

[Report 1898] / Medical Officer of Health, Yeovil U.D.C. / Borough.

Contributors

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TO THE

Town Council of the Borough of Yeovil.

February 18th, 1899.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present my Annual Report of the health and sanitary condition of your Borough for the year ending December 31st, 1898.

Area, 700 acres ; Population, 9,648 (Census, 1891) ; Inhabited Houses (Census, 1891), 1907 ; the last mentioned have much increased during the last two or three years ; Geology, upper and middle lias, Yeovil sands ; Occupation, chiefly Glove Making, also Foundries, Breweries, and Tallow Melting.

General Vital Statistics.

The calculation of the Death and Birth Rate has been made on the Census of 1891.

During the year 260 Births were registered within the Borough, the same number as in 1897. The Birth Rate for 1898 is 26·94 per 1,000, as it was in 1897. Fifteen births were illegitimate, as compared with twenty in 1897.

During the year 123 deaths occurred, as compared with 139 in 1897, a decrease of sixteen. This gives a Death Rate of 12·74 per 1,000 population, including 16 at ages from 75 to 85, and 6 at the age of 85 and upwards.

It may be noted that the Death Rate is lower whereas the Birth Rate is unchanged.

Respiratory Diseases, including Phthisis.

The mortality here has not reached quite so high a percentage as last year, being at the rate of 2·10 per 1,000, as against 2·20 in 1897. Phthisis has caused 8 deaths, the same number as in 1897.

Illegitimate Birth Rate.

This is slightly lower, being at the rate of per 1,000 population, 1·55, as compared with 2·16 last year.

Small Pox.

The town, so far as I know, has been perfectly free from this disease during the year.

Slaughter-Houses.

These have been inspected and there has been no necessity to serve notices.

Bake-Houses.

These have been inspected as usual.

Dairies and Milk-Shops

Are now registered under the Order of 1885.

Tallow Factory.

These premises have frequently been visited by your Sanitary Officers during the year, and the owner has quite recently incurred considerable further expense in altering the furnaces with the hope of reducing to a minimum if not entirely abolishing effluvia which of necessity arise from such a business.

Board Schools.

Schools clean and in good order.

Infectious Diseases (Notification) Act.

This Act still remains unadopted, although the advisability of its adoption has been brought prominently before the Sanitary Authority in every report since 1890. I consider this regrettable and wrong, for it means the weakening of the power of your Medical Officer to arrest any serious outbreak of epidemic. It may prove impossible for him to get sufficiently early knowledge of the existence of disease to enable him to take the step necessary to prevent its extension. There appears to be considerable misunderstanding as to the powers conferred on the M. O. H. by this Act, and I may be forgiven for again citing the following statement by the Local Government Board :—

“ The Infectious Diseases (Notification) Act, 1889, when adopted confers no *new* powers upon the M. O. H. but is designed to afford him such *immediate* information of the outbreak of infectious disease as will enable him *promptly* to take such measures as are prescribed by the instructions of the order of March 8th, 1880, and authorized by the existing law of the Public Health Act, 1875.” This explanation, I venture to think, must remove from any reasonable person's mind the idea that any arbitrary power is conferred on the M. O. H. by its adoption. I do again strongly urge the early consideration of this important matter. Mr. Preston Thomas (Local Government Board Inspector for this district) strongly recommends that this Act be adopted in this Borough, and is willing, if agreeable, to interview the Authority on the subject.

Disposal of Sewage.

As a scheme for treating the whole of the sewage of the Borough, by means of the “ Septic Tank System ” of “ Sewage Disposal,” is under preparation at the present moment, I will not enlarge upon this subject, but will only say that in my opinion the inhabitants owe a debt of gratitude to their Sanitary Authority for their industry and of the decision they have arrived at in this matter.

Infectious Disease Hospital.

This building, which was erected for the exclusive benefit of this Borough (except under extraordinary circumstances) has been unused during 1898. I would again

remind the Corporation that there is still no laundry or mortuary in connection with the building.

Disinfecting Apparatus.

Although we have a stationary apparatus, a portable one might be of great service in the event of an outbreak of infectious disease.

Bye-Laws.

As approved by the Local Government Board in 1885, with additions and amendments in 1887 and 1891, are in operation.

Summary, 1898.

BIRTHS	Males	...	...	142	{ Including illegitimate }	Males	...	...	...	7
	Females	...	...	118		Females	...	...	...	8
				260					15	

Percentage of Births to total population in	...	...	1898—	2·69
Annual rate of Births per 1,000 population	...	...	1898—	26·94
" " " "	...	...	1897—	26·94
" " " "	...	...	1896—	26·53
Excess of registered Births over Deaths	...	...	1898—	137
" " " "	...	...	1897—	121
" " " "	...	...	1896—	78

Births are the same in number as in 1897.

DEATHS	Males	...	...	62
	Females	...	...	61

123

Percentage of Deaths to total population	...	...	1898—	1·27
Annual rate of mortality per 1,000 population	...	...	1898—	12·74
" " " "	...	...	1897—	14·40
" " " "	...	...	1896—	18·44
Deaths as compared with last year show a decrease of 16.				
Deaths in Union Workhouse	...	...	1898—	12
" " " "	...	...	1897—	18
Deaths in Yeovil and District Hospital	...	...	1898—	8
" " " "	...	...	1897—	6

INFANTILE MORTALITY RATE.

In children under 1 year	...	...	1898—	18
" " " "	...	...	1897—	29
Over 1 year and under 5 years	...	...	1898—	4
" " " "	...	...	1897—	8

Death rate per 1,000 deaths	...	...	...	...	1898—178·8
" " "	...	...	...	...	1897—266·18
Death rate per 1,000 births	...	...	...	...	1898— 88·47
" " "	...	...	...	...	1897—142·3
Death rate of Infants under 1 year of age per 1,000 births	1898—69·23				
" " " " " deaths	1898—146·34				

ZYMOTIC DISEASES. One death from Diptheria.

Percentage to total population	...	...	...	...	·01
Annual rate per 1,000 population	...	...	...	...	·1

DEATH RATE from Respiratory Diseases including Phthisis :

Deaths from Phthisis	...	...	...	8	
" " Bronchitis	...	...	8	}	13
" " Pneumonia	...	...	4		
" " Croup	...	...	1		
Total	...	...	...	21	
Death rate per 1,000 population	...	...	...	...	2·10

Six Inquests were held in 1898 as compared with four in 1897.

ILLEGITIMATE BIRTH RATE per 1,000 population	...	...	...	1·55
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Birth Rate per 1,000 population.	Death Rate per 1,000 population.	INFANT MORTALITY (under 1 year of age).			
		Per 1,000 Deaths.	Per 1,000 Births.	FROM ZYMOTIC DISEASES.	
				Per 1,000 Population.	Per 1 000 Deaths.
26·94	12·74	146·34	69·23	0	0

SUMMARY OF WORK DONE BY THE INSPECTOR OF NUISANCES DURING THE
YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER, 1898.

1898.			Nuisances Investigated.	Premises Visited.	Notices served to abate Nuisance.	Parcels of Bedding disinfected.
January	...	...	11	105	1	
February	...	...	9	90	1	
March	...	...	10	205	2	
April	...	...	9	200	—	
May	...	...	10	115	1	
June	...	...	9	200	4	
July	...	...	12	145	5	
August	...	...	11	105	1	
September	...	...	17	305	5	
October	...	...	9	250	6	
November	...	...	12	220	4	
December	...	...	11	230		
TOTAL	...	...	130	2170	30	

Zymotic Diseases.

One death only was registered during the year, a fact on which the town may be congratulated as affording most satisfactory evidence of the attention to the detail of sanitary precautions.

I would take this opportunity of drawing your serious attention to the recent importation of "Typhoid" or "Enteric Fever" from *outside* this Borough, into the District Hospital. I venture to submit some reasons for very strongly advising the Sanitary Authority to discontinue this precedent.

Typhoid Fever is unquestionably an infectious and spreadable disease, as has been recently demonstrated in the report of an outbreak in the University College Hospital, 1897-8, and in the Foundling, 1891. If necessary, much documentary and other evidence can be adduced in support of this proposition.

As the Borough already possesses an Infectious Hospital, for the treatment of such cases occurring in families (non-paupers) incapable of dealing with them satisfactorily at home, it is imprudent to run unnecessary risk by establishing another focus for infection. Moreover, the Rural Sanitary Authority *is by law*, obliged to provide for the treatment of such cases occurring in their district.

There are very grave doubts, whether the drainage of the District Hospital is all it should be, and it is well known that the sewers, carrying the Hospital sewage, are in an unsatisfactory condition (vide Surveyor's report thereon).

The water service and its storage must be guaranteed by an expert's certificate before the proposal to admit such cases, can even be entertained.

The organisation of the Hospital at present, is not adequate or appropriate :—the nursing staff consisting only of a matron, two nurses, and one probationer.

Nurses, between the ages of 20 and 35 are admittedly prone to contract "Typhoid." To re-place them on an emergency in a country district is most difficult.

Especially should the door to infection *not* be opened unnecessarily in this Borough. Yeovil is a manufacturing centre and upon the outbreak of any serious infectious disease, the staple trade of the town is instantly affected. Under the Factory and Workshops Act (the clauses of which are rigorously enforced), no work can be given *out* to an infected family, neither *can* any member of the same, who is in any way in touch with infection, be employed in any factory.

As regards the infectious properties of Typhoid, the supporters of this revolution do not attempt to put their case higher, than that, however otherwise dangerous that infectious character may be, it is the complete sanitary arrangements, together with the perfection of nursing skill to be found in a Hospital, which neutralize such danger. Granted, possibly assuming such perfection and completeness, but is that always to be guaranteed in a small institution like ours ?

In a large London Hospital, nurses are numerous and much experienced. Moreover, in such establishments, space admits of Typhoid cases, if admitted, being effectually placed in some particular portion of the building. In a small county infirmary circumstances are greatly different.

Were it now the question of an existing Typhoid epidemic, calling for the aid of the Hospital conveniences, much possibly might be pertinently urged in favour of this

departure from what has hitherto been the rule and practice, but the circumstances attending the recent introduction of the Typhoid patients, point rather to the mere academic propounding of what is at present a superfluous problem.

Other arguments might be added, but for the present, I have said enough to justify my submission to the Council, that this question is one, demanding *very serious* consideration on the score of peril to the public health.

E. C. GARLAND,

M. O. H. Yeovil Urban District.

31st January, 1899.

To the Medical Officer of Health for the Urban District of Yeovil.

DEAR SIR,

I hereby certify, that the public sewer in Kingston, into which the drains from the Yeovil and District Hospital flow, is in a very unsatisfactory condition, being nothing more than a dry jointed stone drain, with a flat bottom, and flat cover stones.

W. K. L. ARMYTAGE,

Borough Surveyor, &c.



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ANNUAL REPORT

OF

DR. GARLAND,

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

FOR THE YEAR 1898.