

**[Report 1902] / Medical Officer of Health, Wantage U.D.C.**

**Contributors**

Wantage (England). Urban District Council.

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WANTAGE,  
BERKS.

To the Urban Sanitary Authority.

GENTLEMEN,

The following is my Annual Report for the Urban District of Wantage, for the year 1902.

GEOLOGY.

The area is 2,296 acres.

The geological formation of the Southern part is chalk, of the Northern part chiefly greensand.

VITAL STATISTICS.

The population at the last Census (1901) numbered 3,766.

DEATHS.

The total deaths registered in the District numbered 57, equal to a rate of 15 per 1000 of the population, but if we exclude those not belonging to District, who died in the Union Workhouse or Cottage Hospital, we have 49, this is at the rate of 12.9 per 1000, and is the lowest since 1893, when the death rate was 11 per 1000.

BIRTHS.

The births were 87, equal to 23 per 1000.

INFECTIOUS AND NOTIFIABLE DISEASES.

The following were reported to me:—

*Diphtheria* 11 cases, all recovered.  
*Scarlet Fever* 3 cases, ditto.  
*Enteric Fever* 4 cases, ditto.  
*Erysipelas* 11 cases, ditto.

Except Influenza, there was no epidemic during the year, the above cases occurring at different times and in different parts of the town.

DEATHS FROM INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Compared with the previous five years the figures are:—

	1897	1898	1899	1900	1901	1902
Enteric Fever ...		1			1	
Diphtheria ...	2					
Influenza ...		2	5	3	6	2
Scarlet Fever ...				1		
Measles ...		3				
Erysipelas ...						
Whooping Cough ...			3			1
Puerperal Fever ...						

#### ENTERIC FEVER.

Four cases were reported during the year, but none had a fatal termination. The first case occurred in May, in Newbury Street, its origin could not be traced; the second and third cases were in Partridge's Row, Wallingford Street, sanitary defects were found in the Cottages. The fourth case in the Market Place was imported from Southsea.

In all the above cases strict precautions were taken to prevent the disease from spreading, and any sanitary defects found were remedied.

#### DIPHTHERIA.

Eleven cases, mostly of mild type were reported, all of whom recovered.

#### INFLUENZA.

This disease was very prevalent during the Winter and Spring, causing two deaths.

#### SMALL POX.

We were quite exempt from this disease in the Urban area; though many cases occurred in the neighbouring towns and villages. A great many primary and re-vaccinations were performed.

#### WATER SUPPLY.

That from the Company's Mains is pure, with the exception of the chalk it contains. The water from the surface wells is all more or less impure.

#### HOUSE ACCOMMODATION FOR THE WORKING CLASSES.

Is fairly good, and there is little over-crowding: the average number of persons to each house is between four and five. A great many of the old and un-sanitary houses have been pulled down and new ones erected.

Important factors in the healthiness of dwelling houses are damp-proof floors, large windows which can readily be opened, and as much air space as practicable around.

#### SEWAGE.

During the year the new system of drainage has been completed; this is known as Bacterial or Septic Tank method: it seems most efficient, and apparently solves, what for years has been a difficult problem. I have examined the effluent, and it seems quite inodorous and innocuous.

#### FOOD.

My attention has not been called to any case where unwholesome food has been exposed for sale.

#### OFFENSIVE TRADES.

None exist in the District.

#### FACTORY AND WORKSHOPS ACT, 1901.

In compliance with this Act, which came into operation on January 1st, 1902, I have visited the Workshops in my district and they appear to comply with the provisions of the Statute, both as regards cleanliness, air space, ventilation, and suitable sanitary conveniences.

SYSTEMATIC INSPECTION of my District has been made as required by the Local Government Board.

SUMMARY OF WORK DONE DURING THE YEAR.

Houses inspected	...	...	...	118
Drains, Water-courses, Sewers inspected				27
Wells examined	...	...	...	15
Samples of Water examined	...	...	...	23

I have much pleasure in stating that your Inspector, Mr. Belcher, has given me most efficient help in carrying out my duties as Medical Officer of Health.

Appended are the usual Table of Statistics and Mr. Belcher's Report.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

THOMAS G. EMERSON, M.D.,

Medical Officer of Health.

*February 23rd, 1903.*

