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Borough of



Wednesbury.

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# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH,

FOR THE YEAR ENDED DEC. 31st, 1900.

WALTER C. GARMAN, M.D., EDIN.,

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

Printed by Order of the Town Council.

WEDNESBURY :

T. SOUTHERN AND SON, PRINTERS.

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## BOROUGH OF WEDNESBURY.

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# Report upon the Health of Wednesbury, FOR THE YEAR 1900,

BY

WALTER GARMAN, M.D., Edin., Medical Officer of Health.

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TO THE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE WEDNESBURY  
TOWN COUNCIL.

MR. MAYOR AND GENTLEMEN,

I have pleasure in presenting to you my Annual Report for the year 1900. The statistics are calculated upon an assumed population of 26,000, as was done in the two preceding years. In the course of a few months we shall obtain the figures accurately from the census returns. The Borough Surveyor tells me that 23 new houses have been erected during the year. Further I have ascertained that no habitable houses are at present void. Such dwellings as are unoccupied are closed by the Sanitary Authority owing to their insanitary condition.

### I.—VITAL STATISTICS.

The number of births registered during 1900 was 935 (males 461, females 464) which is equal to a birth-rate of 35·5 per 1,000 of the population. The natural increase of births over deaths was 399. The deaths from all causes numbered 526, which is equal to a death-rate of 20·2 per 1,000 of the population. The deaths of children under 5 years of age numbered 266 or 50·05 per cent of the total deaths. Of these 161 were under one year of age.

The following table furnishes an analysis of deaths under 5 years of age during the past five years :—

	1896	1897	1898	1899	1900
Premature Birth and Wasting Diseases ...	75	82	69	81	64
Bronchitis and Pneumonia ...	44	33	47	30	39
Scarlatina ...	2	6	—	3	4
Measles ...	49	8	16	2	59
Whooping Cough ...	10	6	12	21	1
Diarrhœa ...	5	36	59	59	43
Diphtheria ...	5	1	—	—	—
Other Causes ...	81	95	46	45	56
	271	267	249	241	266
Percentage of Total Deaths ...	51·3	53·5	51·2	50·2	50·05

These figures shew what has been observed in most years, viz : the occurrence of half the total deaths amongst children under five years of age. In this connection I have nothing to add to what I have stated on previous occasions.

The next table gives the deaths due to zymotic disease, 116 in number and equal to a death-rate of 4·4 per 1000. For the purpose of comparison the corresponding figures for the preceding four years are included in the table :—

	1896	1897	1898	1899	1900
Smallpox ...	—	—	—	—	—
Fever,—Simple continued, and Typhoid ...	5	4	10	4	4
Scarlet Fever ...	3	10	—	4	6
Measles ...	53	9	18	2	59
Diphtheria ...	5	2	—	—	—
Diarrhœa ...	6	39	63	65	46
Whooping Cough ...	10	6	12	22	1
Total ...	82	70	103	97	116
Death-rate per 1,000 ...	3·2	2·7	3·9	3·7	4·4



Reference must be made to the very fatal nature of the measles epidemic which occasioned no fewer than 59 deaths. It is difficult to say anything upon this subject, although the disease was responsible for no less than 11·2 per cent of the deaths from all causes. Public opinion is, so far, opposed to the idea of isolating measles or to regarding the disease seriously; and I am convinced that the town will regard this very heavy death-list with perfect equanimity. So long as this is the case, and so long as the public continue to view measles as a trifling ailment, not even calling for medical advice until some serious complication is superadded to the main attack, so long shall we continue to record a long list of fatal cases whenever the disease becomes epidemic. The very heavy mortality from measles, and this alone accounts for the unusually high zymotic death-rate, viz :—4·4 per 1000, a rate which is altogether excessive for Wednesbury, and the highest recorded during the past decade.

It is convenient at this point to refer to the working of the Notification of Infectious Diseases Act during the year. The total number of cases notified was 254 made up as follows : Diphtheria 28 ; Membranous Croup 3 ; Erysipelas 26 ; Scarlet Fever 154 ; Enteric Fever 42 ; and Puerperal Fever 1. The cost to the town for these notifications amounted to £31 15s. 0d., or £1 4s. 6d. per 1000 of the population. This cannot fail to be satisfactory to the Council. The fact that no deaths resulted from Diphtheria, although 26 cases were notified, strikes one as peculiar, and points to a very mild type of the disease, allowing that all the cases notified were truly diphtheritic in character. It will be observed that no fewer than 154 cases of Scarlatina were notified, and these were not limited to any one period of the year, but were spread over the entire twelve months. Here again it may be said that the type of the disease was distinctly mild, the deaths only numbering six. The returns shew that 42 cases of Enteric Fever occurred during the year, with 4 deaths, a number which tends to indicate that many of the cases were of a mild type. It will be seen from the Sanitary Inspector's Report that 92 houses were disinfected during the year. Most of these disinfections were after Scarlatina. Seeing that a large number of the cases at the end of the year were still under treatment, and that in some instances several cases of Fever occurred in the same house, this record may be regarded as quite satisfactory.

Epidemic, or, as we may almost say Endemic Influenza was responsible during the year for 10 deaths. This is greatly to be regretted, but up to the present time no means are available for controlling the spread of this troublesome and fatal malady. It is almost a pity that the disease has no constant and distinctive rash to indicate the presence of the poison. If this were so, the affection would be seriously regarded by the public, which at present is not the case.

The next table gives the mortality from pulmonary disease : —

Year.	Bronchitis and Pneumonia.	Phthisis.	Total.
1896	96	20	116
1897	73	26	99
1898	97	20	117
1899	73	21	94
1900	83	35	118

Following is a statement of the vaccination performed during the year ending June, 1900.

Births Registered.	Successfully vaccinated.	Insusceptible	Dead unvaccinated.	Medical postponement.	Certificates sent in of conscientious Objection	Removals known.	Removals unknown	Defaulters.
945	503	7	129	21	67	15	44	159

The inquests held by the Coroner numbered 26 and may be thus classified :—

Natural Causes	...	...	10
Accident	...	...	14
Suicide	...	...	2
Total			26

The next table sets forth the deaths occurring during 1900 from all sources, classified according to diseases and ages for the four quarters, and of births for the same period :—



[illegible]



# URBAN DISTRICT OF WEDNESBURY.

Causes of, and Ages at, Death during the Year 1900.

Causes of Death.	Deaths in whole District at subjoined Ages.						Deaths in Localities (at all ages.
	Under 1.	1 and under 5	5 and under 15.	15 and under 25.	25 and under 65.	65 and upwards	
Small-pox ..							
Measles ...	14	45					59
Scarlet Fever ...		3	2	1			6
Whooping Cough ...		1					1
Diphtheria & Membranous Croup ...							
Croup ...		1	1				2
Fever { Typhus ...							
{ Enteric ...			2	1	1		4
{ Other cont'd							
Epidemic Influenza				1	7	2	10
Cholera ...							
Plague ...							
Diarrhœa ..	27	16			2	1	46
Puerperal Fever ...					1		1
Erysipelas ...	1				1		2
Other septic diseases							
Phthisis ...				6	29		35
Other tubercular diseases ...							
Cancer, malignant disease ...					7		7
Bronchitis ...	13	9	1	1	13	17	54
Pneumonia ...	6	11	1	1	9	1	29
Pleurisy ...							
Other diseases of Respiratory organs							
Alcoholism } Cirrhosis of Liver }							
Venereal diseases...					1		1
Premature Birth ...	19						19
Diseases and accidents of parturition							
Heart diseases ...		1		1	15	17	34
Accidents ...	3	1	1	2	5	1	13
Suicides.. ...					1	1	2
All other causes ...	78	17	5	1	60	40	201
All causes ...	161	105	13	15	152	80	526

Following is a table giving the average birth-rate and zymotic rates for the past ten years :—

Year.	Estimated population.	No. of Births.	No. of Deaths.	Death-rate per 1,000 living.	Birth-rate per 1,000 living.	Zymotic death-rate.
1891	25,300	881	514	20·3	34·0	1·6
1892	"	966	440	17·3	38·0	2·4
1893	"	847	473	18·7	33·4	1·6
1894	"	825	402	15·8	32·6	2·4
1895	"	872	499	19·7	34·4	1·9
1896	"	959	528	20·8	37·9	3·2
1897	"	899	499	19·7	35·5	2·7
1898	26,000	938	486	18·6	36·0	3·9
1899	"	900	480	18·4	34·6	3·7
1900	"	925	526	20·2	35·5	4·4

Following is a list of deaths occurring during the year in each street, the zymotic deaths being separately indicated :—



Street.	Deaths from all causes.	Zymotic deaths.
Addison Street	6	2
Albert Street...	11	1
Alma Street ...	2	
Birmingham Street	1	
Brookside ...	1	
Butcroft ...	1	
Bilston Road...	7	7
Brunswick Terrace	1	
Brunswick Park Road ...	3	1
Bright Street...	5	2
Brickkiln Street	5	1
Bridge Street...	13	3
Chapel Street. .	4	1
Chapel Street, Kings Hill	4	
Corns Street ...	1	
Camphill Lane	7	2
Church Hill ...	4	
Camp Street ...	6	3
Church Street	15	2
Church Street, Kings Hill	1	
Cobden Street	7	
Cook Street ...	7	1
Cross Street ...	8	3
Crankhall Lane	3	
Delves ...	2	
Dale Street ...	5	1
Dangerfield Lane	7	2
Darlaston Road	12	
Darlington Street	8	1
Dudley Street	20	5
Elwell Street ...	3	1
Foley Street ...	3	
Foster Street ...	11	6
Franchise Street	8	1
Friar Street ...	3	
Great Western Street	2	1
George Street	4	1
Hall End ...	4	1
High Bullen ...	5	2
High Street ...	7	1
Hill Street, ...	3	
Hydes Lane ...	4	
Hobbins Street	6	
Hobbs Hole ...	1	
Holyhead Road	15	1

Street.	Deaths from all causes.	Zymotic deaths.
Holden Road ...	1	1
Hollies Drive...	2	1
Kings Hill ...	13	3
King Street ...	6	1
Lloyd Street ...	3	1
Little Hill ...	1	
Ladbury's Lane	6	1
Lea Brook ...	5	2
Market Place...	2	1
Mill Street ...	3	1
Meeting Street	12	5
Moore Street	2	
Moxley ...	21	4
North Street ...	1	
New Street ...	6	
Oakeswell Street	3	
Old Park Road	4	
Old Union Street	5	2
Oxford Street	9	2
Perry Street ...	5	1
Piercy Street ...	5	1
Pritchard Street	1	
Portway Road	39	14
Potters Lane ...	7	3
Park Street ...	2	
Pinfold Street	3	1
Queen Street ...	4	
Russell Street...	10	2
Ridding Lane	2	
School Street...	1	
School Street Kings Hill	1	
Short Street ...	2	1
St. James' Street	5	1
Stafford Street	5	1
Terrace Street	4	2
Trouse Lane ...	6	3
Union Street ...	12	2
Vicarage ...	4	
Victoria Street	2	
Wellcroft Street	6	2
Wood Street ...	3	
Walsall Road...	4	2
Walsall Road, Kings Hill	12	1
Wood Green ...	13	
Windmill Street	4	



## SANITARY WORK.

Appended is a table shewing the work carried out in the Sanitary Inspector's Department :—

Various Nuisances reported upon for Abatement.	No. of Nuisances reported.	No. of Nuisances abated.
Defective Drains requiring Opening or Cleaning ..	96	92
"    Spout Drains .. .. .	12	11
Nuisances arising from Want of Drains .. .. .	4	4
"    "    Keeping of Fowls, &c. ....	4	4
"    "    Filthy condition of Premises ..	60	60
"    "    Accumulation of Water in		
Cellar .. .. .	6	6
"    "    Foul or Defective Urinal ..	4	4
"    "    The Overcrowding of Houses ..	6	6
Swine kept as to be a Nuisance .. .. .	6	6
Unwholesome Houses, filthy, or with defective		
roofs .. .. .	53	49
Houses Disinfected, Cleansed, and Purified, where		
Zymotic Disease has occurred .. .. .	92	92
Accumulation of Wash, Deposits of Offensive		
Matter, &c. ....	7	7
Foul and Defective Ashpits or Privies .. .. .	74	68
Houses where the Ashpit or Privy belonging there		
to are so defective as to require reconstruction ..	11	10
Foul condition of Water Closets .. .. .	14	14
"    "    Cisterns .. .. .	2	2
Defective condition of Manure Pits .. .. .	3	3
"    "    "    Cesspools .. .. .	2	2
Private Houses require connections made to Public		
Sewer .. .. .	18	16
Slaughter Houses require connections made to		
Public Sewers .. .. .	0	0
Houses closed as unfit for human habitation ..	6	6
Additional Privies required .. .. .	5	5
Miscellaneous .. .. .	3	3
Lodging Houses visited by day .. .. .	30	
"    "    "    night .. .. .	2	
Preliminary Notice served .. .. .	315	
Final Notices served .. .. .	162	
Whitewash Brushes lent .. .. .	607	
Ashpits and Cisterns cleansed .. .. .	3,703	
Total Number of Nuisances reported .. .. .	497	
Nuisances not abated by December 31st, 1900 ..		17

District and Population.		Foul conditions. Structural defects. Overcrowding. Unfit for habitation. Lodging-houses. Dairies and Milkshops. Cowsheds. Bakehouses. Slaughter-houses Canal Boats. Ashpits and Privies. Deposits of refuse and manure. Water-closets. Defective Taps. No disconnection. Other faults. Water supply. Pigsties. Animals improperly kept. Offensive trades. Smoke nuisances. Other nuisances. Totals.	House drain- age.	Food supply and water.	Precautions against infectious disease.
	Inspection and observations made.	53 ...			Lots of infected bedding stored or destroyed. Houses disinfectant after infectious disease. Schools disinfected after infectious disease. Prosecutions for not notifying existence of infectious disease. Convictions for not notifying existence of infectious disease. Prosecutions for exposure of infected persons or things. Convictions for exposure of infected persons or things.
Widnesbury,	Formal notice by Authority.	53 ..	6 6 3 ...	17 ...	92
26,000	Nuisances abated after Notice.	49 ...	6 6 3 ...	16 ...	



I am pleased to say that the Hospital was not called into requisition during the year for the treatment of Small-pox patients ; no case of the disease having arisen. Acting however upon the authority entrusted to me, I authorised the admission to our wards of five cases of Scarlatina, which were being treated outside under wholly unfavourable conditions. Three of the cases were removed from 3 Addison Street, where other brothers and sisters were in the same house, under the sole care of the mother. Of these three cases, one aged 2 years died fourteen days after admission. The fourth case, a lad from 65, Church Street was under the care of his widowed mother, who also superintended the remaining four or five children and managed a small shop. The fifth case came from 2 Court 6 House, Bridge Street and was in equally unfavourable surroundings. Towards the end of the year I attended a meeting of the Sanitary Committee to explain the circumstances under which I had admitted the cases to Hospital. At this meeting a discussion took place which indicated a feeling in favour of erecting special hospital accommodation for the treatment of Scarlatinal cases, where the home accommodation might be insufficient. I can only now express a hope that the matter may go further than mere discussion, and that the Sanitary Committee may shew their seriousness of purpose by giving practical effect to the feeling then expressed. I may say that the average duration of the treatment in hospital of the Scarlatinal cases was six weeks.

I take this opportunity of reminding the Council that so far my suggestions with reference to the polishing and improving of the Hospital floors have not been carried out, nor has a suitable ambulance been provided. Possibly before my next Annual Report becomes due, these defects may have been remedied. This also would seem to be the place to remind the Council, that no effect has so far been given to my recommendations respecting the provision of proper buckets with lids, for the removal of the excreta from Typhoid cases. When I reported upon this matter, I supplied the name and address of the maker of these articles together with the price. So far nothing has been sanctioned by the Sanitary Committee. Seeing that no fewer than 42 cases of Enteric Fever have been treated in the town during the year, it is plain that a large number of middens must have been fouled by the typhoid excrement. This must mean a real and practical danger to the inhabitants. The midden system at best is an unwholesome and



dangerous arrangement. But surely it becomes much more so, if an admixture of the ordinary midden contents with typhoid excreta be permitted to occur. I would recommend that the matter should again receive the attention of your Committee ; and that in addition to the provision of the needful articles, one of the town's servants be appointed to carry out the systematic removal of the utensils and the discharge of the excreta directly into the sewer.

I trust it may appear to the Council that none of the foregoing recommendations are unreasonable or excessive, and consequently that they should be carried out for the benefit of the town's health. Obviously by such co-operation alone is it possible for your Health Officer to work for the improvement of sanitation, and I can assure you that practical encouragement of this kind is urgently needed by me in the discharge of duties which are of great importance, but which cannot be accomplished without your generous support.

The vaccination record for the year ending June 30th, 1900, is very similar to that of the previous year, and does not shew such an improvement as I anticipated. The fact that there were 159 defaulters who refused vaccination, taken together with the fact that no prosecutions were instituted by the persons responsible for the proper working of the Vaccination Acts, shews that no proper system has been followed, and that means created for giving effect to the requirements of the Act have been completely neglected. I feel it my duty to speak here of the uniform excellence of the calf lymph supplied by the Government, the results obtained by its use have been all that could be desired. Of the total number of vaccinations done, it must not be forgotten that a considerable number consisted in vaccination in one place only. Experience has shewn that the protection against Small-pox thus afforded is very transient, and such a practice cannot be too strongly condemned. My reason for emphasising this point again and again is that when we presently have to deal with the inevitable visitation of Small-pox, a number of such imperfectly protected persons will certainly contract the disease. The opponents of vaccination will adduce such cases as evidence of the inefficiency of vaccination, and thus endeavour to bring the operation into disrepute. Hence I consider it advisable to keep the point prominently in evidence. With regard to vaccination by one insertion I may say that such a practice



should be prohibited. Probably in order to do this effectively, public Vaccinators throughout the country should bring the matter before the General Medical Council who might be disposed to insist upon the abolition of the practice.

The following properties may be mentioned as amongst those that have been improved during the year :—

**1 to 20, Dale Street Terrace.**—These premises have been redrained, the paving restored, sinks and woodwork put in order ; also ashpits and privies put into a sanitary condition.

**8, Lower Dudley Street.**—Additional privy erected and the premises effectually drained.

**91 to 100, Albert Street.**—Old water course removed and each house connected to the public Sewer.

**Waterworks Cottages and 65 and 66, Church Hill.**—Dumbwell used for drainage purposes filled up and 3 houses connected to public sewer, ashpits and privies made sanitary.

**23 to 25 Lower High Street.**—Additional privy erected and ashpit made sanitary.

**40 to 44, Portway Road.**—Four houses closed and the whole afterwards repaired and amended as to be made sanitary dwellings ; also outbuildings repaired.

**Temperance Hall.**—Old privy and privy cisterns removed and water-closet erected.

**60, 61 and 62, Holyhead Road.**—Water-course to Albert Street closed and the premises drained into the public sewer in Holyhead Road.

**110 and 111, Albert Street.**—Ashpit and privy removed and water closet erected.

**112 and 155, Albert Street.**—Ashpits and privies re-constructed.

I have in conclusion to acknowledge the assistance I have received during the year from your Sanitary Inspector.

I remain, Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

WALTER GARMAN, M.O.H.









