

[Report 1895] / Medical Officer of Health, Standish-with-Langtree U.D.C.

Contributors

Standish-with-Langtree (England). Urban District Council.

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Dear Sir,

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J. H. Wilson

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Annual Report for Urban District

Standish with Langtree 1895.

STANDISH.

Dr. J. H. Wilson, medical officer to the Standish Urban District Council, presented the following report to the members on the health of the township:—Gentlemen,—I have much pleasure in laying before you the annual report for the past year. The following are the vital statistics:—Births registered, 258; rate per 1,000, 44.1; deaths, 120; rate, 20.5; rate of infant deaths under one year to 1,000 births, 155.11; death rate from seven principal zymotic diseases per 1,000 population, 2.05. For an easy comparison of the vital statistics for the years 1894 and 1895 I have arranged these in tabular form.

	1894	1895	Increase.	Decrease.
Estimated Pop.	5,716	5,850	134	..
Reg. Births	229	258	29	..
Reg. Deaths	135	120	..	16
Birth rate	40.1	44.1	4 per 1000	..
Death rate	23.7	20.5	..	3.2 per 1000
Death rate from zymotica ...	4.19	2.05	..	2.04 per 1000
Rate of Deaths under 1 year to 1,000 births ..	2.9	155.11	..	53.89 per 1,000 births
Deaths under 5	82	61	..	21
Deaths over 5	54	59	5	..

From the table it will be seen that the death rate has materially diminished, the birth rate increased, the death rate from zymotic disease improved, and the rate of infant mortality per 1,000 births decreased by 50. The diminution in the infant mortality rate is especially gratifying, as it is regarded by many sanitarians as an index of the sanitary status of a district, is the item in the vital statistics of many working class populations which most calls for comment, is most difficult of explanation, and its reduction one of the most arduous tasks which the sanitary reformer can attempt. The zymotic diseases which prevailed during the year were scarlet fever, enteric fever, whooping cough, and epidemic diarrhoea. Cases of scarlet fever were notified in the months of January, February, March, April, May, June, July, and August, but none during September, October, November, or December. All the usual precautionary measures were adopted to stop the infection, and its continuance, in spite of these, was believed to be due to the mild cases which did not come under medical supervision, the affected children being allowed to mix freely with others during the stage of desquamation. Twenty-two cases of enteric fever were notified during the year, 14 of the number occurring during the last quarter. The district was free from this affection during the months of April, May, and June. The locality where most of the cases occurred was Church-street, and the explanation is probably to be found in a system of old stone drains, which served originally to carry sewage matter before the construction of the present sewerage system, giving rise to a contaminated subsoil. Action has been taken by the Council, which it is hoped will be successful in removing the danger from this source. The sewer in this neighbourhood has also been more efficiently ventilated, and several of the drains which were considered defective were taken up and relaid. Whooping cough prevailed during October and November, and seriously threatened to become as epidemic as in the winter of 1894, when 13 deaths

were attributed to this scourge of infant life. I drew up a few simple instructions, explaining to parents how to deal with the affected children. The Council had these printed and distributed among the people, and they appear to have had the desired effect, for though the season was exceptionally favourable to the extension of the epidemic, I was able in December to inform the Council that it had entirely abated, only two deaths having occurred. Influenza was rife during the months of March and April, causing six deaths, death being due in each case to one or other of the complications, which constitute the main danger of this affection. In buildings recently erected water closets have been provided, and have been found to be a great improvement on the old privy system. The sewage is disposed of on the board's farm by the intermittent downward filtration process. The area of land available for use is 42 acres. The sewage is filtered five times through the land, and is finally led on to a filter bed composed of clinkers, ashes, and sand, and the results obtained are, to my mind, very satisfactory. Samples of the effluent have been frequently taken by the inspectors of the County Council, and have all been considered satisfactory, with one single exception, and in this case the unsatisfactory condition of the effluent was due to an accidental cause, viz., the displacement of one of the service pipes on the farm by the large volume of storm water following heavy rain. As the Council have under consideration a scheme for dealing with the storm waters of the village by a separate system, the total volume of the sewage to be dealt with on the farm will be much diminished, so that we anticipate that when this scheme is completed there will be no difficulty in keeping the quality of the effluent up to the standard imposed by the County Council, whilst at the same time one of the most frequent causes of failure in this respect will be removed. The application of the Council to the Corporation of Wigan for power to turn the Lower Ground sewage into their main conduit was granted, and though the work of laying the pipes has been in progress some time, I regret that it is not yet completed. Disinfectants are supplied by the Council free of cost for use in all infectious cases. The representatives of the Standish Estate have done much to improve the condition of this estate during the past year, and it is now in a more satisfactory condition. The removal of refuse is still effected by contract, and in my opinion this work is properly performed. The Isolation Hospital for smallpox cases is still maintained, but fortunately has not recently been required. The cowsheds, dairies, and bakehouses are in satisfactory condition, but the erection of a public abattoir would be of great public benefit. One hundred and eight notices were served for the abatement of nuisances, 86 of which were complied with, the rest are receiving further consideration.

