

**[Report 1902] / Medical Officer of Health, Workington Borough.**

**Contributors**

Workington (England). Borough Council.

**Publication/Creation**

1902

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*To the Chairman and Members of the Workington Urban  
Sanitary Authority.*

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## ANNUAL REPORT

OF MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR YEAR 1902.

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MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

I continue to base my statistics on an estimated population of 26,000, the same as last year.

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### **Births.**

During the year 943 Births were registered in your district, of which 498 were males and 445 females, being equal to an annual birth-rate of 36·3 per 1,000, as compared with 31·1 for preceding year.

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### **Deaths.**

The Deaths registered amounted to 430, of which 226 were males and 204 females. This is equal to an annual death-rate of 16·5 per 1,000, as compared with 15·5 for preceding year.

I append the Death-rate since 1882 :—

In 1882	...	24·4 per 1,000.
„ 1883	...	18·2 „
„ 1884	...	16·2 „
„ 1885	...	18·7 „
„ 1886	...	17·7 „
„ 1887	...	18·9 „
„ 1888	...	21 „
„ 1889	...	18 „
„ 1890	...	18·3 „
„ 1891	...	16·6 „
„ 1892	...	16 „
„ 1893	...	16 „
„ 1894	...	14·95 „
„ 1895	...	19·5 „
„ 1896	...	15·8 „
„ 1897	...	14·46 „
„ 1898	...	20·3 „
„ 1899	...	17·6 „
„ 1900	...	19·6 „
„ 1901	...	15·5 „

The following is a classification of the ages at which the deaths occurred :—

123	under 1 year.
44	over 1 year and under 5.
21	„ 5 „ „ 15.
24	„ 15 „ „ 25.
126	„ 25 „ „ 60.
92	„ 60.



### Infant Mortality

was at the rate of 130 per 1,000, as compared with 150 for preceding year, and included 13 deaths from gastro enteritis, 10 from gastritis, 6 from general tuberculosis, 3 from meningitis, 4 from asthenia, 25 from premature birth, 23 from convulsions, 20 from bronchitis, 5 from pneumonia, 2 from marasmus, and 2 from croup.

The zymotic death rate was equal to 76 per 1000, as compared with 14 for preceding year, and included one death from Puerperal Fever, one from Erysipelas, two from Enteric Fever, four from Diarrhoea, nine from Whooping Cough, one from Measles, and one from Smallpox.

It will be seen from the foregoing statistics that though the annual death-rate is slightly higher, there is a notable decrease both in the rate of Infant mortality and in the zymotic death-rate, both of which speak well for the sanitary condition of your district, to which also has to be added an increase in the annual birth-rate.

Under the Infectious Diseases (Notification) Act I have received :—

Scarlet Fever	...	...	49
Enteric Fever	...	...	13
Erysipelas	...	...	35
Smallpox	...	...	3
Puerperal Fever	...	...	1
Membranous Croup	...	...	2
Diphtheria	...	...	2

### Ellerbeck Infectious Hospital.

This hospital was opened for the reception of patients in the month of September, but so far only in three cases has removal been effected. This is much to be regretted, especially when it is borne in mind that Scarlet Fever still lingers in the district, and that proper isolation can, in most instances, only be maintained (and the disease thereby eradicated) by taking advantage of the facilities offered by such an institution. In time, it is to be hoped, public prejudice will be overcome, and in the meantime, much could be done in this direction if we could secure the co-operation of the medical attendant, for without this our own efforts, in most cases, are not likely to meet with much success.

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### Smallpox.

We had unfortunately during the year a further experience of the danger to be apprehended from an invasion of smallpox, and a lesson on the necessity of keeping ourselves in a state of preparedness so as to be able effectually to deal with this disease. In my last Annual Report I wrote strongly on this subject, and endeavoured to impress upon you that the question of smallpox accommodation was a matter of the greatest urgency, and that the time to act was when we were free from the disease, and not when we were threatened with an epidemic. I am glad to say that your Authority took a similar view of the situation and readily passed a resolution for the erection of a portable building. The difficulty (and a very serious one it was) that confronted us was the acquiring of a suitable site for the same, and unfortunately ere this could be solved we were face to face with the disease itself. A temporary arrangement entered into with the Port Sanitary Authority enabled us to make use of their Hospital on the Merchant's Quay, and there to isolate the cases which occurred. In this



way, and by the adoption of the measures suitable for the occasion, we had the good fortune to check the disease at its outset, though one of the cases was of a most malignant type and ended fatally after a few days' illness. And so we breathed once more, and once again your Sanitary Officials had the supreme satisfaction of preserving your District from a possible epidemic. To all who worked with me through this trying time, when the public censure was more free than public praise, the best thanks are due. But the scare did not pass away without again enforcing upon my mind the absolute necessity that existed on the part of your Authority to provide for yourselves a suitable building for the immediate isolation and treatment of cases of smallpox. And I am glad to state that this has been done, and that when an arrangement has been come to with the Port Sanitary Authority and the ground landlord to utilise part of the site on the Merchant's Quay, we will then erect a portable iron building with eight beds. This will enable us at least to grapple thoroughly at the outset with any future invasion of smallpox so far as isolation is concerned.

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### **Insanitary Dwellings and the Housing of the Working Classes.**

Our position at the present time is this. Early in the year we obtained the sanction of the Local Government Board to proceed with the erection of 20 workmen's dwellings in Blackburn-street, and these are now in course of completion. The representation which I made to you with regard to Griffin-street and the Brows is still, as I stated in my last annual report, not beyond the embryo stage. Nor with so many large schemes on hand at the present time can I see any chance of progress. Indeed so far back as April, 1900, I wrote :—“ By the adoption of Part III of the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890, and by the passing of a resolution on



the 6th ult., to proceed with the erection of 20 workmen's dwellings, your Board has made a beginning with a great social question which for long I have had much at heart, and towards the solution of which I made a first attempt some three years ago. I have little tinge of regret that the lines of procedure which I then advocated has not commended itself to your Board. The difficulties in the way were considerable, and to some may have appeared insurmountable. It is enough for me that your Board has resolved to follow out the principle for which I contended, and that you have wisely decided that while you proceed to erect new and better dwellings, the condition and ultimate destination of the insanitary property in your district shall not escape your attention. In dealing with this latter question, it is my intention, with your permission, to follow somewhat in the lines of the serial story 'To be continued in our next', and from time to time to submit to you a report on such property or properties as may appear to me to be in an insanitary condition, *and to obtain from you the necessary authority for re-habilitation or demolition as the case may be.* And to begin with I took certain property in King-street which formed part of the representation I made to you in my Special Report of 1897. Referring to page 236 Minutes of Council for 1900, it will be found that the Committee recommend that the necessary steps be taken to have these houses put into proper habitable repair, and failing the same, that application be made to the Justices for orders to close the same, these proceedings to be taken under all or any of the statutory powers enabling them in that behalf."

At page 284 of the same year it will be seen that I resumed the consideration of this subject which, indeed, formed so large a part of my last month's report, and that a resolution was passed to have the houses scheduled put into habitable condition. Also at page 332 I stated "I append a report on those houses in Udale-street dealt with under the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890," and the inevitable resolution follows. Again, on



page 366, there is a further representation by me of insanitary property, and at page 369 another resolution.

I refer to all this at the present time because there seems to be a disposition on the part of some, at least, to believe that I was indifferent or neglectful as to dealing with insanitary property in your district. That this was not so the above extracts will, I hope, abundantly prove. I admit that at one time I may have been impatient at the slow results likely to follow, and that I should have preferred a scheme or schemes that would sweep away once and for all these insanitary areas, but finding this could not be done I fell back on the principle that 'half a loaf was better than no bread.' If my action has been the means of causing unnecessary delay in dealing with these insanitary properties I am willing to take whatever share of blame attaches to me. It is true that hitherto, perhaps, we have not accomplished very much, but one thing we have gained. The whole matter is now properly focussed, so to speak; the materials we have been gathering are still available, and an understanding has been arrived at as to the line to be followed, and, when the machinery is put into operation, as it will be soon, I hope that of insanitary property in Workington, like the snakes in Iceland, there will be none. The matters connected with the sanitary administration of your district have, under my directions, come under the observation and received the attention of your Inspector, Mr. Sheldon, to whom I am indebted for a active and intelligent co-operation in public health work, and whose report I have the honour to submit. I have nothing special to add to what is therein contained except to say that, with smallpox around and about us, we are keeping a strict watch on the lodging-houses and on any tents or vans that may come into your district.

I am,

Yours respectfully,

JOHN HIGHET, M.D.,

*Medical Officer of Health.*

**INSPECTOR OF NUISANCES' ANNUAL REPORT.**

Town Hall,

Workington,

January 6th, 1902.

To JOHN HIGGET, Esq., M.D., M.O.H.

SIR,

I have the honour to submit my Thirteenth Annual Report, giving a summary of the work done in my department, as per Report Book for the year-ending December 31st, 1902.

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**General Inspection of the Borough and Discovery of Nuisances.**

This has been done periodically, and, as far as possible, systematically, especially in such places and streets which most need attention, and I trust with good results.

During the year special inspections have been made in Church-street, Griffin-street, and adjacent Brows, Udale-street, and King-street, and verbal notice given to occupiers, to cleanse, limewash, and in some cases to abate overcrowding in various parts of houses and tenements visited.

I venture to say that in many of the houses so visited, some of the insanitary conditions under which the people live would be improved by an application of elbow grease and other essentials due to healthy households. Many of the houses, however, require structural alterations; this I hope will have attention in the near future, and dealt with in a more comprehensive manner than it has been in the past.



### **Borough Slaughter Houses.**

These have been visited and inspected frequently, especially on killing days. Nothing that has come under my notice has been slaughtered to justify any interference except upon one occasion, when the carcase of a cow was brought in by a local tradesman, and after being stripped of its hide, was found to be altogether unfit for human consumption, and was carried away by the owner and buried. The Slaughter Houses have been twice lime-washed, and spouts renewed, and would be still further improved by the flagging, paving, or macadamising the whole of the surface of the yard. The removal of offal, manure, &c., together with the trade carried on in skin cleaning, causes complaints from time to time, but every effort is made as far as possible under existing circumstances to keep the premises in good condition.

The number of animals slaughtered during the year are as follows :—Beasts, 2,190 ; sheep, 7,623 ; lambs, 1,753 ; calves, 166 ; pigs, 1,783 ; total, 13,515. In addition to the above, I have to report that Mr. A. Fisher has again used his private slaughter house, situate in Elizabeth-street, during the year. The premises are in good order, but I have no record of the number of animals killed.

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### **Registered Common Lodging Houses.**

Of these there are six upon the register, containing 33 bedrooms and affording accommodation for one hundred and ten casuals. Regular inspections have been made during the year, and on three occasions the sanitary arrangements were found to be faulty, and notices served for the abatement of nuisances. General conduct of the houses, fair, and no irregularity discovered.

### Tents and Vans.

The vans used as dwellings, which during the year entered the Borough and stayed for brief periods, were inspected, and in each case enquiries made to ascertain whether any infectious disease existed among the occupants, or whether the vans or occupants had travelled from any centre where infectious diseases prevailed. No actual case or suspicious case was discovered, and I am glad to report that upon the whole the vans were clean and in good condition.

### Schedule of Nuisances.

During the year 442 nuisances have been discovered and dealt with as per Inspector's Journal, viz :—

To cleanse filthy and choked water-closets, ashpits, &c	140
„ cleanse choked drains and gullies	65
„ provide Sanitary drainage	6
„ cleanse dirty and insanitary yards	25
„ repair pavement in back yards	20
„ removal of accumulations of manure, stagnant water, and other refuse	15
„ improved water supply	10
„ abate nuisances from smoke	8
„ abate nuisance caused by offensive trades	1
„ repair defective water closets	75
„ repair defective eaves, spouting and down spouts	22
„ abate nuisances for overcrowding	20
„ put houses into habitable condition	6
„ abate nuisances from urinals	7
„ abate nuisances from poultry keeping, &c.	8
Miscellaneous not mentioned under the above heads	12



### **Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops.**

There are in Workington thirty-one registered Dairy-men, Cowkeepers, and Purveyors of Milk. Twelve during the year have given up business, and three new names registered. The premises of each engaged in the trade, from time to time inspected and generally found in fair condition. In relation to cowkeepers, the removal of manure continues one of difficulty.

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### **Public Markets.**

Each Market Day, Hag Hill and the Covered Market were visited, with a view to the detection of unsound fruit, fish, meat, &c., being exposed for sale, but nothing of an unusual character occurred.

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### **Factory and Workshops Act, 1901.**

As you are aware the above Act came into force on January 1st, 1901, and under the provisions of the Act, it is incumbent upon all District and Borough Councils to keep a register of all Workshops and Factories situate within their respective districts. The requisite register has been obtained, and the names of ninety-three owners and occupiers, together with the nature of the trade and situation of premises, entered therein.

Most of the Workshops have been inspected, and in five instances it has been necessary to serve notices and administer warnings for contraventions of the law, and the defaulting conditions being remedied, it was of course not necessary to resort to extreme measures.

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**Infectious Diseases (Notification) Act.**

During the year one hundred and five cases have been reported upon, viz :—

Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	49
Enteric Fever	...	...	...	13
Puerperal Fever	...	...	...	1
Erysipelas	...	...	...	35
Smallpox	...	...	...	3
Membranous Croup	...	...	...	2
Diphtheria	...	...	...	2
				105

Instructions were given in all cases visited, as to the necessary steps to stop the spread of infection, disinfectants supplied where required free, and in all cases (except Erysipelas) houses and bedding disinfected, three cases were removed to Ellerbeck for treatment, and the three Smallpox cases to the hospital on the Merchants Quay, one of the latter unfortunately proving fatal.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

WM. SHELDON,

*Inspector of Nuisances.*





