8, Mean Min 44.2. Our mean daily range in only about 10.5 degrees, showing a fairly equable climate: we do not suffer from extremes of heat and cold.

RAINFALL:- This is small even for the East Coast of which the average is about 25 inches annually. That at Southwold in 1897 was only 19.5 inches.

BRIGHT SUNSHINE:- In this respect Southwold is greatly favor--ed, we had 1680 hours of bright sunshine during the year. From the first of March to the end of October, a period of 8 months, we had only 11 sunless days (viz, when no sun was visible) and only 60 throughout the year.

WIND:- The wind lay chiefly in the West quarter but it ranged a good deal also in the S.E. during this year. Our prevailing wind is certainly West. A notion prevalent amongst visitors and others is that we get nothing but East wind.

In conclusion gentlemen, I would observe that I have endea--voured to make my report exhaustive and as far as possible fair and impartial. Whilst recounting the good I have not hidden the bad but in reading it over one cannot but observe how few defects are now to be found in comparison with the many that existed but a short time since. So much good work has been done during the past two or three years through your agency, so many improvements have been effected that this town is fast developing into an ideal place. I do not imply that we have yet attained perfection: there are defects still to remedy but we are in the right way. To sum up, the drainage is good and effective, the water supply is very fair indeed, dust refuse and all excrement carefully collected and disposed of, new roads have been made and nearly all are in capital condition - well lighted and kept clean - the healthy sea--breezes, the gravel soil, the equableness of climate, the large amount of bright sunshine and its thoroughly insular position, all these, I repeat, make of Southwold an ideal resort during a great portion of the year for all invalids and for those who are desirous of obtaining that

thorough rest, quiet and change so indispensable after such arduous work. Everything points to a bright and prosperous future and to you gentlemen the community at large owes a debt of gratitude for the splendid work you have lately effected in bringing about so many happy results.

I remain, Gentlemen

Your obedient servant

A. C. Herbert

Med. Off. Health