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Borough of



Wednesbury.

Annual Report

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH,

FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1903.

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


MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

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BOROUGH OF WEDNESBURY.

REPORT

UPON THE

HEALTH OF WEDNESBURY

FOR THE YEAR 1903,

BY

WALTER GARMAN, M.D., Edin.,

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

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 1903.

The statistics which are given are based upon an assumed population of 26,700, as was the case last year.

1.—VITAL STATISTICS.

The number of births registered during 1903 was 900 (males 464, females 436) which is equal to a birth-rate of 33·7 per 1,000 of the population. The natural increase of births over deaths was 463. The deaths from all causes numbered 437, which is equal to a death-rate of 16·3 per 1,000 of the population. The deaths of children under five years of age numbered 216— or 49·4 per cent of the total deaths. Of these 130 were under one year of age.

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

	1899	1900	1901	1902	1903
Premature Birth and Wasting Diseases	81	64	18	27	13
Bronchitis and Pneumonia	30	39	37	46	41
Scarlatina	3	4	3	12	22
Measles	2	59	1	13	1
Whooping Cough... ..	21	1	16	11	19
Diarrhœa	59	43	29	7	11
Diphtheria	--	--	3	1	4
Other causes	45	56	86	102	105
	241	266	193	219	216
Percentage of Total Deaths ...	50·2	50·05	50·00	48·09	49·4

It will be seen that, as usual, half of the total deaths have occurred amongst children under five years of age.

The next table gives the deaths due to zymotic disease. These, during 1903, numbered 73—a number equal to a zymotic death-rate of 2·7 per 1000. For the purpose of comparison the corresponding figures for the preceding four years are included in this table.

	1899	1900	1901	1902	1903
Smallpox	—	—	—	—	—
Fever—Simple, continued, and Typhoid ...	4	4	4	5	3
Scarlet Fever	4	6	3	13	27
Measles	2	59	1	14	1
Diphtheria	—	—	5	1	5
Diarrhœa	65	46	31	7	13
Whooping Cough	22	1	16	11	19
Influenza	—	—	5	2	5
Total	97	116	65	53	73
Death-rate per 1,000	3·7	4·4	2·4	1·9	2·7

The next table gives the mortality from pulmonary disease :—

Year.	Bronchitis and Pneumonia.	Phthisis.	Total.
1899	73	21	94
1900	83	35	118
1901	72	12	84
1902	98	19	117
1903	81	18	99

Following is a statement of the Vaccination performed during the year ending June 30th, 1903 :—

Births Registered.	Successfully Vaccinated.	Insusceptible.	Dead unvaccinated.	Medical postponement.	Certificates sent in of conscientious objections.	Removals known.	Removals unknown.	Unaccounted for.
931	743	11	92	7	40	7	27	4

The inquests held by the Coroner numbered 19, which may be thus stated :—

Natural Causes	...	...	...	...	...	...	8
Accidents	...	...	...	...	...	...	8
Suicide	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Murder	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
							—
Total	...	...	...	...	...	...	19
							—

The next table sets forth the deaths occurring during 1903, from all causes, classified according to diseases and ages for the four quarters, and of births for the same period :—

Urban District of Wednesbury.

Causes of, and ages at, Death during 1903 : --

CAUSES OF DEATH.	All Ages.	Under 1 year	1 and under 5	5 and under 15	15 and under 25	25 and under 65	65 and up- wards
Measles	1	1					
Scarlet Fever	26	4	18	3		1	
Whooping Cough	19	9	10				
Diphtheria and Membranous Croup	7		6	1			
Enteric Fever	3		1		1	1	
Influenza	5	1				2	2
Diarrhœa	13	10	1			1	1
Enteritis	23	16	6				1
Puerperal Fever	1				1		
Erysipelas	5	1			1	2	1
Phthisis	18			1	2	15	
Other Tubercular Diseases ...	12	1	5	4	1	1	
Cancer, Malignant Disease ...	11					5	6
Bronchitis	53	15	12		1	11	14
Pneumonia	28	4	10	1		12	1
Alcoholism							
Cirrhosis of Liver }	8					8	
Venereal Diseases	6	6					
Premature Birth	13	13					
Diseases and Accidents of Parturi- tion	2				1	1	
Heart Disease	29		1	1	1	14	12
Accidents	8	3				4	1
Suicides	2					1	1
All other causes	144	46	16	6	5	31	40
All causes	437	130	86	17	14	110	80

Following is a table giving the average birth-rate, death-rate and the zymotic-rate 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.
1894	25,300	825	402	15·8	32·6	2·4
1895	„	872	499	19·7	34·4	1·9
1896	„	859	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
1901	26,544	876	387	14·5	33	2·4
1902	26,700	954	450	16·8	35·9	1·9
1903	„	900	437	16·3	33·7	2·7

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...	3	1
Albert Street ...	7	1
Alma Street ...	1	
Bilston Road ...	6	2
Birmingham Street ...	3	2
Brookside ...	1	
Butcroft ...	3	
Brunswick Park Road ...	7	
Bright Street ...	2	1
Brickkiln Street ...	7	1
Bridge Street ...	10	1
Chapel Street, King's Hill ...	2	
Corns Street ...	6	
Camphill Lane ...	2	1
Camp Street ...	7	3
Church Hill ...	9	2
Church Street ...	10	1
Church Street, King's Hill ...	2	1
Cobden Street ...	3	1
Cook Street ...	11	1
Cross Street ...	3	
Delves ...	3	
Dale Street ...	6	1
Dangerfield Lane ...	3	
Darlaston Road ...	4	
Darlington Street ...	4	

Street	Deaths from all causes.	Zymotic deaths.
Dudley Street	6	2
Earp's Lane	2	
Elwell Street	5	1
Foley Street	4	1
Foster Street	8	2
Franchise Street	9	1
Great Western Street	6	
George Street	1	
High Street (Upper and Lower)	7	2
Holden Road	2	
Hitchen's Croft	5	1
Hill Street	4	1
Hydes Lane	2	1
Hobbins Street	4	
Holyhead Road... ..	17	4
Hollies Drive	1	
Hall End	2	
King's Hill	10	1
King Street	4	1
Lloyd Street	4	2
Little Hill	2	1
Ladbury's Lane... ..	13	2
Lea Brook	3	
Loxdale Street	4	1
Market Place	4	1
Mill Street	1	
Meeting Street	5	
Moxley	17	5
North Street	1	1
Oakeswell Street	2	
Old Park Road	4	1
Old Union Street	6	1
Oxford Street	7	
Perry Street	2	
Paul Street	1	1
Pound Road	4	2
Pritchard Street... ..	1	
Piercy Street	13	1
Portway Road	17	1
Potters Lane	9	4
Park Street	5	
Queen Street	8	1
Russell Street	3	1
Rooth Street	1	
Ridding Lane	6	
School Street	2	1

Street.	Deaths from all causes	Zymotic deaths
Spring Head	1	
St. Paul's Road	4	
Short Street	2	
St. James' Street	5	
Stafford Street	3	
Sparrows Forge Lane	2	1
Terrace Street	3	
Trouse Lane	6	3
Union Street	5	
Vicarage	3	
Vicar Street	4	1
Windmill Street	4	1
Well Street	1	
Wood Street	1	
Wellcroft Street... ..	1	
Walsall Road	4	1
„ „ King's Hill... ..	10	
Woodgreen	9	1

The following table gives the cases of zymotic disease notified to the Health Authority under the Notification of Infectious Diseases Act:—

Scarlet Fever	486
Diphtheria	37
Erysipelas	35
Enteric Fever	18
Puerperal Fever	4
Membranous Croup... ..	2
Total... ..	582

The foregoing figures supply such statistics as are needed in order to form an opinion as to the health of the town during the year. The outstanding feature of the year is furnished by the notifications of Scarlet fever, which numbered 486, and which were nearly twice as numerous as those of the preceding year. The epidemic commenced in 1900, and thus has been characterised by marked persistence.

In that year, 154 cases were notified, with 6 deaths.

In 1901, 215	„	„	3	„
„ 1902, 272	„	„	13	„
„ 1903, 486	„	„	22	„

It is thus made clear that a wide-spread epidemic has prevailed, and the only matter for surprise is that there have not been many more deaths than actually occurred.

In view of the foregoing facts, it is obvious that we should come to a decision as to the possibility of coping with such an outbreak by definite steps of a practical nature. In this connection the first thing that arises is the question of isolation—and to this question I have given careful and prolonged consideration. In last year's report I urged what may fairly be regarded as a counsel of perfection. Such counsel, however, is impracticable more often than not—and so I have come to regard it in the present instance. As I then pointed out half measures are useless, expensive, and disappointing. One of the measures then emphasised cannot be practically carried out. I allude to the segregation of the family of an infected house whilst the house and clothing are thoroughly disinfected. This, however, is not the only difficulty. It must not be forgotten that at the present time expert opinion is greatly divided respecting the advantages resulting from isolation. Whilst it may be allowed that the scarlatinal patient can be more efficiently nursed in hospital, it must be remembered that in the opinion of many the virulence of the disease is increased by bringing into one building many cases of the disease, and that thereby the mortality is increased.

Again, in dwelling upon points of practical value it is wise to note the experience of other towns. Taking in the first place those in our own neighbourhood, it is interesting to note that like ourselves Birmingham suffered from a severe outbreak of Scarlatina, which was dealt with by means of isolation upon an extensive scale. So far as I could ascertain the cases of the disease notified in proportion to the population were almost identical with our own, and the mortality was approximately at the same rate. In West Bromwich I understand that a point was reached where the accommodation for isolation was exhausted, and when, therefore, no more cases of the disease could be received. At Tipton isolation was attempted, but I am not aware that the epidemic was thereby controlled. At Walsall the question of isolation was investigated by the Health Authority, and as a result it was decided not to isolate.

Moreover, if we go further afield, we obtain little encouragement to attempt isolation. So far as I can learn the Authorities at Notting-

ham and Sheffield found isolation unsuccessful and disappointing, and still more so was this the case at Leicester, where, acting upon the advice of their Medical Officer of Health, it was decided to close the Hospital, upon which they had expended many thousands of pounds. It can scarcely be wondered at, therefore, if I hesitate in the face of such experiences to persist in advising you to expend a large sum of money for so doubtful a result.

At any rate, having regard to the divided state of expert opinion upon this difficult question, I think it reasonable to wait until greater unanimity is arrived at. Meanwhile steps have been taken to deal with the outbreak by disinfection, and by issuing instructions in printed form to the public, as to the steps they should take when confronted by the disease, and emphasising the special dangers to be avoided.

The Hospital has not been required for the treatment of Smallpox during the year, no cases of the disease having arisen.

Enteric fever caused 3 deaths. It will be seen that 18 cases of the disease were notified, as compared with 39 in the previous year. There was never during the year anything in the nature of an epidemic.

The other zymotic diseases call for no comment.

With regard to vaccination, I may say that good as the figures were in 1902, this year they are still more satisfactory. Thus out of 839 children alive at the end of June 1903, and born during the preceding twelve months, no fewer than 743 were successfully vaccinated, as compared with 681 children out of 804 vaccinated in the previous year. The percentage of successful vaccinations in 1903 was 88·5, as compared with 84·7 in 1902, and 62·7 in 1901. This indicates very thorough work on the part of the Vaccination Officer. The calf lymph supplied by the Government has again yielded excellent results. Furthermore, very few cases of vaccination in one place have occurred during the year. This record of vaccination, from every point of view, is the best made in Wednesbury for many years past.

Sanitary Work.

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

SUMMARY OF SANITARY WORK done in the Nuisance Inspector's Department during the year 1903, in the Urban District of Wednesbury.

				Inspections and observations made.	Formal Notices by Authority.	Nuisances abated after Notice.
Foul Conditions	}	Dwelling-houses and Schools.		178	58	54
Structural Defects				15	15	13
Overcrowding				10	7	7
Unfit for Habitation				12	7	7
Lodging Houses				130	3	3
Bakehouses	...	...	...	70	4	4
Slaughter Houses	...	...	...	54	1	1
Ashpits and Privies	...	...	...	3460	140	126
Deposits of Refuse and Manure	...	...	...	8	6	6
Water Closets	...	...	...	76	21	21
Defective Taps	...	...	...	82	76	72
Other Faults	...	...	...	25	15	14
Water Supply	...	...	...	3	3	3
Pigsties	...	...	...	12	9	9
Animals improperly kept	...	...	...	15	12	12
Offensive Trades...	...	...	...	1	1	1
Smoke Nuisances	...	...	...	1	1	1
Other Nuisances...	...	...	...	48	41	39
Total	...	...	...	4200	420	393

Precautions against Infectious Disease:—

Lots of Infected Bedding Disinfected or Destroyed	...	90
Houses Disinfected after Infectious Disease	...	326
Schools	... ..	5

Factory and Workshops Act, 1901.

Under this Act, 26 Bakehouses have been inspected. Note has been taken of their cubic capacity and means of ventilation. In four instances it was found necessary to issue orders for their sanitary improvement. There are also 93 Workshops for various trades. Most of these have been visited, and in five cases orders made as to cleansing structural alterations, &c., which were promptly attended to. The night soil contractor has emptied and cleansed 4954 ashpits and cisterns during the year. His work has been smoothly carried out, and speaking generally, with greater efficiency than in the past.

The Inspectors have 15 cowsheds and 60 dairies under their control, to which 300 visits have been made, and orders given to whitewash in 12 instances.

Amongst other sanitary improvements carried out during the year were the following :—

No. 1, Portway Road.—Here the old privy which discharged into the cistern has been removed, and 2 water closets erected. The yard has also been paved and the drains connected to the public sewer.

No. 47, Foster Street.—Here the old privy and cistern, as also the pig-styes, have been removed, and 2 new closets with an ashpit on modern lines erected. The yard has been part paved, and the drains connected with the sewer.

No. 58, Union Street.—The old privies have been removed, water closets provided, the yard paved, the drains connected with the sewer, and the outbuilding re-built.

No. 3 Court Lea Brook.—The three back houses have been taken down, in order to provide room for better sanitary arrangements for the front houses.

No. 5 Court Camp Street.—Here two back houses have been closed and a privy removed.

No. 22, Camp Street.—A water closet has been provided, and the yard paved.

Two special reports have been prepared by me during the year. The first had reference to the File-cutting industry in Wednesbury. This was written in March, and forwarded to the Treasury Solicitor's Department. It was considered, with many others, at a meeting held in Birmingham at that time for the purpose.

The second dealt with the Scarlatinal epidemic in Wednesbury, and was asked for by, and forwarded to the Local Government Board in the autumn.

Action has been called for with reference to the Horse Slaughtering premises at the Delves. The requirements of the Sanitary Committee were not complied with, and in consequence a nuisance resulted which was made the subject of repeated complaints by the residents in the neighbourhood. The outcome of this was that the license required and issued yearly by the Health Authority was refused. The nuisance complained of will, therefore, not occur again.

In the foregoing remarks attention has been directed to such facts and matters as are likely to interest or inform the Committee. It may, I think, be considered that the figures indicate a fairly satisfactory state of health in the town generally, and it will probably be seen that we compare favourably with neighbouring towns, and with those throughout the country.

Finally, I would acknowledge the assistance I have received during the year from your Sanitary Inspector.

I remain, Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

WALTER GARMAN,

Medical Officer of Health.

