

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH,

FOR THE URBAN DISTRICT OF CAMBORNE, CORNWALL.

For the Year ending 31st December, 1898.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE CAMBORNE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

GENTLEMEN,

I have pleasure in presenting to you my report on the Sanitary Condition of your District for the year 1898.

POPULATION.

At the census of 1891 the population of your district was 14,703, and as stated in previous reports, considering the continued emigration which has taken place in this district for several years past, I have, in calculating the various birth and death rates, taken this return rather than one calculated on the increase between the census of 1881 and 1891, as affording a more nearly accurate estimate of the population.

AREA.

The area of your district is 6744 acres, giving a density of population of 2.1 per acre.

INHABITED HOUSES.

The number of inhabited houses is 3500.

BIRTHS.

During the year 373 births were registered (187 males and 186 females) giving a birth rate of 25.37 per 1000, as compared with one of 25.5 for 1897, and one of 24.55 for 1896. The total number of illegitimate births registered during the year was 23, giving an illegitimate birth rate of 1.56 per 1000 of the population, and a proportion of 61 to 1000 births, a rate which is above the average of the country generally.

DEATHS.

During the year 348 deaths (166 males and 182 females) were registered, giving a death rate of 23.67 per 1000 of the population as compared with one of 16.66 for 1897, and one of 17.21 for 1896. In analysing these death returns however, we find that 141 of the deaths occurred in children under five years of age, and 91 in persons over 65 years of age, a total of 232 deaths, leaving only 116 deaths between the ages of 5 and 65, equal to a death rate of 7.9 per 1000.

NATURAL INCREASE.

25, as compared with 132 for 1897, and 108 for 1896.

INFANTILE MORTALITY.

No less than 112 of the deaths were in infants under one year of age, and were due to the following causes:—

Diarrhœa—31 (29 of these being in the months of September and October, when epidemic diarrhœa was very prevalent over the whole County, 31 infants dying from this cause in this district, during the two months and all under 18 months of age.)

Gastro-Enteritis—13.

Whooping Cough—15.

Broncho-Pneumonia—6.

Convulsions—6.

Marasmus—14.

Atrophy—6.

Prematurity—12.

Scarlet Fever—1.

Influenza—1.



Wm. Dyer

General Tuberculosis—1.

Menenigitis—1.

All other causes—5.

These give the very high infant mortality of 300 per 1000 births, which is considerably above the average of the country generally. I have again and again called your attention to the pernicious habit which exists in this district of feeding tender infants on farinaceous foods, and the substitution of cows milk for breast milk, often given in uncleanly bottles, containing milk in a state of decomposition. Considering that 63% of the deaths in infants were from diseases of the digestive system and general wasting diseases, this question demands the serious consideration of all thoughtful persons.

OTHER DEATHS.

29 deaths were in children between the ages of 1 and 5, and 91 were in persons 65 years of age and over.

ZYMOTIC DEATH RATE.

35 deaths from Diarrhœa, 24 from Whooping Cough, 8 from Typhoid Fever, and one each from Diphtheria, Membraneous Croup and Scarlet Fever, give a Zymotic Death Rate of 4.7 per 1000 of the population, as compared with one of 2.04 for 1897, and one of 1.40 for 1896.

INQUEST CASES.

There were eight Inquest Cases during the year, and of these :—

Two were accidentally killed in a mine.

Two hanged themselves while of unsound mind.

One died from Rupture of a Blood Vessel through pulling a heavy chain.

One died from the effects of a fall overstairs.

One died from Carbolic Burning through inadvertance and in the other case the verdict was "Accidental Death."

PHTHISIS.

33 deaths (of which only eight were of miners) occurred from Phthisis, being 9.4 % of the total deaths, and giving a death rate from Phthisis of 2.2 per 1000.

OTHER RESPIRATORY DISEASES.

47 deaths were from other Respiratory Diseases being 13.5 % of the total deaths, and giving a death rate of 3.1 per 1000 of the population.

Respiratory diseases therefore account for 22.9 % of the total deaths.

OTHER DEATHS.

Four deaths were from Tubercular Diseases other than Phthisis, twenty two from Heart Disease, twelve from Cancer, and eighteen from Influenza.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

During the year, 89 cases of Infectious Disease were notified, giving a Disease Rate of 6 per 1000 of the population as compared with 9.5 for 1897, 7.6 for 1896, and 21.08 for 1895. Of these cases of Infectious Disease, 57 were from Typhoid Fever, 2 from Continued Fever, 13 from Scarlet Fever, 8 from Diphtheria and Membraneous croup, and 9 from Erysipelas.

TYPHOID FEVER.

Fifty-seven cases were notified during the year, giving an average rate of 3.8 per 1000 of the population. Six of these were fatal, the other two deaths being in cases notified in December, 1897.

Of these cases forty-two occurred during the Typhoid Epidemic, twenty-eight being Primary Cases, and the remaining fourteen due to Secondary Infection.

Of the remaining fifteen cases notified during the year :—

One was in March.

Two in July.

Six in August.

Two in September, and

Four in October.

The exact cause of the disease in these cases was not apparent, but in many of the premises one found large accumulations of excremental and other refuse, defective traps, and soakage, and consequent pollution of the soil by waste waters and liquid refuse. In all the cases notified, explicit directions were given as to the disposal of the Typhoid stools, the privy pits were cleaned out and disinfected with perchloride of mercury solution, and in two cases the bedding was destroyed.

DIPHTHERIA.

Six cases of Diphtheria and two of Membraneous Croup were notified during the year, giving a Disease Rate of .54 per 1000 of the population, and of these two were fatal. Two of these cases were due to defective drainage, two were in children attending the Beacon Board School, and possibly due to the insanitary condition of these premises, and to which the attention of the School Board Authorities was called.

SCARLET FEVER.

Thirteen cases of Scarlet Fever with one death in an infant nine months of age, were notified during the year. Two were notified in March, one in July, seven in September and October, (five of these attending the infant Board School at Kehelland,) one in November and two in December. These cases occurred in different parts of the district, and with the exception of these attending the Kehelland School, the origin of the disease was not determined.

In addition to these there were nine cases of Erysipelas and two of continued Fever, but no death was registered from either disease.

WHOOPIING COUGH

Was very prevalent in an epidemic form all over the district during the months of March, April, May and June, and was responsible for 24 deaths, giving a death rate from this disease of 1.6 per 1000 of the population. Of these deaths fifteen were in infants under one year of age, and six under two years of age.

INFLUENZA

Was epidemic over the whole district in common with the county generally, during the latter part of January and February months, and was responsible for eighteen deaths, nine being in persons over 60 years of age.

In all cases of Infectious Disease brought to my notice Jeye's Fluid has been freely distributed when necessary, and personal directions given by myself and the Sanitary Inspector as to the means to be taken to prevent the spread of disease.

DISINFECTING APPARATUS.

I have again however to regret to report that you have not yet seen your way to purchase a Disinfecting Apparatus for this district, though the matter has been under your consideration on more than one occasion.

ISOLATION HOSPITAL.

This Hospital which was open at the beginning of the year for the treatment of Typhoid Fever patients was closed in March. Nine patients in all were treated here, and, happily all recovered.

I regret that you have not yet seen your way to instruct me to use the Hospital for the isolation of the first cases of any Infectious Disease which may require isolation to prevent its spread.

The chief use of an Isolation Hospital is to prevent the spread of an epidemic, and to only open it when an epidemic is far advanced is to deprive your District of its chief advantages.

This question of Isolation Accommodation should engage your serious attention. As only one disease at a time can be treated in the present building, it is quite inadequate to the requirements of your district.

I would recommend you to again consider the advisability of erecting a permanent building adequate to the need of this district, which containing as it does such a large working class population, renders the question of isolation in the individual homes an impossible one to solve.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES PREVENTION ACT.

I must again call your notice to the advisability of adopting the Infectious Diseases Prevention Act of 1890. This, which is an adoptive Act, will throw no further cost upon you as

a Sanitary Authority, but will give you and your officers increased powers for dealing with and preventing the spread of infectious diseases. Until this Act has been adopted and its provisions carried out, you will not have armed yourselves with full powers for dealing with cases of infectious disease as they arise.

WATER SUPPLY.

With the exception of the unfortunate epidemic of Typhoid Fever in December, 1897, and January of last year, I know of no case of disease directly traceable to the water supply, and there is no place in your district without an adequate and accessible supply of good drinking water within a reasonable distance.

It would be well, however, if the Water Company would consider the advisability of continuing their supply to the villages of Condurrow and Barripper, which are not so well supplied with drinking water as other parts of the district.

I am pleased to be able to report that you have instructed me to lay before your Sanitary Committee periodical reports as to the sources of water supply in this district.

I have visited the Camborne Water Company's reservoirs at Boswyn and Cargenwyn on several occasions during the year, and as showing the altered condition of things since the visit of Dr. Bruce Low in January last, I am pleased to be able to report as follows:—

As you are aware the Camborne Water Company derive their supply from two separate sources, Boswyn and Cargenwyn.

At *Boswyn* the water is derived from a series of underground springs in the Boswyn valley, and as these springs are beneath the clay in the solid elvan rock, they are not open to surface pollution.

The water from these springs is conveyed by a series of underground pipes directly into the service tank.

During the prolonged drought of last year this supply became very scanty, and to further augment it the Water Company sank a shaft some 37 feet deep through some 30 feet of clay, and 7 feet of solid elvan rock, and succeeded in finding a large spring of water coming from the direction of Copperhill, which has been pumped to the surface and yielded approximately some 77,000 gallons of water in 24 hours. The water from this source is now discontinued, as the ordinary springs are more than sufficient to supply the consumers.

No surface water now finds its way into the Boswyn tank.

The series of pipes which were formerly used to convey water from the open stream running by the side of the tank have been all removed, and there is now no possibility of any water from this stream finding its way into the Water Company's supply.

The service tank which holds when full some 60,000 gallons, is flushed out and cleaned once every three months.

The water from this tank passes through a fine cone-shaped strainer directly into the main. The strainer is cleaned every day.

The service tank is not in my opinion sufficiently protected from mischievous trespassers, and I consider it advisable that a spiked iron railing should be fixed around the outside of the tank.

The covers of the manholes communicating with the springs should be provided with locks, so that they could only be removed by the caretaker.

At *Cargenwyn* the source of the water supply is from a deep spring which issues from a hollow in a field some fifty yards from the roadway leading from the main road to the village of Cargenwyn.

Formerly the water flowed in open channels, partly to No. 2 and partly to No. 1 Reservoirs, and it was liable in its course to pollution from surface waters, and drainage from the surrounding lands and houses.

This condition of things is however entirely done away with.

The water is now piped its whole distance to No. 2 and No. 1 Reservoirs, and the overflow from Nos. 2 and 3 is also piped direct into No. 1. All surface and byewash waters are excluded from the reservoirs.

Granite kerbstones have been placed across the gateways leading from the main road into the grounds of Nos. 1 and 2 Reservoirs, and these will prevent any surface water from the roads polluting the water supply.

I have had occasion during the year to draw your attention to wells at Chycarn Moor, Stennack, Rosewarne Downs, and Roscroggan, all liable to pollution by surface drainage from houses and yards in their immediate vicinity. Those at Chycarn Moor and Stennack, you have ordered to be closed as being unfit for drinking purposes, and at the former place a new well is being sunk by your Council to supply the inhabitants with pure water.

At Roscroggan and Rosewarne Downs steps are being taken to protect the wells from the possibility of pollution.

DRAINAGE.

During the year 46 houses have been drained into the main sewers and the drains of 21 others have been repaired and put in order. 2266 feet of drain pipes have been laid down. Where possible, all houses not yet drained should be connected with the main sewers. Flushing tanks are still required at Sea View Terrace and Barripper.

I understand that the one at Sea View Terrace is to be erected almost immediately, but at Barripper the question of the supply of water for flushing the tank is still the difficulty and matters do not seem any further forward now than when I referred to the matter in my Annual Report for 1896.

I had occasion during the year to draw your attention to the necessity of draining the North end of Troon, and this is to be carried out almost immediately.

The Main Sewers have been periodically inspected and flushed during the year, and disinfected with Jeye's Fluid.

SEWAGE FARM.

I am pleased to be able to report that complaints have not latterly been received as to nuisances arising from the Sewage Farm at Rosewarne.

This matter has received the serious attention of your Sanitary Committee during the year and acting on their recommendation your Council has notified the lessee that you insist on the whole of the Sewage being utilised, and if through any inattention or defect in this matter nuisances continue to arise, you will exercise your powers of compulsorily acquiring the land and take the management of the Sewage Farm under your direct control.

Your Sanitary Inspector has instructions to report to you once a month on this matter.

I have on more than one occasion urged upon you the necessity of the drainage of Beacon, and this question in particular, as well as the advisability of the drainage of other villages in the district should engage your early attention.

SCAVENGING.

Twelve hundred tons of Manure and other refuse have been removed during the year and subsequently sold, as compared with 500 tons in 1897, and 600 tons in 1896.

There are now 99 Box Closets (an increase of 34 during the year), and 354 Ash Boxes (an increase of 66), which are emptied by your Authority twice a week. Two Scavenging carts are also constantly employed instead of one as in past years.

Whilst congratulating you on the steps in the right direction which you have taken to improve the scavenging of the town, and whilst believing that you realise the need of still further efficiency in this direction, I must again impress upon you the fact that the scavenging of a district such as this will never be efficiently done until you yourselves undertake it under the powers conferred upon you by the 42nd Sect. of the Public Health Act, and I must again warn you that so called economy in this direction is at the risk of the public health.

Excremental, house and liquid refuse are allowed to accumulate for long periods together in close vicinity to dwellings, polluting the air and soil and inducing a low state of vitality amongst the inmates of such dwellings which must render them unduly susceptible to attacks of sickness and less resistant to those attacks when they do occur.

The present condition of things is likely to continue until you yourselves carry out the entire scavenging of the district.

You have had brought before your notice both by myself in my last Annual Report and more recently by your Sanitary Committee the advisability of formulating some scheme whereby water-closets could be substituted for all existing middens and privies, when water for flushing such W.C.'s would be available, and if this scheme could be carried out, a great existing evil would be done away with.

OTHER SANITARY WORK.

As regards other sanitary work done during the year :—

23 notices have been served on the owners of private dwellings for the providing of privy accommodation, and 20 have been erected. Ten privies have been converted into water-closets, and eight into hand flushed closets.

Fourteen houses have been inspected and certified to be fit for occupation, and of these ten are provided with privies, and the others with W.C.'s.

In all 82 notices have been served, and 78 nuisances abated.

NEW BUILDINGS.

Forty plans were submitted to the Council, thirty eight of which were passed, representing the new Masonic Hall in Cross Street, eleven new dwelling houses and additions to fifteen others, the rebuilding of six other dwelling houses and five plans for outbuildings.

HOUSE ACCOMMODATION.

During the year I have made a house to house inspection of some of the more populous parts of the district.

Owing to the uncertainty of tenure under the "three life" system, in many cases there being only one old life on the property, several of the houses are in want of repair, and dampness and want of efficient ventilation is common to many.

The House Accommodation is not sufficient for the requirements of this district, four-roomed houses at a rental of £4 to £5 a year being greatly needed, and the advisability of you yourselves erecting such houses is a question which you should seriously consider.

Sixteen houses at Wellington Street and Bath's Court have been condemned during the year as unfit for human habitation, and of these the six at Wellington Street have been repaired and put in order, and the remaining ten at Bath's Court are to be pulled down.

I have again to call your attention to the absence of paving in the back yards of many premises, and the consequent lack of cleanliness and efficient drainage. It is common to see the ground soaked with liquid refuse and slop water, a consequent pollution of the surrounding soil which must act injuriously on the health of the inmates.

I had occasion in my report of 1896 to call your attention to the fact that no back lanes existed between the houses in Tolcarne Street and William Street, and that all refuse and filth requiring removal had to be brought through the houses.

This condition of things has at last been remedied and the back lane has been made and opened for use.

There are still several houses in the district, notably in West Charles Street, Fore Street and Wellington Street, with no back entrances, and the best means of dealing with these should engage your attention.

SCHOOLS.

I have had occasion during the year to call your attention to the insanitary condition of the Board School premises at Beacon, and this matter is engaging the attention of the School Authorities. This is the only complaint which has been made of any of the public schools in the district during the year.

SLAUGHTER HOUSES.

The various slaughter houses in the district have been regularly inspected both by myself and the Sanitary Inspector, and your Sanitary Committee have visited some of them on one or two occasions. There are sixteen in the district, and notice has been served on all of them to be registered forthwith.

A list of requirements in each individual case to bring the slaughter house up to the requirements of your Byelaws has been drawn up and sent to each occupier, and I am pleased to be able to report that it is your intention to see that such requirements are straightway carried out and your Byelaws enforced.

DAIRIES, COWSHEDS AND MILKSHOPS.

These are all, as far as known, regularly inspected and forty four are registered. Your Sanitary Committee have had under consideration from time to time during the year, steps which should be taken to improve the sanitary conditions of the Dairies and Cowsheds in your district, and they have drawn up draft regulations under Sect. 13 of the Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops Order of 1885, which have been forwarded to the Local Government Board for their approval. I trust you will see that these regulations when approved, are carried out.

BAKEHOUSES.

The bakehouses have been frequently inspected during the year. They should however be registered.

COMMON LODGING HOUSES.

There is only one common lodging house in the district and this is not registered, a direct violation of the Public Health Act. I am pleased however to be able to report that the Sanitary conditions of the premises are greatly improved.

The yard has been repaved and three w.c.'s have been erected in place of the former privies.

The other requirements of your Byelaws should be enforced, and the House registered forthwith and failing this the occupier should be proceeded against.

BURIAL GROUNDS.

The various burial grounds in the district are in a satisfactory sanitary condition, and no complaint has been required to be made of any of them during the year.

THE RAILWAY STATION CLOSETS, URINALS AND PUBLIC URINALS have been inspected from time to time and found in a satisfactory sanitary condition.

THE MEAT AND FISH MARKETS have been regularly inspected every week. No case has however been brought to my notice in which there appeared to be a necessity for the seizure of food as unfit for human consumption.

BYE LAWS framed on the Model Byelaws of the Local Government Board are in existence in this district, but many of them are not in force.

They embrace the following subjects :—

- New Streets and Buildings.
- Hackney Carriages.
- Public Wash Houses.
- Common Lodging Houses.
- Slaughter Houses.
- Nuisances.
- These have been adopted since 1886.

I think it right in conclusion to add that the Sanitary Inspector has been most attentive to his duties during the year.

In my opinion, however, the staff which he has under his control are not sufficient for the sanitary requirements of a district such as this. Consequently many sanitary improvements which you may from time to time order to be carried out, have to be delayed sometimes for a prolonged period, because your sanitary Inspector has more work for his men than they can efficiently deal with.

I must thank all the members of your Council, and more particularly those of the Sanitary Committee with whom I am most brought in contact, for the unvarying courtesey which I have always received from them, and if you can see your way during the year to seriously consider and if possible carry out all the recommendations embodied in this report. I shall have the more cause for congratulation.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

J. TELFER THOMAS,

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

Camborne, February 10th, 1899.