

[Report of the Medical Officer of Health for Harrow-on-the-Hill UDC 1896].

Contributors

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*With J. Fletcher Little's
commentary*

1896.

HARROW-ON-THE-HILL

URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.



ANNUAL REPORT

OF

JOHN FLETCHER LITTLE,

M.B. CANTAB, M.R.C.P. LOND.,

Medical Officer of Health for Harrow.

HARROW:

Printed by F. W. Provost, High Street.

1897.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OF THE

AMERICAN

SAVINGS

AND

TRUST COMPANY

NEW YORK

HARROW-ON-THE-HILL
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

POPULATION, 1896 (CENSUS), 8,373.

AREA, 2,197 STATUTE ACRES.

POPULATION, 1891 (CENSUS), 5,725. AREA, 1,000 STATUTE ACRES.

ANNUAL REPORT, 1896.

32, HARLEY STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE, W.

To the Chairman, Harrow Urban District Council.

SIR,

I have the honour to present to you my Annual Report for the year ending December 31st, 1896.

The population, according to a census taken by your Council on May 17th, 1896, was 8,373.

During the year the births of 104 boys and 90 girls were registered—total 194, showing a birth-rate of 23·7 per 1,000. There were 71 deaths registered. The death-rate being 8·5 per 1,000. The following is the distribution of deaths according to age :—

Under 1 year.....	22	} under 5 years...29
Over 1 year and under 5 ...	7	
„ 5 years „ 15 ...	0	} over 5 years.....42
„ 15 „ „ 25 ...	1	
„ 25 „ „ 65 ...	25	
„ 65 „16		

Comparing the 22 deaths of infants under 12 months old, with the 194 births, it appears that there are 113 of such deaths to each 1,000 births, or, in other words, of every nine children born one dies without seeing the the anniversary of its birth.

There were 6 deaths from zymotic disease (viz. measles 5, diphtheria 1), or at the rate of $\cdot 7$ per 1,000; from diarrhœa and dysentery 3 deaths; from phthisis 1 death.

There were certified during the twelve months 44 cases of scarlet fever, 6 cases of diphtheria, 5 cases of typhoid fever, and 5 cases of erysipelas.

Statistics of past ten years. At page 7 will be found a table of statistics covering the past ten years, in which a steady and considerable sanitary improvement may be traced. It is worthy of notice that, whilst the town has increased in size and population, the number of deaths has remained practically stationary. Excluding the deaths from influenza in 1892, the number of deaths during the last five years ranges from 70 to 75, which gives an average death-rate throughout the five years of $9\cdot 6$.

The death-rate from zymotic diseases shows a very satisfactory decline. During the first half of the decade it was $1\cdot 18$, whilst during the second half it was only $\cdot 52$, or a decrease of more than 50 per cent. The most unsatisfactory feature of the statistics is that the number of deaths of infants under one year old remains at practically the same figure. To 1,000 births during the first quinquennium it was 116, whilst during the second it was 110, or only a decrease of 6.

DECLINE OF DEATH-RATE.

In 1887 my predecessor, judging by the comparative statistics of that day, reported that a death-rate of $11\cdot 3$ per 1,000 was highly satisfactory. In 1895 Harrow was the healthiest district in Middlesex, with a death-rate of only $9\cdot 3$. Last year it was still more healthy, the death-rate being only $8\cdot 5$. I am satisfied that it may be still further reduced.

HOW TO REDUCE THE DEATH-RATE.

As regards scarlet fever, whilst 44 cases were certified, no death ensued. Improved sanitation, the mild type of the disease, and the treatment in the Isolation Hospital, probably account for this happy result. The position of measles is quite different. The number of cases is

unknown. At present it is not a notifiable disease in the district. Unlike scarlet fever, it runs its course unchecked and uncontrolled, and it is responsible for 5 deaths. A duty to notify the first case in any house would enable us to offer isolation, and afford some hope of coping with this deadly malady. Six cases of diphtheria were certified, and one death occurred. Manifestly there are still houses in Harrow which are fit generating places for this disease, but the house-to-house inspection inaugurated by your Council will, I trust, result in their being put into proper sanitary condition, and so diminish sickness and death.

HIGH INFANT MORTALITY.

The largest reduction in the death-rate must be looked for in the diminution of what may justly be termed "infanticide." That out of every nine children born in Harrow one should die before he is a year old is highly discreditable. These deaths mainly arise from ignorance. No other occupation is entered upon with so light a heart and with so little preparation as the nursing of infants, and the consequences are simply disastrous.

Our public elementary schools give instruction in subjects much more apart from the main business of life, and even the middle classes provide no system of instruction for those who anticipate the duties of motherhood.

INCUBATOR.

It is to be observed that 5 deaths of infants followed a few days after their premature birth. Some of these were probably preventable. In such cases some of our hospitals successfully use an incubator, and had we one in Harrow, to be lent out under the care of a district nurse, some of these deaths would be prevented.

LONDON AS A CENTRE OF INFECTION.

I have more than once drawn your attention to the ill effects upon the health of Harrow of the absolutely inefficient isolation arrangements in London. There provision is only made for the separation of a small proportion of the cases of infectious disease. The rest are left, frequently in crowded houses amidst dense populations, to form centres of disease to infect the

neighbours. This is a constant danger to the health of Harrow, and if the richest city in the world will not make suitable provision, I think there ought to be some means by which her smaller and poorer neighbours should be able to recover from her for the expense and loss of life her negligence has caused them.

ISOLATION HOSPITAL.

There were 32 patients admitted during the year, of these 31 had scarlet fever and 1 diphtheria. All the cases of scarlet fever recovered. The case of diphtheria proved fatal. This is the first death in the hospital. The hospital has proved of the greatest use during the year in keeping the town free from infection.

STEAM DISINFECTING.

In March, 1889, my predecessor, Dr. Thompson, wrote "The purchasing of a disinfecting apparatus, which I understand has recently been decided upon, will be a very valuable step in the right direction." For some reason, of which I am unaware, the step has not yet been taken, though it is much more desirable in 1897 than it was in 1889, and I should respectfully urge your Council to provide a steam disinfecting apparatus at the earliest possible moment.

WATER CLOSETS WITHOUT WATER.

There are still some water closets in the town without a supply of water. I have repeatedly pointed out the danger of such places. I trust that your Council will now place them in the same category as the old bell traps, and let them be dealt with in like manner by the Sanitary Inspector.

DAIRIES AND DAIRY FARMS.

A great deal has been done by the proprietors of these places to bring them up to the standard required by your Bye-Laws. When your regulations have been complied with they will be recommended for registration. A considerable portion of the milk supply of the town comes from outside, and is collected over a wide area. If this milk is not produced under sanitary conditions, danger may arise. An epidemic of infectious disease in a distant county may thus lead to an outbreak in Harrow.

BAKERIES.

The majority of the bakeries are in a good sanitary condition. In a few cases, however, I found accumulations of dust under the kneading troughs, and cobwebs on the walls. I hope that I shall not have to make like complaints on future inspections.

SLAUGHTER-HOUSES.

Although most of these places are badly situated, I found them in a fairly good sanitary condition. It is necessary that some of them should be more frequently lime-washed. Under present circumstances it is impossible for the meat supply of the town to be efficiently supervised, and I have again to recommend the early provision of a public slaughter-house.

COMMON LODGING HOUSES.

The registered common lodging house has been duly visited, and found in perfect order. At the General Annual Licensing Sessions, when application was made for the renewal of a license to premises, part of which is used as a common lodging house, conditions were laid down which should ensure good sanitation.

NEW BUILDINGS.

There were 86 new dwelling-houses, 3 additions, and 15 new buildings (not dwelling-houses) erected during the year.

METEROLOGICAL REPORTS.

These reports have been supplied me by Mr. Charles, and have been carefully kept. They show that the rainfall for the year was 26·88 inches. During September 7·45 inches of rain fell, or more than one-fourth of the rainfall of the year. On 24 days of that month rain to the extent of ·01 inch or upwards fell, and on one day, the 12th, to the extent of 1·06 inches.

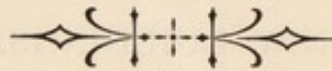
The rainfall of the past five years was as follows:—
1892, 20·55; 1893, 21·04; 1894, 29·48; 1895, 25·21;
1896, 26·88.

It gives me much pleasure once more to acknowledge the willing and efficient help that Mr. Charles, in his capacity of Sanitary Inspector, has rendered me during the year. The rapidity with which he removes infectious cases to the hospital, and proceeds to the disinfection of the patients' houses, deserves special mention.

During the year Mrs. Dear has suffered from scarlet fever, acquired whilst performing her duties at the Isolation Hospital. Her assiduous attention to the patients has largely contributed to the excellent results I have reported above.

I remain, Sir,

Your obedient servant,
JOHN FLETCHER LITTLE,
M.B. CANTAB., M.R.C.P. LOND.,
Medical Officer of Health for Harrow.



TEN YEARS' SANITARY STATISTICS.

Estimated Population.	Number of Deaths.	Death-rate.	Zymotic Death-rate.	Number of Births.	Birth-rate.	Number of Deaths under 1 Year of age in 1,000 Births.
1887.....5,894	67	11.3	.6	127	21.5	133
1888.....5,950	68	11.4	.8	156	26.2	96
1889.....6,006	76	12.6	2.8	148	24.6	168
1890.....6,132	104	16.9	1.3	154	25.0	143
1891.....6,675	72	10.7	.4	149	22.3	47
1892.....6,876	84	12.2	.8	142	20.6	112
1893.....6,979	72	10.3	.7	144	20.6	97
1894.....7,118	70	9.8	.28	161	22.6	124
1895.....7,807	73	9.3	.13	169	21.6	106
1896.....8,373	71	8.5	.7	194	23.7	113
Averages for } 5 years, } 1887 to 1891 }	77.4	12.5	1.18	146	23.9	116
Averages for } 5 years, } 1892 to 1896 }	74	10	.52	162	22.2	110

(A) TABLE OF DEATHS DURING THE YEAR, 1896, CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO DISEASES, AGES, AND LOCALITIES.

Names of Localities adopted for the purpose of these Statistics; public institutions being shown as separate localities.	Mortality from all causes, at subjoined ages.						Mortality from subjoined causes, distinguishing Deaths of Children under Five Years of Age.										
	At all ages.	Under 1 year.	1 and under 5.	5 and under 15.	15 and under 25.	25 and under 65.	65 and upwards.	Diphtheria.	Measles.	Diarrhoea & Dysentery.	Rheumatic Fever.	Phthisis.	Bronchitis, Pneumonia, & Pleurisy.	Heart Disease.	Injuries.	All other Diseases.	TOTAL.
Harrow	63	22	7		1	19	15	1	5	3	1	1	6	5	5	19	46
Cottage Hospital	7					6	1						5			16	25
Isolation Hospital	1																
TOTALS	71	22	7		1	25	16	1	5	3	1	1	6	5	4	19	46

(B) TABLE OF POPULATION, BIRTHS, AND OF NEW CASES OF INFECTIOUS SICKNESS, CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO DISEASES, AGES, AND LOCALITIES.

Names of Localities adopted for the purpose of these Statistics; public institutions being shown as separate localities.	Population at all ages.		Registered Births.	Aged under 5 or over 5	New Cases of Sickness in each locality, coming to knowledge of Medical Officer.				Number of such Cases removed from their Homes in the several Localities for Treatment in Isolation Hospital.	
	Census 1891,	Estimated to middle of 1896.			Diphtheria.	Enteric or Typhoid Fever.	Erysipelas.	Scarlatina.	Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.
	Under 5	5 upwds.	Under 5	5 upwds.	Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Enteric or Typhoid Fever.	Erysipelas.	Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.
Urban Sanitary District of Harrow..	5,729	8,373	194	Under 5 5 upwds.	10 34	1 5	5 5	5	6 25	1

METEOROLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS

TAKEN AT HARROW DURING THE YEAR ENDING
DECEMBER, 1896,

By T. CHARLES, ENGINEER AND SURVEYOR TO THE COUNCIL.

Month.	Hygrometer.		Temperature.				Rainfall.			Wind.	
	Dry Bulb.	Wet Bulb.	Max.	Min.	Earth.		Total Depth	Greatest Fall in 24 Hours.		No. of Days on which '01 or more fell.	Prevailing Wind.
					1ft.	4ft.		Depth	Date.		
JANUARY.											
Means	39.3	38.1	44.2	35.6	42.2	45.5	0.86	..	..	..	S.W.
Highest	48.0	47.0	52.0	49	43	46	..	0.18	25th	10	..
Lowest	30.0	29.0	39.0	27	40	45	..	..	..	..	..
FEBRUARY.											
Means	37.2	36.5	45.7	32.7	40.7	44.2	0.40	..	..	..	S.W.
Highest	48	47	55	44	43	45	..	0.15	20th	8	N.W.
Lowest	28	28	35	20	38	44	..	..	..	..	N.E.
MARCH.											
Means	44.6	42.2	52.1	38.5	44.06	45.5	3.42	..	..	..	S.W.
Highest	53	51	65	48	47	46	..	0.57	17th	27	..
Lowest	33	29	43	30	41	44	..	..	20th	..	..
APRIL.											
Means	48.96	45.5	57.2	39.6	46.9	46.3	0.54	..	..	..	N.W.
Highest	56	54	67	50	50	48	..	0.09	14th	10	..
Lowest	41	37	48	31	44	46	..	..	..	..	..
MAY.											
Means	54.4	49.5	65.3	43.5	52.6	48.1	0.25	..	..	..	N.E.
Highest	67	61	76	56	56	52	..	0.19	21st	5	..
Lowest	45	40	52	33	48	48	..	..	..	..	..
JUNE.											
Means	62.96	58.0	72.6	52.2	60.4	47.4	1.75	..	..	..	N.W.
Highest	74	67	82	63	64	56	..	0.47	10th	14	..
Lowest	54	49	62	40	56	52	..	..	..	..	..
JULY.											
Means	64.3	58.6	74.9	53.2	63.1	51.2	1.10	..	..	..	N.W.
Highest	74	65	87	62	66	59	..	0.49	26th	7	..
Lowest	53	51	62	44	60	56	..	..	..	..	..
AUGUST.											
Means	58.6	53.9	67.5	50.9	60.9	59	3.40	..	..	..	N.E.
Highest	65	61	73	60	63	59	..	0.91	31st	14	N.W.
Lowest	52	48	60	44	59	59	..	..	..	..	..

METEOROLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS (*continued.*)

Month.	Hygrometer.		Temperature.				Rainfall.				Wind.
	Dry Bulb.	Wet Bulb.	Max.	Min.	Earth.		Total Depth	Greatest Fall in 24 Hours		No. of Days on which .01 or more fell.	Prevailing Wind.
					1ft.	4ft.		Depth	Date.		
SEPTEMBER.											
Means	56.3	54.2	62.4	50.2	58.1	56.06	7.45	..	..	..	S.W.
Highest	64	62	68	59	60	58	..	1.06	12th	24	..
Lowest	48	46	56	35	54	57	..	..	..	..	..
OCTOBER.											
Means	44.8	43.4	52.9	40.03	50.2	55.4	2.72	..	..	..	N.E.
Highest	59	58	62	59	56	57	..	0.60	6th	19	..
Lowest	31	30	44	25	44	53	..	..	..	..	..
NOVEMBER.											
Means	38.4	37.03	45.1	34.0	43.1	50.3	1.24	..	..	..	N.E.
Highest	48	47	51	43	45	53	..	0.50	7th	9	..
Lowest	28	27	37	23	40	48	..	..	..	..	..
DECEMBER.											
Means	38.0	37.8	43.5	32.8	40.8	46.8	3.75	..	..	..	S.W.
Highest	48	47	51	42	43	48	..	0.67	2nd	21	..
Lowest	25	25	34	23	38	45	..	..	..	..	..

The Total Rainfall for the Year was 26.88 inches.



