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# Report of Medical Officer of Health for the Year 1920.

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

GENTLEMEN,

The report, for the year ending December 31st, 1920, which I have the honour of submitting to you, as to the Sanitary Conditions existings; and the remarks in reference to the General Health of the District, bring forth the following:—

It is again gratifying to tell you that the prevalence of Infectious illness, this year, has again shown a remarkable decrease, upon the number of cases reported during the previous year, which was then almost a record

The new Sanitary Inspector has shown great zeal in his work, and has spared no pains in disinfecting the rooms, and supplying disinfectants in all cases of infectious sickness, and probably to this cause, is due the fact, that spreading of infection, has been very largely prevented. In association with this, I must again point out, the great value, the Isolation Hospital has been to us; and I am much gratified to know that the inhabitants, both in the town and neighbourhood, have shown such ready willingness to have their relatives treated in this Institution; which I feel bound to say, has done untold good service; when I tell you, that 124 cases were treated therein, during the year, you will readily appreciate the amount of nursing and care, that has been bestowed upon the sufferers; and with remarkable good results.

Reviewing these infectious illnesses :

MEASLES,

Which is perhaps the more frequent infectious illness, was not nearly so prevalent as in the two former years; the cases were of a mild nature, and it is gratifying to note that no death followed this complaint.

DIPHTHERIA.

Fifteen cases of this serious disease were notified; compared with sixteen last year, of these cases twelve were treated at the Hospital, some of the cases were severe, but fortunately only 1 death resulted.

WHOOPING COUGH.

This distressing illness amongst young children, was more or less prevalent throughout the year, and is very difficult to control, as so many of the sufferers are to be seen







running about the district whilst in an infectious state ; imcomplicated with Bronchitis it is not a very dangerous disease, but when this appears, too great care cannot then be taken, and immediate medical assistance should be sought ; at least three, if not more deaths resulted from this complaint.

#### SMALL POX.

Fortunately, no case of this disease was reported.

#### SCARLET FEVER.

Twenty five cases of this disease were notified ; and of these nineteen were treated at the Hospital, fresh cases sprang up throughout the year, but at no particular period were there many ; this is somewhat remarkable as there were so many cases in the surrounding neighbourhood ; undoubtedly early isolation and disinfection with these cases, was most valuable ; and to these I attribute the small number of cases, fortunately no death resulted.

#### ENTERIC FEVER.

Only one case of this disease came to my knowledge, the poison was absorbed whilst away from town, the case was very severe, and unfortunately rapidly proved fatal.

#### CHICKEN POX.

Was not very prevalent, only thirteen cases existed, compared with seventeen last year.

#### ERYSIPELAS.

Only five cases of a mild type were notified.

#### INFLUENZA.

This illness, which has yearly visited the district was not nearly so prevalent, as in former years ; I am glad to find that in its earliest stages, strict sanitary precautions are now taken, isolation of cases in separate rooms adopted ; and that plenty of ventilation is provided.

The following are the records of the 4 deaths from this disease.

January 3rd. A married woman, aged 54 years.

February 20th. An aged lady of 81 years.

March 15th. An aged man of 81 years.

March 18th. An aged lady also of 81 years.

I am glad to be able to again report, that Venereal Diseases are little prevalent, and that adequate arrangements continue, for suitably dealing with these cases.

With respect to the artificial system of Sewerage and the Water supply, these are very adequate, and continue to be increasingly useful, an enormous quantity of water is required and now used both in the factories, houses, and other buildings in the town.







The Town Planning Act becomes more important each year, many repairs, and such like smaller matters have been carried out; and it is gratifying to note, that in spite of the enormous difficulties of building, and the enhanced cost of labour you are endeavouring to provide more dwellings, and so relieve the congestion in the houses, and the inevitable overcrowding.

#### SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE DISTRICT.

As usual, during the year, very many visits of inspection have been made to the various factories, buildings and schools, and we have found ready willingness in getting remedied nuisances, defects of such like.

Taken as a whole, the town has been kept cleanly, the scavenging well looked after, and refuse quickly removed. I am glad to note that some improvement has been made in the attention to the careless throwing about of refuse on Market days, but if more care is still exercised, an enormous amount of work, would be saved in the cleansing of the Market Place and Streets, and a much more sanitary and cleanly appearance would result: the destruction of street and other refuse at the Pumping Station adds much to the safety and health of the inhabitants.

Although, the health of the people is not affected thereby; may I point out to you, that the comfort of the populous would be enormously added to, and it would be greatly appreciated if a few pilot lights were used and kept alight during the long nights of the year, at various corners of chief street and thoroughfares.

#### FOOD SUPPLY.

The general supply has been increasingly satisfactory, food stuffs have been plentiful both as regards meats, fish, and such like; the milk supply, has been better, but a larger quantity is still needed, as so much depends upon this, in the feeding of Infants and Invalid people; in connection with this, I believe that much good is being done at the Children's Welfare, which is the means of providing mothers with artificial foods, who find so great a difficulty in obtaining an adequate milk supply. It is highly satisfactory to note, that comparatively very little food, has had to be condemned during the past year.

As yet, it has not been found desirable to limit the Housing Accomodation, by closing the worst cottages, although many of the smaller dwellings, need much doing to them, still great improvements has been made in some of the yards, with obvious benefit to the inhabitants of these parts, and I would ask landlords to do much more than they have been doing, in having their houses repaired and put in a better state, to save their being condemned and closed; which must inevitably follow, if this is not done.

I am again able to report, that the Sanitary requirements, are being well looked after, in the various factories in the town, where there are now considerable numbers of workpeople employed; the main work in these consists in the manufacture of fruit, and all that is connected in dealing with this most valuable source of food production; no deleterious trade or work is carried on, affecting the health of the work people, such as flock making and such like, in the district.





## BIRTHS.

The number of births during the year was 264 compared with 173 last year, of these 138 were males, and 126 females; and included in this number are 17 males and 17 females who were illegitimate, giving a birth rate of 24.1 per 1000 of the population, which is estimated to be 10931.

## DEATHS.

The number of deaths from all causes, after taking into account all outward and inward deaths, was 154, of these 80 were males and 74 females; this compares most favourably with the previous year, when 174 deaths were recorded, the calculation of the Death rate upon this number, gives a death rates of 14 per 1000 of the estimated population; a highly satisfactory rate.

Amongst these deaths are included the deaths of 29 infant children, giving an Infantile death rate of 109 per 1000, of the nett births. Whilst in the total number of deaths Pulmonary Consumption accounted for 12 deaths, 6 being males and 6 females; whilst other Tuberculosis diseases caused 3. Cancerous diseases 26. Heart disease 14. Pneumonia 9 and Bronchitis 10. Whilst no death was attributed to child birth, or connected therewith.

Attached to this report, I beg to include the Report of the Sanitary Inspector, for your consideration.


I remain, Gentlemen,

Very faithfully yours,

HARRY GROOM, M.D.,

*Medical Officer of Health.*





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# Sanitary Inspector's Annual Report for 1920.

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S OFFICE,  
TOWN HALL,  
WISBECH,

March, 1921.

*To the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors of the  
Borough of Wisbech.*

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present to you my report for the year ending December 31st, 1920, being my first Annual Report.

## FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

Inspections were made of 37 factories and 110 workshops (including Bakehouses). Defects were met with in several cases which may be summarised as follows:—

Factories with no sanitary accomodation ... ..	1
„ „ insufficient sanitary accomodation ... ..	2
„ „ defective „ „ ... ..	4
Workshops with no sanitary accomodation ... ..	1
„ „ insufficient sanitary accomodation ... ..	1
„ „ defective „ „ ... ..	6
„ not ventilated ... ..	2
„ requiring limewashing, cleansing, &c... ..	2

In each case the matter was dealt with under preliminary notice and with the exception of two cases only, the work has been satisfactorily carried out. The two unabated cases are to be put in hand at an early date. The work carried out will be found detailed in the summary following this report.

## DAIRIES, COW SHEDS AND MILK SHOPS.

Visits were made to the Dairies, Cow Sheds and Milk Shops in the Borough, and these for the most part were found to be satisfactory. It was necessary to draw the attention of the occupiers of three cow sheds to the limewashing being overdue, and in several instances the stacking of large quantities of manure too close to the cow shed had to be complained of. This latter is a very bad practise and the importance to the danger







of milk contamination by flies from these stacks cannot be too strongly emphasised. It was also necessary to give notice to the owner of one cow shed to the want of proper drainage, lighting and a new floor in the cow shed. This work was immediately carried out.

#### SLAUGHTER-HOUSES.

The slaughter-houses in the Borough, taking into consideration the fact that they are chiefly very old premises and in poor structural condition, are now well kept. It is satisfactory to find that the owners and occupiers of these premises endeavour so far as possible to carry out the requirements of the bye-laws. Obviously a public abattoir where better control could be exercised is desirable and necessary, in place of the present thirteen private slaughter-houses, which are scattered from one end of the Borough to the other, but whilst the present house shortage and high prices of materials maintain, we can hardly expect that our desire in this respect will mature.

#### UN SOUND FOOD.

In all 1 ton, 8 cwts., 17 lbs., of meat, and 103 boxes of fruit, on examination, were found to be unfit for the food of man. The meat condemned included, 5 carcasses of beef, 15 carcasses of mutton, 6 hams, 38 lbs. of bacon, and the remainder was made up of organs where local disease only existed.

It was not found necessary to take legal proceedings in any of the foregoing cases, as for the most part my attention was drawn to the condition of the food concerned, and the same on being declared unfit for food, was voluntarily surrendered and afterwards destroyed.

#### HOUSING, TOWN PLANNING, &c., ACTS, 1909-1919.

Under the above Acts 100 houses were inspected during the year. Nine statutory notices, and 36 preliminary notices were served respecting 76 houses. Twenty-four of these notices were complied with, and 51 houses were repaired, so as to meet the requirements of the Housing Acts. Twenty-three houses were in course of repair at the end of the year.

The old cottage property in the Borough has been neglected too long, with the result that defects have been allowed to accumulate and the cost of repairs when taken in hand, owing to the prevailing high prices, is almost prohibitive. Still much more could be done than is being done at present, and I would appeal to owners of this class of property in their own interest to put the work in hand.

#### INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

Fifty-one visits were made in connection with the 25 cases of scarlet fever, 15 cases of diphtheria, and 1 case of typhoid fever, that occurred during the year. The scarlet fever was of a mild type and was, except in the case of one small outbreak, scattered over a wide area. Connection could be traced in a few of the cases of diphtheria but for the most part nothing was found pointing to any direct cause of the disease. Enquiries pointed to the case of typhoid fever being imported, as the patient returned from a holiday only five days before the onset, and no cause was found for the disease at the patient's residence. It is worthy of note, that 27 cases, out of the 40 cases that occurred during the year, were isolated in hospital.







## GENERAL.

Under this heading, I would mention the state of the Wisbech Canal. This is a source of great nuisance from refuse and vegetable matter of all descriptions being deposited into the water way. As the canal does not remain full owing to the defective gates, the canal fills with each tide from the river Nene and when emptying, much of the refuse is carried away, yet much more remains on the banks where the tide does not reach. I have spent a great amount of my time in trying to obviate this nuisance, the cottages abutting on the canal side have been visited, and the occupiers cautioned, notices have been posted, and the Corporation men were instructed to take particular care in the collection of refuse from all these houses. Some improvement for a time was certainly noticed and is still evident, yet, carelessness or laziness still prevails, as it is evident that rather than take the trouble to put out the refuse for collection by the Corporation carts, the canal is used as a tip, and if apart from the unsightliness, the offenders would give serious thought to the dangers to health, and the nuisance they have to suffer from rats, this very difficult problem might yet be solved.

Generally speaking, the year has been a healthy one, the number of cases of infectious disease has been low, and with the tendency of the after-war effects to become less strained, we may hope that further improvements may be effected.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

E. J. SUTCLIFFE,

*Sanitary Inspector.*







## Summary of work done during the Year 1920.

### INSPECTION OF PREMISES.

For Nuisances	...	...	...	...	...	561
Where infectious disease has occurred	...	...	...	...	...	51
Inspections of Factories	...	...	...	...	...	37
"    "    Workshops	...	...	...	...	...	64
"    "    Bakehouses	...	...	...	...	...	44
"    "    Shops...	...	...	...	...	...	52
"    "    Cowsheds	...	...	...	...	...	19
"    "    Milkshops	...	...	...	...	...	10
"    "    Slaughterhouses	...	...	...	...	...	519
"    "    Canal Boats	...	...	...	...	...	2
"    under Housing, Town Planning &c., Acts	...	...	...	...	...	100
"    of Works in progress	...	...	...	...	...	279
Re-inspections as to compliances with notices	..	...	...	...	...	302
				Total	...	2040
No. of premises disinfected	...	...	...	...	...	39
Smoke tests applied to drains	...	...	...	...	...	14
Water " " " "	...	...	...	...	...	36
No. of complaints investigated	...	...	...	...	...	104
Cases abated under preliminary notice	...	...	...	...	...	144

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## Summary of Works carried out in compliance with Notices during the Year 1920.

### HOUSE DRAINAGE.

House Drains repaired, cleansed, &c.	...	..	...	...	20
New Pipe Drains provided	...	...	...	...	15
New Ventilating Pipes provided	...	...	...	...	8
New Cesspools provided	...	...	...	...	3







### SANITARY CONVENIENCES.

Privies converted into Water-closets	...	...	...	12
„ abolished	...	...	...	1
New Water-closets provided	...	...	...	5
Closets repaired, cleansed, &c.	...	...	...	14
Flushing Cisterns provided to W.C.'s	...	...	...	15
New Urinals provided	...	...	...	1

### FACTORIES, WORKSHOPS & BAKEHOUSES.

Factories provided with sufficient Sanitary Accomodation				2
„ „ „ improved	„	„		4
Workshops „ „ sufficient	„	„		2
„ „ „ improved	„	„		5
„ „ „ proper Lighting and Ventilation				2
„ Cleansed, Limewashed, &c.	...	...	...	2

### DAIRIES & COWEHEDS.

Provided with improved Lighting	...	...	...	1
„ „ „ Drainage	...	...	...	1
Limewashed, Cleansed, &c.	...	...	...	3
Shippon Floor relaid	...	...	...	1

### SLAUGHTERHOUSES.

Cleansed, Limewashed, &c...	...	...	...	16
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### MISCELLANEOUS.

Houses Cleansed, Limewashed, &c.	...	...	...	3
Houses repaired	...	...	...	51
Houses provided with sufficient Water Supply	...	...	...	10
Houses provided with New Sinks	...	...	...	9
Yards, Sculleries, W.C.'s, &c., repaired	...	...	...	19
Accumulations of Refuse removed	...	...	...	15
Unsound Food Condemned	1 ton, 8 cwts., 17 lbs. and		103 boxes of fruit	
Cases of Overcrowding abated	...	...	...	5
Removal of Animals improperly kept	...	...	...	2







New Piggeries built ..	...	...	...	...	...	1
Piggeries Cleansed & Limewashed	...	...	...	...	...	2
New Manure Bins provided	...	...	...	...	...	3
Ash-pits abolished ...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Sculleries Rebuilt ...	...	...	...	...	...	6
Defective Wells closed	...	...	...	...	...	2
Cesspools emptied ...	...	...	...	...	...	3

E. J. SUTCLIFFE,

*Sanitary Inspector.*



