

**[Report 1898] / Medical Officer of Health, Thornton U.D.C.**

**Contributors**

Thornton (England). Urban District Council.

**Publication/Creation**

1898

**Persistent URL**

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/wy6vaxvq>

**License and attribution**

You have permission to make copies of this work under a Creative Commons, Attribution license.

This licence permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See the Legal Code for further information.

Image source should be attributed as specified in the full catalogue record. If no source is given the image should be attributed to Wellcome Collection.



Wellcome Collection  
183 Euston Road  
London NW1 2BE UK  
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722  
E [library@wellcomecollection.org](mailto:library@wellcomecollection.org)  
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

# ANNUAL REPORT

FOR 1898,

OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE

**THORNTON URBAN SANITARY AUTHORITY.**

---

---

*To the Chairman and Members of the Thornton Urban District Council.*

*Gentlemen,*

I beg to present to you my Annual Report for the year 1898, with the Vital Statistics and Tables; and some account of the Sanitary work accomplished and required in your district.

As is well known, it is doubtful what the future government of this district will be, owing to the possible absorption of Thornton into the City of Bradford. On that account, I must be careful in the statements I make; but I will endeavour to specify very clearly and fully what I consider to be the requirements of the district to bring it into a state of sanitary efficiency. And, by-the-way, I may say that your Council has during the past seven or eight years, in the face of great difficulties, of which the financial aspect has been not the least serious; made great and praiseworthy efforts to bring the sanitation of the district up to present day requirements.

Among the schemes carried out, I may mention the building of an Isolation Hospital, jointly with the Urban Councils of Wilsden and Clayton, in the year 1892, at a cost of about £3000.

In the year 1891 your Council adopted the Infectious Diseases Notification Act, which made it possible to find out any Infectious Diseases, and isolate them before they assumed epidemic form.

In the year 1895 the Sewage Works were constructed at a cost of a little over £4000, to meet the requirements of part of the district.

Efforts have also been made to secure a larger supply of good water for public consumption.

And in 1898 your Council adopted a scheme for the main drainage of an important part of the district at an estimated cost of about £2200.

Whether these various schemes have been carried out to the best advantage or not, it is not my intention now to discuss; but there can be no doubt that they have and will tend to the improvement of the public health of the district. What still remains to be done I will state later on in this report.

*Population.*—It is impossible to form a correct estimate of the population in 1898. According to the usual way of reckoning, as the population of Thornton was on the decrease during the decade from 1881 to 1891, it should by the middle of 1898 have been reduced to 5403; that is a decrease of 277 since the census of 1891. But taking into account the increase of births over deaths, and the number of new houses built and occupied, and the comparatively few houses unoccupied, I feel justified in taking the figures of 1891, viz :—5680, as a probably fair estimate for June, 1898.

*Births.*—The total number of births registered during the year 1898 was 138, of which 59 were males, and 79 females. This gives a birth rate equal to 24·2 per thousand. Or if I estimate the population at 5403, the birth rate would be equal to 25·5 per thousand. Both these rates are below what it has been for many years back. The rate for England & Wales for 1898 was 29·4 per thousand.

*Deaths.*—The total number of deaths registered during the year was 96, of which 49 were males, and 47 females; giving a death rate equal to 16·9 per thousand. Or, again if I take the population at 5403, the rate is 17·7 per thousand. That for England & Wales being 17·6. This shows a gratifying reduction for in 1897 it was 18·4.

The distribution according to age of these 96 deaths was as follows :—

Under 1 year	1 and under 5	5 and under 15	15 and under 25	25 and under 65	65 and upwards
19	6	1	7	35	28

In the previous year the numbers were respectively :

28	13	1	3	33	27
----	----	---	---	----	----

These figures show that the number of deaths in adult life was about the same in both years, but that among children under five years of age there were 16 fewer deaths in 1898, as compared with 1897. That shows a very satisfactory improvement.

In the following table I have classified the deaths according to their causes :

*Class I. Zymotic Diseases.*

Typhoid Fever	...	...	...	4
Diphtheria	...	...	...	1
Whooping Cough	...	...	...	1
Diarrhœa	...	...	...	1

*Class II. Constitutional Diseases.*

Cancer	...	...	...	5
Phthisis.	...	...	...	9
Tubercular Meningitis	...	...	...	1
Goitre	...	...	...	1

*Class III. Local Diseases.*

<i>a</i> Nervous System, including Apoplexy, Convulsions, Paralysis, &c.	...	...	...	11
<i>b</i> Vascular System, Heart Disease	...	...	...	12
<i>c</i> Respiratory System, Bronchitis, Pneumonia, &c.	...	...	...	21
<i>d</i> Digestive System, Diabetes, Dyspepsia, &c.	...	...	...	5
<i>e</i> Urinary System, Cystitis, Bright's Disease, &c.	...	...	...	4

*Class IV. Developmental System.*

Defective Development	...	...	...	7
Old Age	...	...	...	11
Teething	...	...	...	1
<i>Accidental Death</i>	...	...	...	1

Total 96

The various rates of mortality were as follows :

*Infantile Mortality.*—19 children died before attaining the age of one year, which is equal to a rate of 137 deaths per 1000 births registered. In the previous year it was equal to 168 per 1000 births. The rate for England & Wales was equal to 161.

This decrease is very gratifying, and goes to show that the lower general death rate is not due to a wrong estimate of the population, but rather to a decreased mortality among infants, which is reckoned according to the number of births, and not to the population.

*Zymotic Death Rate.*—There were 7 deaths registered from the principal Zymotic diseases, giving a death rate equal to 1·2 per thousand of population. In the previous year it was 1·05, and in England & Wales it was equal to 2·22.

*Phthisis Death Rate.*—There were 9 deaths from Phthisis, giving a rate equal to 1·5 per thousand of population. In the previous year it was 1·2.

*Respiratory Death Rate.*—There were 21 deaths registered from the other diseases of the respiratory organs, such as Bronchitis, Pneumonia, &c., giving a death rate equal to 3·6 per thousand of population. In the previous year it was equal to 3·3.

These rates all show a very slight increase over the previous year, but call for no further comment.

*Infectious Diseases.*—There were 21 cases of Infectious diseases notified during the year 1898. They were as follows :

Enteric Fever	...	14
Scarlet Fever	...	1
Diphtheria	...	2
Erysipelas.	...	4

The chief item among these is the 14 cases of Enteric Fever, which caused no little alarm and anxiety ; and I regret to say also 4 deaths. The first case was reported on April 7th, the second on May 27th, the third on June 28th ; then from August 6th to September 5th, there were 9 cases notified ; 5 of these being members of one family. Then there were no more cases until December, when 2 more cases were notified, one on the 12th and the other on the 21st of the month.

I enquired carefully into all these cases, but could not trace any direct cause, nor the origin ; except that the first case was that of a young man whose daily employment was in Keighley, and he may have contracted the disease there. Also, in the early cases there did not appear to be any connection one with the other.

I examined the dwellings of these cases, and found some sanitary defects, in some cases in connection with the house drains, in others the ash-pits and closets. These I reported at the time, and they have since been remedied.

I also visited and examined the sources of the Milk supply, which was different in almost every case. The various cow-sheds were mostly dirty, dark, and badly ventilated; yet I could not attribute the disease to any of them.

Two or three of the cases had worked in the same room at one of the mills, and it was thought possible that the disease had come from there. But these cases were not the first to commence, and they were separated at such an interval one from the other, that I believe there was no connection between them. I visited the mill and examined the closets, and found them fairly clean, and free from smell. I recommended, however, the substitution of water closets for the present arrangements.

The water supply of nearly all the cases was from the Council's service. And that seemed to be the only thing common to all. But if that had been the cause, one would have expected the epidemic to have assumed more wide-spread dimensions.

I believe the cause was local sanitary defects in most of the cases.

Of these 14 cases of Typhoid, 9 were removed to the Hospital for isolation and treatment, of which 3 died in that institution; and one case died at her own house. Many of the cases were extremely mild, and were going about again within two or three weeks of commencing to be ill. And one case was certified as having died of Meningitis three weeks after having been notified as suffering from Typhoid Fever.

The one case of Scarlet Fever was notified in March. It had, undoubtedly, contracted the disease in the Queensbury district, where it had been staying, and where that disease then existed. It was isolated in the hospital, and no further cases occurred.

Of the two cases of Diphtheria, one was removed to the hospital the same day as notified, and died on the following day. The other case was so mild that it was running about apparently well, when the inspector visited the house two days after it was notified.

The four cases of Erysipelas call for no special comment, not being due to any sanitary defect.

*Diarrhœa* has been particularly prevalent during the greater part of the year. In January and February there was a large number of cases, which I believed to be due to the cold and very wet weather. In May more cases occurred, and in July, August, and September, there were numerous cases of a severe character; many of them accompanied with fever which lasted generally for about a week.

*Influenza* also appeared in the district, particularly in the early months of the year.

*Whooping Cough* first broke out in May, and rapidly became epidemic, a very large number of young children suffering from it. It continued until the end of the year, being at its height about August & September, and then gradually declining

*Chicken Pox* also existed to a considerable extent, especially about October and November. There were also two or three cases of Measles, several cases of German Measles, and in the early months of the year several cases of Mumps.

---

## SANITARY WORK.

Under this heading the chief item of interest was the adoption of plans for the main sewerage of an important part of the district. It comprised three separate sections. 1st, in West Lane; 2nd, in Saggate Lane and Market Street; 3rd, in the New Road, from the Church to Green Lane Top. A Local Government Board enquiry was held, and borrowing powers sanctioned for the necessary expenses. Sections 1 and 2 of this scheme have been let to contractors at a cost I have already stated, and are to be completed before the end of 1899. The 3rd section has been dropped for the present. When this drainage has been carried out, it will prove to be very beneficial to a central and thickly populated part of the district.

I think it desirable that your Council should at once provide a main sewer along the New Road, extending from Albion Place to Green Lane Top, as the greater part of this is unprovided with a proper sewer, and the population along this road and in the streets running off it is very considerable.

As shewn in Table C, about 250 yards of new pipe sewers were laid during the year.

*Scavenging.*—The Scavenging has been done by a contractor, at a cost of £150 for twelve months. Upon the whole he has attended to it very well, but there have been some complaints of carelessness in emptying the Ashpits.

*Slaughter Houses.*—These have been inspected by your Nuisance Inspector and by myself from time to time. They have been kept clean. But as I have before stated, from their number, and the great distance apart of some of them, an efficient inspection, especially of the cattle slaughtered, is impossible. Also several of them are situated in the midst of dense population, and so are of necessity a nuisance, and dangerous to health. I consider a public abattoir is most desirable for Thornton.

---

## WATER SUPPLY.

The water supply to most parts of the district is very good. But again I must call your attention to the needs of the Mountain district. Now that Queensbury has provided a Tank for the supply of its part of that district, I think your Council should endeavour to make terms with them for the supply of the Thornton part of that district.

I would also call your attention to the importance of guarding the gathering ground at Hill Top of our water supply ; and to prevent any possible pollution. This might be done by the provision of sewerage, and the re-construction of the many privy-middens which are in a bad sanitary condition. And the water should be analysed at more frequent intervals.

In conclusion I venture to say that the chief sanitary needs of the district are as follows :

The provision of main sewers upon the lines indicated above, with also a few further extensions, especially in the Hill Top district.

The drainage, flagging and paving of side streets, which I have been advocating for years.

The re-construction of privy-middens in all parts of the district, for there are at present only about half of them in a sanitary condition, and some are abominable in the extreme. There is also need for further provision of conveniences to some dwellings. Many houses being quite unprovided with closets of

their own, and have to depend upon the good-will of others, which again causes there to be too many families for one closet.

The condition of privy-middens I consider to be one of the worst features of Thornton, and most in need of attention.

The water supply, as I have before stated, requires to be closely guarded and inspected regularly. The Mountain district is in need of a public supply of wholesome water.

The milk supply of the district requires more attention. The cowsheds in many cases being quite unfit for their purpose. Considering the importance of the milk supply to every individual in the district, I think the orders regulating this supply should be strictly carried out.

The slaughter houses I believe can only be made perfect by the provision of a public slaughter house, and the closing of the rest.

I append Tables A, B, and C duly filled up.

I am, gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

A. E. TUNSTALL,

L.R.C.P., and L.R.C.S., Ed.,

Medical Officer of Health.

*Rose Cottage, Thornton,*

*February 15th, 1899.*