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WEST BRIDGFORD

URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health.

FOR THE YEAR 1895.

Nottingham:

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REPORT
OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
FOR THE YEAR 1895.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I beg to present to you my Annual Report for the year 1895.

The year has been one of much interest to the parish, and one fruitful with good and evident work by your Council.

Amongst the more important undertakings during the year I would mention :—(1) The taking over by your Council, of the management of the Sewage Farm, and the subsequent deep draining, cleaning, and improving the land. (2) The construction of a deep level sewer, to carry the sewage from the new allotments to the pumping station. (3) The erection of a new engine and engine house, at the pumping station. (4) The removal of the Brook Bridge, with the widening and draining of Bridgford Road.

Many other improvements of a minor character were carried out.

During the year, I have exercised a general supervision over the sanitary conditions of the parish, advising as to the abatement and removal of nuisances. I have presented to your Council, quarterly reports, dealing with vital statistics, and other matters of public health.

SEWAGE FARM.

The management of the Farm was taken over by your Council, and in the Autumn, the entire Farm, after being deep drained, was ploughed and cleared of twitch. On the East, South, and West boundaries of the Farm, the "dyke" has been cleaned out and deepened to the extent of four or five feet. The sewage which has been pumped on to the land, after percolating through the soil, passes into the deep drains and discharges itself at intervals into this dyke, as a clear and innocuous fluid. In the entire course of the dyke, the effluent water is clear and free from smell, and quite safe for cattle to drink. It is important that this dyke should be kept free from weeds, or any other obstruction which might retard the flow of the effluent. The brickwork at the "outfalls" has been strengthened, and the sluices have been repaired. During the early Spring the land should be cross ploughed, and cleared of any remaining twitch, and planted with root crops. Regular "Carriers" for the sewage can then be laid out, and irrigation in a systematic method be adopted, for the first time in the history of the Farm. I am sanguine that, in a year or two, your Farm Committee will have the farm in such a forward and satisfactory condition, that it may become a model for other sanitary authorities.

PUMPING STATION.

During the year an additional Boiler has been erected in the old boiler house. Also a new Horizontal Gear Engine and

new Engine House, with a set of Triple Crank Pumps. It is intended to use this new engine for pumping operations, reserving the old engine for any extra pressure of work as in times of flood, or in case of any break-down. The old pumps were capable of raising about 20,000 gallons of sewage per hour. The new pumps will raise about 30,000 gallons per hour. With both at work 50,000 gallons per hour would be pumped. The "rising main" conveying the sewage from the pumping station to the farm is calculated to take 60,000 gallons per hour. A reception chamber calculated to hold one day's sewage has been built in connection with the new engine house. This will receive the sewage from the new allotments.

With the increased engine and pumping power, it will be possible to lessen the number of hours for pumping per day, which formerly averaged 7 to 9 hours including Sundays. With the increased power the staff will now be able to deal satisfactorily with any flood or any breakdown.

SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

The question of sewage disposal is perhaps the most important which can occupy the attention of any sanitary authority. The indoor water closet system is perhaps the best, but the question of out-door closet accommodation is still unsettled.

Recently two "slop" or "waste-water" closets have been erected in connection with houses on Trent Boulevard. These have been inspected by several members of your Council, and I would now desire to point out the advantages of this form of out-door closet, with a view to its adoption, as far as possible by your Council.

The system aims at utilising *all* the waste, or slop water, from the dwellings, as a vehicle to convey the excreta from the

closet into the drains. The waste water collects in an earthenware vessel or "tipper," which holds three gallons, and which is placed underground, and out of sight. As soon as the necessary quantity of waste water is collected, the "tipper" automatically empties itself into the pan of the closet, and the excreta is at once conveyed into the drain.

In 1880 a Royal Commission was appointed to consider the question of sewage disposal, and the result of that investigation was as follows:—"In our opinion the cleanest and cheapest mode of removing excreta will be by water, through closets, drains and sewers, to a common outlet." This opinion still, I think, holds good. By substituting the slop closet for the existing privies, or at least preventing the further extension of the privies, and recommending that in all new buildings "waste water" closets be adopted, your Council would be carrying out the recommendation of the Royal Commission. The entire volume of excreta could be removed from the dwellings to the common outlet at the farm, without any additional expense. Let it be understood, however, that *clean* water closets must always be used for indoor purposes—the slop water closet is only for out-door use. Many towns, and some Urban District Councils have tried this system with satisfactory results. In Nottingham the Health Committee, some months ago, passed a resolution whereby all new houses under a rental of £18 must be provided with some form of outdoor w.c. instead of a pail closet. The slop closet has indeed several decided advantages over the indoor w.c. In severe frosts the slop closet is not liable to be rendered useless. In the severe winter of 1894-5, not one of the 5,000 slop water closets in Wolverhampton was affected by the frost. Slop water, being impure, does not freeze so readily as pure water, while the tipper and drains are at such a depth underground that the most severe frost does not reach them. Slop

water closets can be safely erected quite close to dwellings, so that in many instances they would be preferred to the indoor closet—there would therefore be a great saving of Corporation water, probably from two to four gallons per head per day.

Other advantages may be mentioned: no plumbing repairs are ever needed—the slop closet has practically no working parts, and is therefore less liable to get out of order, while the first cost is less. Neither does the system add materially to the bulk of sewage at the Farm. Quite recent statistics show that the typhoid fever is less prevalent in districts where this system of sewage disposal is in use, than in districts where other forms of out-door accommodation exist.

To make this system a success, however, the closet must be properly designed and constructed. A well-acting “tipper” and a properly shaped pan are essentials. The drains connecting the closet with the main sewer must not be less than six inches in diameter, while any drain connected with more than one house must be nine inches in diameter. With careful attention to these details, and with every closet tested and approved of by your Surveyor, I think your Council would find this system of sewage disposal a complete success.

In flat districts the difficulty of getting a sufficient fall may be urged against the system. This difficulty would not, I think, be experienced in West Bridgford, which, although comparatively flat, has properly constructed and deeply laid sewers, and has the further advantage of having a sewage farm close at hand. Add to the advantages named the further very important one of economy. The expense of scavenging the privies—in itself objectionable work—and which is yearly increasing, would be saved, and this would mean a very considerable saving in rates. Several sanitary authorities have not only adopted the

system, but have agreed to pay part of the cost of conversion from the old form of out-door closet.

In the Annual Report of the Medical Officer of the Local Government Board for 1890, Dr. Parsons says :—“ Slop closets are in my opinion likely to be of great use (both for new houses and in substitution for existing privies) in the growing working class suburbs of towns, where each house stands in its own curtilage and has its separate closet, and especially where it is desirable to economise the public supply of water.”

SCAVENGING.

Towards the end of the year the contract for scavenging the parish was given to Mr. Jackson, a local farmer. Scavenging takes place nightly between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m., except Sundays. The excreta is now carried in zinc pails and emptied directly into the carts. There is now no wheeling or emptying on the roadways. The Contractor uses all the refuse for his own land. A pot-cart with bell attached goes round the parish every Friday. The new Contractor does the work cleanly and expeditiously, and well within the prescribed hours.

WATER SUPPLY.

There has been no alteration in the water supply during the year. The present supply will be quite sufficient for many years. Only a small portion of the new allotments has been supplied with Corporation water. The mains will not be laid further along Trent Boulevard until the various side roads branching from the Boulevard have been sewered. The present year should see this part of your parish provided with the necessary sewers and drains, and the houses provided with ample supply of Nottingham water. There are 35 wells in and

around the old village, while the houses on the allotments which have as yet no Corporation supply, have wells.

During the pumping operations which were necessary in connection with the construction of the deep level sewer from the allotments, several of the old wells during the Autumn became dry, but as far as I know, the health of the villagers was not affected thereby.

LIGHTING AND GAS SUPPLY.

Since my last Annual Report the Trunk Mains have been extended along the Melton Road, and the various Service Mains have been coupled up to the same, so that there is now a much more equable and satisfactory pressure of gas throughout the whole of the parish, and the complaints of deficiency which were formerly heard have now ceased. The supply has also, since my last Report, been extended to the allotments.

Advantage was taken of the stoppage of the Canal last Easter to carry gas and water pipes across it to Trent Boulevard, which is now supplied with gas up the end of the first estate. Beyond this point there are some householders who wish to have gas, while there are others who do not desire it. Up to the present time the demand has not been sufficient to justify a further extension of the mains.

There are now 112 public lamps in the parish.

ROADS.

During the year good progress was made in improving these. Bridgford Road has been widened and improved by the removal of the old Brook Bridge. It has also been drained. The footpaths still require attention. Loughborough Road is now undergoing some much needed improvement, by the joint

efforts of your Council and the County Council. The new roads continue to wear well, although the depressions caused by the sinking of the ground where gas and water pipes have been laid are unsightly. I regret to notice that Musters Road, the finest road in the parish, is constantly used for heavy traffic. Heavy waggons filled with manure pass along it daily. Undoubtedly the proper road for traffic of this kind is the public turnpike. I am still hopeful your Council will find a means of preserving, to some extent at least, the privacy of Musters Road.

There is still much work to be done by your Council; Charnwood Grove, Park Avenue, Central Avenue, and the various roads on the allotments all require attention.

ALLOTMENTS.

There are now 70 houses tenanted in this part of the parish, while many others are in course of erection. These are for the most part provided with cesspools. When the house drains are connected with the main sewers, a work which is at present being carried out, the cesspools can be filled up. This part of the parish seems to me to be peculiarly well adapted for the "waste" water closet system to which I have referred. The time also is opportune. With this system of sewage disposal, and with an efficient gas and water supply, this district must grow in favour, and will shew to others the advantages arising from "Every Man his own Landlord." Might I suggest to your Council that it is now time this part of your parish should have a distinctive and appropriate name.

POPULATION.

At Midsummer 1895 there were 855 houses in the parish occupied, as against 740 at the same time in 1894. The last Census return (1891) shewed an average of $4\frac{3}{4}$ inhabitants to

each house. This gives a population for 1895 of 4,061, and it is upon this figure that I base my vital statistic for the year. At the present time there are 65 houses in course of erection. Of the 855 houses, 70 are situated beyond the Canal.

As shewing the increase of the population during the past five years I give you the following statistic :—

1891	Population	2503 (Census)
1892	„	2800 (Estimated)
1893	„	3230 (Estimated)
1894	„	3515 (Estimated)
1895	„	4061 (Estimated)

The estimated increase in the population from Midsummer 1894 to Midsummer 1895 is 546, which is considerably greater than any previous increase between similar periods of time. The population during the present year is likely to shew a considerable further increase.

VITAL STATISTICS.—DEATHS.

During 1895 the number of deaths according to the Registrar's returns was only 32, as compared with 38 deaths during 1894. 16 were males, and 16 were females. Of these three died before completing the first year of life. 15 died over 60 years of age, nine died over 70 years of age, four died over 80 years of age, and one died aged 93.

Of the infants one died of Diarrhœa, one died of Pneumonia, and one of Congenital Debility. Three deaths were primarily attributed to Influenza, which prevailed in the Spring months. There were three deaths from Consumption, and four from Cancer. One death was due to Diphtheria, but there was no death from Scarlet Fever or Typhoid Fever. Two inquests

were held. Of the total deaths 15 occurred during the 1st quarter of the year, nine in the 2nd quarter, five in the 3rd quarter, while in the last quarter only three deaths were registered.

The death rate is 7·8 per 1000. In 1893 the death rate was 8·5 per 1000, a rate which I described as “phenomenally low;” for 1894 the rate was 10·8, which was described as “satisfactorily low.” The rate for last year (7·8) must be considered a “record” death rate. I am strongly of opinion that no Parish in the United Kingdom of a like population can shew such remarkably low death rate. The death rate for Nottingham for the same year is 18·9. I have in previous reports adverted to the causes which conduce to this low rate of mortality. These are chiefly the absence of poverty and of overcrowding.

BIRTHS.

During the year 88 children were born, 48 males and 40 females, as compared with 91 births in 1894. The rate per 1,000 is 21·2. The Nottingham birth rate is 29·7. No illegitimate child was born.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

During the year 20 cases of Infectious Disease were reported, 16 of Scarlet Fever, three of Diphtheria, and one of Typhoid Fever. Scarlet Fever shews a considerable increase on previous years, this increase being no doubt due to the fact that there is now a large Board School in your parish. In my Annual Report for 1894 I remarked as follows:—“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.”

Let me clear away a misconception which these words may have created in the minds of some people. The increase of Scarlet Fever is in no way due to any defect in the New Schools. Quite the contrary. These Schools are provided with every modern sanitary appliance, and the buildings are in a perfectly sanitary condition. The increase is simply the result of *the daily aggregation of large numbers of children in one building*, and would take place just the same, if the building were a church or a palace. Any one child in an infective condition may spread her disease to many others.

NOTIFICATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The "Notification of Infectious Diseases Act" continues to work well. The fees paid to Doctors for 1895 amounted to 15/-. Infected bedding and clothing are as before removed to the Nottingham Borough Disinfecting Station and thoroughly disinfected by heat. The rooms are fumigated by sulphur. The amount charged to your Council is 10/- for each case. This arrangement, which works well, is one greatly to the advantage of the parish.

Owing to a resolution adopted by the Health Committee of the Nottingham Corporation not to receive into their Hospital at Bagthorpe any cases of Scarlet Fever occurring outside the Borough, these Scarlet Fever cases have to be kept at home. In only one case, as far as I know, has the disease infected a second member of the household. I am of opinion that in the majority of the houses in West Bridgford a case of Scarlet Fever can with due precaution be isolated and nursed so that the disease need not spread. At the same time, these cases cause much trouble, worry, and expense, and the advantages

which a small isolation hospital would offer to the inhabitants of your parish would be very great.

CONCLUSION.

In conclusion I would desire to congratulate your Council on the amount of valuable work it has carried out during the two years of its existence. With the growth and prosperity of the parish, the duties and the responsibilities of your Council and of its Officials become yearly more onerous. There is still much work before you. Amongst the more ambitious projects which at some future time must engage your attention, I would mention from a public health point of view (1) the erection of a suite of public offices, with a depot for the storage of disinfectants, (2) the purchase and the laying out of a suitable piece of land for a Cemetery, and (3) the erection of a small Isolation Hospital for fever cases.

Thanking the members of the Council for their unvarying courtesy towards me.

I remain, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Yours obediently,

WALTER HUNTER, M.D.,

Medical Officer of Health.

To the Chairman and Members of the
West Bridgford Urban District Council.







