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WEST BRIDGFORD

*URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.*

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# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

# MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

FOR THE YEAR 1894.

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Nottingham :

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R E P O R T  
OF THE  
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH  
FOR THE YEAR 1894.

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Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I beg to present to you my Annual Report for the year ending 1894. Before doing so, may I express the hope that my relations with the New Urban District Council may be as pleasant and cordial as they were with the late Local Board.

Previous to 1891, when the parish of West Bridgford was first entrusted with local powers, it formed part of the sanitary sub-district of Carlton, in the Basford Union; the parishes in the sub-division being Burton Joyce, Gedling, Stoke Bardolph, Colwick, and Gamston. During the past twelve years, West Bridgford, from being a mere hamlet, has become a large, important, and populous district, suburban to the town and county of the town of Nottingham.

In 1881 the population of West Bridgford was only 293, ten years later it was nearly ten times greater, while to-day it must be close upon 4,000.

In 1891 the inhabitants of the parish were afforded the opportunity of electing representatives to their first Local Board ;

while, during the past year, further privileges have been afforded them in the election of a School Board. Since 1891 the Local Board has carried out a policy of efficiency with economy, with regard to parochial affairs, and the labours of that Board, from a public health point of view, were decidedly encouraging.

Under the regulations of the New Local Government Act, the Local Board, after an existence of three years, has recently given place to an authority constituted on a new basis, and henceforth to be known as the West Bridgford Urban District Council. The Act has transferred to your Council all the powers, duties, and liabilities of the late Local Board, and has thrown upon you, the members of the New Council, the responsibility of managing the business of the parish, and much care will be required in considering the wisest and best course to be pursued in aiding and further developing the parish, and adding to the health, comfort, and happiness of its inhabitants.

During my tenure of office under the late Local Board, I have exercised a general supervision over the sanitary condition of the parish, advising as to the abatement and removal of nuisances, and have presented regular quarterly reports, dealing with the vital statistics and other matters of public health.

During 1893, at the request of the Local Government Board I presented a special report on the Cholera, and, during the past year, I presented special reports dealing with the parish Burial Ground and with the condition of the Sewage Farm.

## POPULATION.

In new and rapidly increasing districts like West Bridgford, the approximate population is obtained by ascertaining,

from the assessment book of the parish, the number of inhabited houses, and by multiplying this number by the average number of inhabitants in each house, as obtained by the last Census returns. At Midsummer last it is calculated that there were 740 inhabited houses, and as the last Census return of 1891 showed  $4\frac{3}{4}$  inhabitants to each house, we get an approximate population for the year of 3515. It is on this figure that I base my vital statistics for the year. As showing the rapid increase of the parish, I give you the following statistics :—

1881	Population	293	(Census)
1891	„	2,503	(Census)
1892	„	2,800	(Estimated)
1893	„	3,230	(Estimated)
1894	„	3,515	(Estimated)

At present there are 50 houses in course of erection, so that the population during the present year is likely to be considerably increased.

## WATER SUPPLY.

The parish has an abundance of water supplied by the Nottingham Corporation. The present supply is sufficient for a population of 15,000, so that no additional supply will be required for many years. The consumption of water per head of the population is high, mainly owing to the fact that the houses are nearly all supplied with bath-rooms, W.C's, and other modern conveniences. In addition to the Corporation supply, there are 35 wells confined to the old part of the parish, while on the new allotments there are also a number of wells. During the present year these allotments will be supplied with Corporation water and gas. The Nottingham water is, as is well known, above suspicion, while all the samples of well water which I have examined, were quite clear, rather hard, but contained no trace of organic impurity.

## LIGHTING AND GAS SUPPLY.

During the past few years there has been a rapidly increasing demand for gas, both for private and public use. There are now 95 public lamps, and there are some others being erected along the Trent Boulevard. The gas is supplied by the Nottingham Corporation, which two years ago laid a specially constructed, large, wrought iron main across Trent Bridge. During the present year it is intended to extend the trunk mains, and to connect them with the small service mains, in anticipation of a still greater demand. Recently some letters appeared in the press, complaining of the inadequate supply of gas. Had the writers of these letters complained to the Manager of the Gas Department, they would have had a courteous hearing, and any defect would have been promptly remedied. The fault lies not in the quality of the gas, nor in its supply, but in the internal pipes and fittings, which in many of the houses in Bridgford are too small.

It has now been arranged to provide the District South of the Trent with a supply of gas, independent of the Borough supply, so that there will be a uniform pressure. This will provide against the variations in lighting which have been recently complained of.

## ROADS.

The roads continue to wear well, although frequently interfered with for the purpose of laying in gas and water to the newly erected houses. I have, on a former occasion, remarked that these new roads which are always clean, add considerably to the popularity of West Bridgford as a place of residence, as in all kinds of weather good walking can always be enjoyed. Much remains to be done, however. The footpaths

and surface drainage of Bridgford Road, and the general condition of Charnwood Grove, Park Avenue, and Central Avenue, require attention. The footpaths of Loughborough Road demand immediate attention. It is to be hoped that this Road, which, being a county highway, is under the jurisdiction of the County Council, will receive early attention from that body. The opening of Musters and Henry Roads, and their junction with the Melton turnpike, have been completed during the past year. These roads are models of road making. I have noticed that since the opening of Musters Road, heavy carts and waggons from the country are driven along it on their way to and from Nottingham. I cannot think that this fine thoroughfare, which, with care and certain restrictions, promises to become a handsome boulevard, was intended to be used for heavy traffic, and if your Council has the power to do so, it should insist upon all heavy traffic being sent along the turnpike toad. A notice board might be sufficient, failing this, a gate should be erected. Whatever plan your Council may adopt, I would press its early application, so as to check the evil at once.

## THE PUMPING STATION.

The pumping station consists of a Horizontal Gear Engine, of 12 horse power with one boiler. Pumping operations occupy from 7 to 9 hours daily according to the weather. The engine pumps 30 gallons per stroke, or 300 gallons per minute. The Sewage is composed of the waste from the W.C's and baths, and the waste water from the houses and yards. In wet weather the pumping apparatus is taxed to its utmost, and, as there is no auxiliary engine, any break-down would be most inconvenient. Your Council must take into very early consideration the advisability of increasing the plant. Within

the last few days a duplicate boiler has been erected, but an additional engine and pump are quite necessary. The new pump should be more powerful and capable of raising at least 50,000 gallons per hour. With the increased amount of sewage from the allotments, which your Council will soon be called upon to deal with, an increase of pump and engine power appear to me to be imperative.

## SEWAGE FARM.

In my special report to the late Local Board in June last, I entered fully into the condition of the Farm. I called attention to the two chief reasons which accounted for its unsatisfactory state. These were, and are (1) the absence of any attempt at systematic irrigation, and (2) the want of proper deep drainage. The essential requirement of successful Sewage Farming is thorough deep drainage of the land over which the liquid is distributed. Until this is secured, it will be impossible to make the Farm a success. The land should be drained to an average depth of 6 feet, with distances of from 10 to 20 feet between each drain. Filtration would then be effective, and the risk of surface soil being supercharged with sewage would be obviated. A proper system of deep drainage, together with a systematic plan of irrigation, combined with intermittent downward filtration, are the principles upon which Sewage Farming must depend for success. If some parts of the Farm receive no sewage, while other parts become waterlogged and swampy from receiving too much, the fault lies with the management of the Farm, and not with the system. The Farm is quite sufficient for its present purpose, if properly managed. Sewage Farming is successfully carried on in various districts of England and Scotland. When the proper time arrives, it will be a question for your Council to decide whether it should not take the management of the Farm into its own hands.

## ALLOTMENTS.

On the allotments several of the freeholders have erected dwellings. When your Council has provided this part of the district with gas and water, and a system of sewerage, many more houses will be erected. The allotment system should have the warm support of your Council. It tends to promote good health, it encourages thrift, it elevates character, and it occupies the leisure hours in a pleasant, healthful, and profitable way.

## SCAVENGING.

The scavenging of ash-pits and closets takes place between the hours of 3 a.m. and 8 a.m. The contractor finds no difficulty in disposing of the refuse to the neighbouring farmers, so that there is no accumulation. Since the present contractor was appointed I have had no complaints. The work is done expeditiously, and within the prescribed hours.

## INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

During the year there have been reported to me eight cases of infectious diseases, three being due to scarlet fever, three to diphtheria, and two to typhoid fever. One of these latter was imported from London. In spite of the increased population the number of infectious diseases was less than during the two preceding years. The continued immunity of the parish from all kinds of infectious disorders is one of the most pleasing and satisfactory features in the history of West Bridgford. Yet there is much prejudice to be overcome, for quite recently I was officially and very seriously asked the question: "is it true that Bridgford is a veritable death trap?"

The arrangement made between the late Local Board and the Nottingham Corporation for the disinfecting of bedding, clothing, &c., will, it is to be hoped, continue. By this arrangement, all infected bedding and clothing are removed by the Corporation van to the Borough Disinfecting Station and thoroughly disinfected. The expense will be charged against your Council. As this arrangement has worked well during the past three years, I would ask your Council to ratify it.

## NOTIFICATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

This Act, which was adopted by the late Local Board, in 1892, continues to work satisfactorily. The amount paid to medical men for the year 1894 was £1 2s. 6d. With the opening of the new Board Schools a considerable increase in the number of infectious diseases is almost certain to take place. Any school with a large attendance of children is apt, at some time, to become a focus of infection.

## VITAL STATISTICS.—DEATHS.

During the year the number of deaths was 38—18 males and 20 females. Of the total number, 12 died before attaining the age of one year. Ten died over 60 years of age, four died over 70 years of age, and two died aged 80 and 86 respectively. Of the adult deaths three were due to Consumption, eight to Bronchial and Cardiac diseases, and two to Cancer. Of the infants three died of Diarrhœa, five died of Measles and Whooping Cough, three of Congenital Debility, and one of Convulsions. No person died of a Zymotic disease, such as Scarlet Fever, Typhoid Fever, or Diphtheria. One inquest was held. The highest mortality occurred during the summer months, which is

unusual. The death-rate is 10.8 per 1,000, as against 8.5 for 1893. I described the 1893 death-rate as "phenomenally low." The rate for the past year, although not quite so low as 1893, is still very "satisfactorily low." There are various reasons which conduce to the low death-rate of West Bridgford, perhaps the chief of these is the absence of poverty and over crowding. I give you the following death-rates for 1894 for comparison :—

(1)	West Bridgford,	10.8
(2)	Beeston,	12.5
(3)	Carlton & District.	16.2
(4)	Nottingham.	17

## BIRTHS.

During the year 91 children were born, 41 males and 50 females, as compared with 66 births during 1893. The birth-rate is still too low. The rate per 1,000 is 25.9, as against 22.3 for 1893 and 25.7 in 1892. I give the following birth-rates for comparison :—

(1)	West Bridgford,	25.9
(2)	Nottingham,	28.5
(3)	Beeston,	30.5
(4)	Carlton & District,	35.5

## PUBLIC HOUSES.

I would call the attention of your Council to one feature which renders your parish almost, if not quite unique. With a population close upon 4,000, there is only one public house. In Nottingham there is a public house to less than every 300 inhabitants, while in the Southwell division there is one to every 147 inhabitants. As a rule the poorer and more overcrowded a district is, the more do we find public houses. In West

Bridgford there are no poor, and over-crowding does not exist. The inhabitants are, with few exceptions, privileged to live in healthy and comfortable houses. There is no excuse for anyone habitually or regularly frequenting the public house. The requirements of the parish are fully and very well supplied by the present house, which is a commodious, comfortable, and well managed hostelry. I am of opinion that, from a social, moral, and public health point of view, any increase in this direction is undesirable.

### SOCIAL AND PAROCHIAL ADVANTAGES.

Notwithstanding an occasional, but happily very rare visit from a flood, the people of your district enjoy many such. Here are a few. They live in a pleasant and prosperous locality, with an abundance of fresh air, good water, and good roads. Their rates are low. They have a wonderful immunity from Zymotic diseases, and diseases due to "locality." Their death-rate can compare favourably with any death-rate in Britain. They have constant and easy communication with Nottingham, at fares which are exceedingly moderate. They have facilities for buying their houses or their allotments on easy and advantageous terms. They have opportunities almost unequalled for boating, swimming, cycling, tennis, cricket, and football, which help to develop the physical side of their lives, while the various Religious organizations, Choral and Glee singing, Literary and Debating Societies, help to furnish material for their mental well-being. The new Board School shortly to be opened will still further add to their privileges by affording their children a first-class education at a nominal cost.

### CONCLUSION.

In conclusion let me say that your Council is endowed with many and varied powers. Those powers will be used in

such ways as will in the opinion of your Council best add to the health, comfort, and happiness of the people, and to the prosperity of the parish generally.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

WALTER HUNTER, M.D.

Medical Officer of Health.









