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Contributors

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REPORTS OF MEDICAL OFFICERS OF HEALTH FOR THE YEAR, 1900.

*To the Mayor, Aldermen, and Members of the Wisbech Urban
District Council.*

GENTLEMEN,

I again have the honour of submitting to you my Annual Report for the Town of Wisbech for the past twelve months, ending December 31st, 1900, together with the records and a review of the measures I have taken with a view of stopping and stamping out diseases of a zymotic nature.

It is again a great source of satisfaction to me to be able to report to you, that during the past twelve months, we have been able to keep the Town in a very cleanly, healthy state, and the sanitary requirements continue to be as well cared for as they have been in past years; of course, there have been reported to me several cases of Infectious and Contagious illness; taken generally, however, these have been of a very mild type, and at no time have we experienced any difficulty in checking the spread of Infection. Perhaps the most serious outbreak of Infectious disease, was a small epidemic of Measles, which, through the want of a little care, spread very rapidly, and caused the deaths of several children; this is greatly to be regretted, as this disease generally is a trivial complaint, but when neglected, proves a very dangerous illness with children.

The outbreak of Influenza to which I alluded in my last report, at the end of the previous year, became, as I feared, a very widespread epidemic, and lasted considerably into the spring of the year, and attacked every part of the district. The severity of the cases were perhaps not quite so severe as in previous epidemics. Both directly and indirectly several deaths were traced to this disease, and five at least were returned as due to this cause alone.

Scarlet Fever was again not very prevalent, and did not cause any serious anxiety, the cases being all of an exceptionally mild character, and no difficulty was experienced in checking the spread of the disease, in all 19 cases were reported to me, out of which three cases were removed to the Isolation Hospital, and in every case isolation adopted, with a very free and copious use of disinfectants, used by the Inspector himself. The mildness of the cases can perhaps best be judged from the fact that not one fatal case resulted.

There have been isolated cases of Diphtheria, nine in all, reported, but fortunately we have been spared any serious visitation of this terrible malady, and it has been very gratifying to find that prompt precautionary measures have kept in check this disease.

During the summer months we again experienced a rather prolonged period of dry warm weather, but Diarrhoeic diseases did not prove a source of much trouble, although this year there were four cases of Typhoid Fever reported. This is an exceptionally small number, and in each case I was able to trace that defective drainage appeared to be the source of complaint. These facts are all the more gratifying to me, because we did experience a period when the supply of Marham Water became considerably curtailed, owing to the enormous drain on the resources of the Waterworks Company this now being practically the water supply to the town, as more and more houses continue to be supplied every year, and we were all greatly relieved to learn from the Company, that as great a pressure will be maintained, if possible, in the dry months as we now constantly have in the other months of the year. The one fatal case of Typhoid Fever was that of a young man brought into the town from a neighbouring village.

The outbreak of Measles in the town was associated with the same disease in the neighbouring district of Walsoken and spread very rapidly. I was able to ascertain to some extent the widespread prevalence of this disease from the school reports very quickly, quite half the children attending the various schools were absent through this disease. The closing of these schools for a short time proved very effectual in limiting the number of cases, but still we have to deplore the loss of nine lives, which were directly attributable to this disease. Erysipelas again has not caused me much anxiety, the cases have not been severe, and only eight were reported to me.

In each case of infectious illness which has been reported to me, a very liberal supply of disinfectants have been used, directly under the supervision of the Inspector himself, who again has many times been at considerable trouble in carrying out my instructions, and especially in disinfecting thoroughly after the termination of the illness. During the year I have frequently visited the various parts of the Town, and from time to time the various Public Buildings, &c., which continue to be well kept and carefully looked after; perhaps the chief exception is the condition of Carpenter's Arms Yard, this being very thickly populated, requires more than ordinary care.

The condition of the main and smaller sewers continue on the whole very satisfactory, and have worked generally much better this, than in any former year, very few complaints have been made; whilst with the constant system of flushing, and the very valuable ventilators, offensive gases have rarely escaped. The escape from the Lynn Road

Main Sewer at times is still considerable. I am again pleased to note that steps are still being taken with a view to the erection of a better Fever Hospital, also to learn that you now have power to obtain a better water supply for the Ring's End district, about which a special report was sent in to you during the year.

The number of Births during the year was 228, again being an increase of four on the previous year, giving a birth-rate of 24 per 1,000.

The number of Deaths registered in the Town were 167, being 34 more than in the previous year; as well as these there were five deaths in the Hospital, and 35 in the Work-house, giving a general death-rate for the Town of 17·9 per 1,000. Out of this number of deaths, 38 were in infant children, giving an infantile death-rate of four per 1,000, this being nearly twice as large as in the previous year.

Deaths from Pulmonary and Heart affections were very numerous in proportion to the deaths, 11 of these being due to Phthisis, 22 to Bronchitis, 8 to Pneumonia, and 8 to Heart affections, whilst malignant disease caused 9 deaths.

Herewith I beg to hand you very full tabular statements of Births, Sickness and Mortality for this period, together with a record of previous years, which must prove very interesting statistics for comparison.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Very faithfully yours,

HARRY GROOM, M.D.,

Medical Officer of Health.

YEAR.	POPULATION ESTIMATED TO MIDDLE OF EACH YEAR.	BIRTHS.		DEATHS UNDER ONE YEAR OF AGE.		DEATHS AT ALL AGES. TOTAL.		DEATHS IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS.	DEATHS AT ALL AGES. NETT.	
		Number.	Rate.	Number.	Rate per 1000 Births registered.	Number.	Rate.		Number.	Rate.
1890	9370	229	24	30	3·2	225	24	47	272	29
1891	9395	225	23·9	26	2·7	209	22·2	39	248	26·3
1892	9405	238	25·3	36	3·8	167	17·7	32	199	21
1893	9415	215	28·8	34	3·6	180	14·2	47	227	24·1
1894	9425	212	22·8	28	2·9	145	15·3	34	179	19
1895	9437	218	23·2	40	4·2	180	19·1	59	239	25·3
1896	9449	239	25·2	40	4·2	163	17·2	41	204	21·5
1897	9461	213	22·5	34	3·5	157	16·5	46	203	21
1898	9473	219	23·2	31	3·3	152	16	53	205	21·6
1899	9480	224	23·6	27	2·8	133	14	38	171	18
1900	9485	228	24	38	4	167	17·9	40	207	21·8

Area of District in acres (exclusive of area covered by water) 6000.

Total Population at all ages 9395 at Census of 1891.

SUTTON BRIDGE,

January 15th, 1901.

MR. MAYOR AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present to you my fourth annual report for the year ending December 31st, 1900.

It is again my pleasant duty to inform you of the healthy condition of the Port, there having been no cases of an infectious or contagious nature during the year. I visited the s. Eidsion in the Eye on May 15th, 1900, as she was stated to have a man ill on board, I found the mate, by name Nils Wörk, suffering from Bronchicelasis and great exhaustion. I regret to say the poor fellow succumbed a week later whilst the ship was in the river. The captain of the vessel under my directions thoroughly disinfected and white washed the cabin occupied by the deceased, as a precautionary measure. Whilst the plague has been prevalent in Glasgow and foreign ports we have been on the watch for any cases of a suspicious nature. All vessels are boarded by the Quarantine Officer or the men under him as soon as practicable and the ships papers over-hauled—anything of a suspicious nature or I might say the occurrence of any illness whatever is reported to me.

I am glad to say that with the above named exception all the vessels have had a clean bill of health.

The Hospital has been visited by me on several occasions and is ready for any emergency. There are several repairs necessary, of which I have written to Mr. Carrick and I trust that these will shortly be attended to. Whilst the Hospital is prepared to receive any cases of Plague or other contagious or infectious diseases occurring in the Port, I would point out to you that in the event of plague breaking out there is no provision for the care of suspected cases or those who have been exposed to infection, this is a very important matter and it was chiefly due to the admirable manner in which these suspected cases of Plague were isolated, that the epidemic in Glasgow was so rapidly and efficiently exterminated.

Should necessity arise I would advise the removal of suspected cases and those who have been within the range of infection to a large tent erected near the Hospital. I have visited in company with Captain Hoole eighteen vessels, most of which were in an efficient sanitary condition.

I beg to enclose a copy of these vessels and the Ports from which they have come.

I am, Sirs,

Yours faithfully,

J. G. B. COLEMAN.

M.O.H.