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BOROUGH OF TOTNES.



ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH,

FOR THE YEAR 1903.



TOTNES :

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FOR THE YEAR 1903.

TOTNES,

11th FEBRUARY, 1904.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to hand you my Annual Report for the year 1903.

Vital Statistics.—

Population.—The Population has been estimated to have remained the same as at the Census of 1901, viz., 4,034. During the three years, 1901, 1902 and 1903, there have been 72 more births than deaths in the Borough, but as the population diminished during the preceding ten years it would not be safe to estimate an increased population on that ground.

The average population for the preceding ten years, 1893 to 1902 (both inclusive), is 4083·4.

Births.—The number of Births during the preceding ten years has been 913, equal to an average of 91·3 per annum, and a birth-rate of 22·36 per thousand calculated upon the average population of 4083·4.

The number of Births in 1903 was 89, equal to a birth-rate of 22·06 per thousand. That for England and Wales for the same period was 28·4 per thousand, and for Rural England and Wales 27·3. The Totnes birth-rate is therefore slightly below the average for the preceding ten years, and very considerably below that of the Country generally.

Deaths.—The number of Deaths in the Borough during the preceding ten years was 663, an average of 66·3 per annum, and equal to a mortality of 16·24 per thousand per annum.

The total number of deaths registered in 1903 was 71, of these 18 occurred in the Workhouse and one in the Cottage Hospital. The whole of these 19 were non-residents of Totnes, so that the corrected total of deaths for the Borough is 52, equal to a mortality of 12·89 per thousand.

The death-rate for England and Wales during 1903 is 15·4 per thousand living, and for Rural England and Wales 14·8, and for 103 of the smaller towns 14·6. It will thus be seen that the rate for last year is more than 20 per cent. less than the average for the preceding ten years, and although the death-rate throughout the country was low in 1903, that for Totnes is very far below it.

The 19 deaths of non-residents of Totnes referred to above which occurred in the Workhouse and Cottage Hospital, and have therefore been registered in this district, should be added to those for the districts to which they belong. I therefore append particulars—

2	were residents of	Paignton,	} Workhouse
4	„	Brixham,	
2	„	Dartmouth,	
2	„	Buckfastleigh,	
2	„	Harberton,	
2	„	Cornworthy,	
1	was a resident of	Ugborough,	
1	„	Staverton,	
1	„	Churston Ferrers,	
1	„	Brent,	
1	„	Brent,—Cottage Hospital.	

Zymotic Mortality.—There were two deaths from Enteric Fever, and one from Whooping Cough, making a total of 3 equal to mortality under this heading of ·7436 per thousand. One of the cases of Enteric Fever was imported.

The following tables show the deaths due to the principal epidemic diseases during the preceding ten years:—

	1893	'94	'95	'96	'97	'98	'99	1900	'01	'02
Measles	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
Diphtheria	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Whooping Cough ..	3	0	0	0	0	5	1	0	0	0
Enteric Fever	2	3	3	3	0	0	1	0	0	1
Simple Continued Fever	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Totals..	5	3	10	4	0	6	2	1	3	1

Whooping Cough	9
Enteric Fever	13
Measles	10
Diphtheria	2
Simple Continued Fever ..	1

Total.. 35

equal to an average annual mortality of ·8571 per thousand of the average population for the ten years, viz., 4083·4.

The death-rate for England and Wales from the seven chief epidemic diseases for 1903 is 1·46, the rate for Totnes last year is therefore rather below the average for the preceding ten years and equal to about half that for England and Wales.

Phthisis.—The number of deaths from this cause in 1903 has been 6 (one less than last year), equal to a mortality of 1·487 per thousand. This is rather below the average. The average age at death was 35·6 years.

Cancer.—Three deaths from Cancer were registered during the year, equal to a mortality of ·743 per thousand. The average age at death was 62 years.

Accident.—Four deaths from Accident, two of which were from drowning in the Dart, and two Suicides have occurred during the year.

Infant Mortality.—During the preceding ten years there have been 105 deaths of infants under one year of age out of 913 born during the same period. This is equal to a mortality of 115 per thousand births, the highest number was 18 in 1895 and the lowest 4 in 1897. The yearly average was 10·5.

Five deaths under one year of age was registered in 1903 to the 89 births registered during the same period, so that the infant mortality for the year is equal to 56·18 per thousand births, that for England and Wales is 132 per thousand births. The average rate for the ten years is thus considerably below that for England and Wales, and that for last year is less than half the average rate for the preceding ten years.

Ages.—21 of the 52 deaths were of persons over 65 years of age.

Cases Notified.—11 cases of Infectious Disease were notified during the year, six of these were of Erysipelas, three of Scarlet Fever and two of Enteric Fever. The three cases of Scarlet Fever were in one house.

Drainage.—No further progress has been made with the New Sewerage Works during the year. I understand that an application for a New Loan is now before the Local Government Board for the construction of the Outfall Works.

Water.—The supply during the year has been satisfactory in quality and quantity. In 1902 there was reason to believe that the Broomborough Water Supply was liable to pollution from the farm-yard, which is situated near the source of supply. This farm-yard had not been used as a farm-yard for about 40 years until 1902 when it was again stocked and became a source of danger to the Water Supply. An adit was driven into the hill considerably above the farm-yard, a good supply of water obtained and carried in iron pipes from that spot. Since then the water has been under observation and good reports of samples sent them, have been received from Dr. Winter Blythe and the Plymouth Borough Analyst, Dr. Bean.

Scavenging.—The difficulty as to the disposal of the house refuse without detriment to the neighbourhood still exists and is engaging the attention of the Sanitary Authority.

Overcrowding.—No case of overcrowding has come to my notice during the year, although inspections have been made for the purpose of ascertaining whether it existed.

Piggeries.—These have been kept under observation, but no alteration has been made in the Bye-Law which permits them to exist at a distance of 30 feet from a dwelling house.

Dairies.—Inspection has shown that these have been kept in a sanitary state. There has been no Veterinary Inspection of Cows.

Slaughter-Houses have been inspected and found in good sanitary condition.

A considerable number of houses and drains have been inspected during the year and sanitary defects remedied. Bye-Laws have been duly enforced, and the provisions of the Factory and Workshops Act have been carried out.

A very serious fire broke out in one of the shops in High Street, on January 26th, this spread and destroyed the two adjoining houses in addition to the one in which it commenced. There was no loss of life.

The Rainfall during the year was 51·59 inches, as compared with 36·56 inches in 1902 and 39·95 inches in 1901. The driest month was June with a rainfall of 1·58 inches, and the largest amount of rain fell in October, viz., 9·05 inches.

The year 1903 has been remarkable in two ways, the death-rate has been considerably lower than that of any previous year of which I have any record, and the rainfall exceeds by several inches that of any recorded in preceding years.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

KENNETH R. SMITH, M.D., D.P.H. Lond.