

A faded historical photograph of a rural landscape. In the foreground, a dirt road curves from the bottom right towards the center. On the left side of the road, a person wearing a long white dress and a large pink hat stands looking towards the camera. Further down the road, another person in a grey coat is walking away. The background shows a grassy field and a line of trees under a hazy sky.

# Public Health and Hygiene in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

A Snapshot of Rothbury through the Medical Officer's Report of 1896

**ROTHBURY**  
**URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.**

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**REPORT**

OF THE

**MEDICAL OFFICER**

FOR THE YEAR ENDING

**DECEMBER 31st, 1896.**

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ALNWICK :

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## Edward Jenner 1749-1823

- 1796: Edward Jenner produces the first vaccine.
- 1840: Vaccination Act provided free vaccination for the poor
- 1853: Smallpox vaccination is made compulsory
- 1882: Anti vaccination campaigns begin
- 1909: Compulsory smallpox vaccination abolished
- 1962: Last UK smallpox outbreak in Bradford
- 1977: Last naturally occurring outbreak (Somalia)
- 1978: Last tragic case in Birmingham
- 1980: WHO declare smallpox eradicated





THE VACCINATION

OPENING MIXTURE

VACCINE POCK  
hot from  
COW

Benefit of the  
Vaccination

VARIOL





A COURT FOR KING CHOLERA.

Comes, black as a porpus.  
The diabolus ipse,  
Call'd Cholery Morphus;  
Who with horns, hoofs, and  
tail, croaks for carrion to feed  
him,  
Tho' being a Devil, no one  
never has seed him!

Ah! then my dear honies,  
There's no cure for you.  
[Samuel Taylor Coleridge,  
"Cholera Cured Beforehand"]

John Leech's cartoon  
in *Punch*, 1852



# Prevention of Cholera.

## REMEDIES RECOMMENDED BY GOVERNMENT.

1. We would urge the necessity, in all cases of Cholera, of an instant recourse to medical aid, and also under every form and variety of indisposition; for, during the prevalence of this epidemic all disorders are found to merge in the dominant disease.

2. Let immediate relief be sought under disorder of the bowels especially, however slight. The invasion of Cholera may thus be readily and at once prevented.

3. Let every impurity, animal and vegetable, be quickly removed to a distance from the habitations; such as slaughter-houses, pig-sties, cesspools, necessaries, and all other domestic nuisances.

4. Let all uncovered drains be carefully and frequently cleansed.

5. Let the grounds in and around the habitations be drained, so as effectually to carry off moisture of every kind.

6. Let all partitions be removed from within and without habitations, which unnecessarily impede ventilation.

7. Let every room be daily thrown open for the admission of fresh air; and this should be done about noon, when the atmosphere is most likely to be dry.

8. Let dry scrubbing be used in domestic cleansing, in place of water cleansing.

9. Let excessive fatigue and exposure to damp and cold, especially during the night, be avoided.

10. Let the use of cold drinks, and acid liquors, especially under fatigue, be avoided, or when the body is heated.

11. Let the use of cold acid fruits and vegetables be avoided.

12. Let excess in the use of ardent and fermented liquors and tobacco be avoided.

13. Let a poor diet, and the use of impure water in cooking, or for drink, be avoided.

14. Let the wearing of wet and insufficient clothing be avoided.

15. Let a flannel or woollen belt be worn round the belly.

This has been found serviceable in checking the tendency to bowel complaint so common during the prevalence of Cholera. The disease has, in this country, been always found to commence with looseness in the bowels, and in this stage is very tractable. It should, however, be noticed, that the looseness is frequently unattended by pain or uneasiness, and fatal delay has often occurred from the notion that cholera must be attended with cramps. In the earlier stage here referred to, there is often no griping or cramp, and it is at this period that the disease can be most easily arrested. (In all such cases let from twenty to forty drops of Dr. J. Lenac's Cholera Tincture be administered in half a glass of brandy, and the symptoms will abate immediately.)

16. Let personal cleanliness be carefully observed.

17. Let every cause tending to depress the moral and physical energies be carefully avoided.

18. Let crowding of persons within houses and apartments be avoided.

19. Let sleeping in low and damp rooms be avoided.

20. Let fires be kept up during the night in sleeping or adjoining apartments, the night being the period of most danger from attack, especially under exposure to cold or damp.

21. Let all bedding and clothing be daily exposed during winter and spring to the fire, and in the summer to the heat of the sun.

22. Let the dead be buried in places remote from the habitation of the living.

*By the timely adoption of simple means such as these, Cholera, or any other epidemic, will be made to lose its venom; so true is it that "internal sanitary arrangements, and not quarantine and sanitary lines, are the safeguard of nations."*

Every one should provide themselves with the ASIATIC CHOLERA TINCTURE, as the most ready and effectual Remedy in Cholera, Diarrhoea, Flatulency, Cholic, and Bowel Complaints.

In Bottles at 2s. 9d.—4s. 6d.—11s. and 21s. Duty included.

THE ANTI-CHOLERA FUMIGATORS, for purifying the Air of Dwellings, and destroying the Contagious influence of CHOLERA, TYPHUS FEVER, and other INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

They are particularly recommended for the Sick Chambers, Hospitals, Churches, Chapels, Literary Institutions, Theatres, Assembly Rooms, Counting Houses, Taverns, the Cabins and Holds of Vessels, &c.

In Boxes, at 6d.—1s. and 2s. 6d. each, or Carriage free, at 1s.—1s. 6d. and 3s.

Packages for Extensive Buildings, at 10s.—20s.—40s. and 5s.

ANTI-CHOLERA TINCTURE DEPOT,

44, COLEMAN STREET, CITY, LONDON.

N.B. Money Orders must be made payable to Dr. Jaques Lenac.

# 1848 Poster

From the National Archives Educational material

This is a poster that was put up in London in 1848, during the second outbreak of cholera.

PREVENTION OF CHOLERA: REMEDIES RECOMMENDED BY GOVERNMENT.

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# Edwin Chadwick

1800-1890

- Renowned social reformer, reforming the Poor Laws, urban sanitation and public health.
- **1831** First Cholera epidemic: 13,000 deaths.
- **1842** Chadwick's Report: The Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Population.
- **1848** Second Cholera: 21,000 deaths.  
First Public Board of Health set up





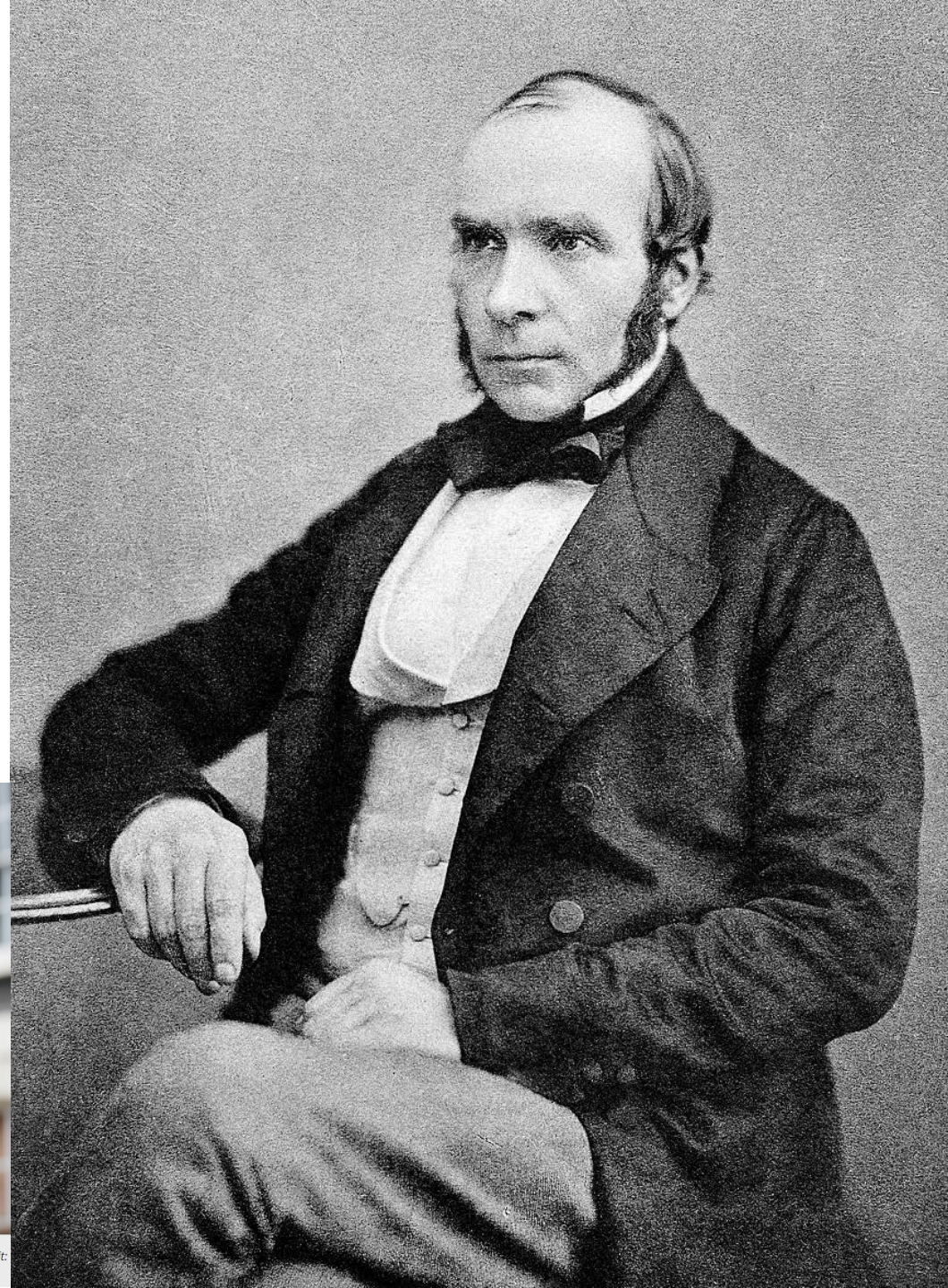
# Dr John Snow

## 1813-1858

- Regarded as the father of epidemiology
- Pioneer of anaesthesia and medical hygiene
- **1853** Third Cholera: 15,000 deaths.
- **1854** Dr John Snow proved that cholera was caused by a polluted water supply.
- **1866** Fourth Cholera epidemic: 6,000 deaths.  
Sanitary Act required local authorities to provide fresh water, sewage and waste disposal.



*John Snow pumphandle, Broadwick Street. Credit: Westminster Council*











# Washing Streets around Covent Gardens

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- Anti-Cholera measures 1894

THOUGH AT TIMES THE ENERGY MAY BE A LITTLE MISAPPLIED, THE CAUSE IS A GOOD ONE, AS ANY WHO SUFFER SHOULD REMEMBER  
AN ANTI-CHOLERA SPECIFIC: WASHING THE STREETS ROUND COVENT GARDEN  
DRAWN BY HENRI LAYOS



# Opposition to Government Public Health Measures: The Times

**'We prefer to take our chance with cholera than be bullied into health. There is nothing a man hates so much as being cleansed against his will or having his floor swept, his hall whitewashed, his dung heaps cleared away and his thatch forced to give way to slate.'**



# Rothbury c 1896

REPORT  
OF THE  
MEDICAL OFFICER

FOR THE YEAR ENDING

DECEMBER 31st, 1896.

ROTHBURY, JANUARY 23RD, 1897.

TO THE ROTHBURY URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

GENTLEMEN,

Allow me to congratulate you, and Rothbury, upon your first year of formation as an Urban Council, and to thank you for allowing me the privilege of presenting this, the first Annual Report to you, as your Medical Officer of Health. Possessing its own Council, Rothbury will now have ample time and power to attend to its own requirements. Of necessity, a great deal of your time has been taken up with routine work, and the framing of the Bye-laws. These, ere long, I believe, will be ready for printing, and to be enforced. Still, during the year, several important matters have been attended to, and from this report you will see that the district has been in an extremely healthy condition.

During the year there were registered 24 births, 10 of these being males, and 14 females. Taking the population at 1200, this is at a rate of 20 per 1000, while that for England and Wales is 30. They were registered, during the first quarter, 6; the second, 5; the third, 8; and last, 5. The deaths were 15 in number, but as two of these



Courtesy of Northumberland Communities



# Births and Deaths

- Population about 1200
- There were 24 births and 15 deaths in the year
- Two of the new-born died
- Two of the deaths were strangers

were strangers, 13 were belonging to the district, which gives the very low rate of only 10·8 per 1000 per annum, which is extremely satisfactory (country towns about 17·0). Of these 13, four were males, and nine females; and they occurred as follows:—In March, 2; April, 1; May, 1; July, 2; August, 1; September, 3; October, 2; November, 1. There being 24 births, and 13 deaths, it follows that there were 11 naturally added to the population, which is at a rate of 9·1, that for England and Wales being 12·0. Of the 24 births, it appears that two died while under one year of age, which gives the low infantile death rate of 83·3 per 1000 born; that for England and Wales being 120. There was only one death in the epidemic or zymotic class of disease, producing a rate of only 0·83 per 1000 living; England and Wales, 2·1. This was due to diarrhoea in an infant. Other chief causes of death were heart disease, 1; bronchitis, 1; injuries, 1; consumption, 0; influenza, 1; apoplexy, 3; others, 6. The periods of life at which these occurred were, under one year of age, 2; five and under fifteen, 1; fifteen and under twenty-five, 1; twenty-five and under sixty-five, 9; above that, 2, one of these being 96. From injuries, a child was accidentally scalded, a Coroner's enquiry being held on this. Of the strangers, one was a man who died suddenly while in charge of a horse and cart, on whom an inquest was also held; and the other, a visitor who came here for change, in the last stage of consumption. There were a few cases of diarrhoea, and it caused one death in an infant. A case of measles was imported with a visitor's child in June. Isolation and disinfection were well carried out, and it did not spread, the child recovering.

A few cases of Influenza, mostly in mild form, and often amongst children (on whom it was more severe), but it caused the death of an adult male, having complications.

There were no cases of scarlet fever or typhoid.

I inspected the Lodging House, and found it clean and tidy; also the Slaughter Houses, which are much cleaner kept than they were, being whitewashed at proper intervals, and the offal is carted away on the day of



# Health

- A child was accidentally scalded.
- One of the strangers died suddenly while in charge of a horse and cart.
- The other visitor died of consumption
- One child died of diarrhoea.
- A case of measles was imported by a visitor's child in June.
- The Board is advised to adopt the new Notification of Diseases Act.

slaughter, thus removing a very foul nuisance next to Mr A. Dixon's, which was complained of by him. Your Inspector has effected this.

Great improvements have been made in Bridge Street. The discharge of the South Terrace sewer above watermark has been rectified. A very great improvement has been effected at the foot of the town, by the clearing out of the conduit of the Cobletch Burn. This was done by a joint committee, thus, let us hope, preventing the occurrence of such floods as used to occur at the low end of the town. The unsanitary condition of the premises behind Henderson's shop has been rectified. A proper W.C. has been provided, and a covered in ash-midden.

I feel it my duty to point out to your Board, that several towns on the east coast are agitating to secure the Tosson Springs of Water, and convey them there. If Rothbury extended much, I fear that the spring at present used might not be sufficient, and then we should need some from Great Tosson. It would be advisable for your Board to petition the owner, Lord Armstrong, to kindly safeguard your interests, in case this was attempted.

I would also strongly advise your Board to adopt the Notification of Diseases Act, so far as small pox, scarlatina, diphtheria, membranous croup, typhoid, continued, and puerperal fevers, erysipelas, and cholera are concerned.

Your Inspector (Mr Bell) advises me that the following have been attended to by him besides above:— Increased storage has been provided for Penniston Well and the stone conduit hitherto supplying Addyheugh Well has been replaced by a properly laid socketed pipe, with cemented joints, preventing waste and pollution.

Two blocks of buildings have had their drainage quite renewed.

Six privies have been replaced by w.c.'s, and five more are under construction. One ash-midden has been provided, and two reconstructed. Three more are in



# Sanitation

- The lodging house is found to be clean and tidy
- The slaughterhouses situation had improved.
- Mr Dixon is happier.
- South Terrace sewer problem has been rectified.
- The Coplish Burn conduit has been cleared.
- The unsanitary conditions behind Henderson's shop have been rectified. A proper WC and a covered ash-midden have been provided.
- Two blocks of buildings have had their drainage renewed



Courtesy of Joan Gale's Rothbury booklet

*Assistants roasting coffee behind Dixon Brothers' shop on High Street, men are Arthur Grieves and John Davidson*



# Sanitation continued

- Six privies replaced by WCs and five more under construction
- More ash middens are being provided and some are under reconstructed
- Seven defective gullies have been replaced
- Several WCs have had soil pipes ventilated
- A Rubbish Depot has been provided out of town





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# Water Supplies

- Storage has been increased for Pennistan Well
- The stone conduit supplying Addyheugh has been replaced by a socketed pipe with cemented joints
- Several towns on the east coast are agitating to secure the Tosson Springs of Water







course of the same. Seven defective gullies have been replaced with efficient ones, and three more being attended to. Several w.c.'s have had their soil pipes properly ventilated.

Provision is being made for storm water in the town, and to try all possible means to prevent the overflow of Cobblech, and the drains at the low end of the town.

The provision of the Rubbish Depot, well out of the town, has enabled your Authority to all but abolish the depositing of ashes and refuse, in unauthorised places.

I am indebted to Mr. Bertram of Craggside, for the following table of Rainfall registered there :—

			INCHES.
January	...	...	1'38
February	...	...	0'80
March	...	...	2'94
April	...	...	1'12
May	...	...	1'17
June	...	...	2'54
July	...	...	3'58
August	...	...	3'37
September	..	...	3'91
October	...	...	8'75
November	...	...	2'22
December	...	...	7'38
			—
Total	...	...	39'16
			—

Thus there was the greatest rainfall in October and December, indeed I have no such records for 14 years ; the average of these has been 33'0 inches. The finest month was February.

Your obdt. servant,

**F. BARROW,**

Medical Officer of Health.

# Rainfall

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- Mr Bertram of Craggside has very kindly provided monthly rainfalls.



# THE TEESDALE MERCURY—WEDNESDAY. FEB. 17, 1897

## RAILWAY ACCIDENT AT ROTHBURY.

- A railway accident, resulting fatally to two persons, and in injury to several others, occurred late on Saturday at Rothbury, Northumberland, at the terminus of a short line of the North British Railway Company connecting Rothbury with the North-Eastern line at Morpeth. An excursion train was run in the afternoon from Rothbury to Newcastle to give people an opportunity of attending the matinee performances of the pantomimes. The train left Newcastle on its return journey at 7.15 p.m., and reached Rothbury Station about 10.20 p.m., where a large crowd was awaiting its arrival. As the train was drawing up to the platform the carriage nearest the engine from some cause, which will be the subject of investigation, suddenly left the rails, dashed into the signal-box, and then turned over in a shattered condition upon its side, burying its occupants beneath the debris. The stationmaster and officials, and other helpers, hurried to render assistance, but nearly an hour elapsed before the unfortunate captives could be liberated. Two of them, Miss Annie Cowing, of Rothbury, and Mr. Hugh Proudlock, of Carlington, died almost immediately, having been terribly hurt, and it was found that 10 others had been injured more or less seriously. They were taken on ambulances to Rothbury Hospital, after receiving temporary surgical treatment on the spot.