

Changing Times, Changing Places

Amserau'n Newid, Lleoedd yn Newid

Wrexham in 1848 was an expanding prosperous market town, but the residents faced many problems.

Yn 1848 roedd Wrecsam yn dref farchnad ffyniannus yn ymestyn, ond roedd y trigolion yn wynebu llawer o broblemau.



High Street, Wrexham. © National Library of Wales.
Stryt Fawr, Wrecsam. © Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru.

Sanitation in Wrexham was appalling. There were 600 pigsties, 12 slaughterhouses, countless privies and cesspools, and no sewerage system. Everyone feared a cholera epidemic. George Cunliffe, the Vicar of Wrexham, held a public meeting to establish a Sanitary Committee. The Committee tried its best to clean up the town, but it had few powers and little money.

The town was divided historically. The manorial courts of Wrexham Regis and Wrexham Abbot were ineffective. The Parish Vestry, another local government body, was no better. People outside the town objected to paying any rates to improve life inside the town. Nonconformists objected to paying any rates to the Parish Vestry at all.

Frustrated, the Committee petitioned the Board of Health to hold an inquiry in Wrexham and to recommend a way forward. In October 1849 George T. Clarke held the inquiry in the Town Hall, surveyed the town and in April 1850 published his report.

The report made sombre reading:

The mortality rate, 29 per thousand, is excessive even for a town and is the highest in North Wales. Abbot Street is the most unhealthy street in the town, death rate 56 per thousand.

Yorke Street, death rate 52 per thousand, here the refuse is thrown into the churchyard and drains down the public steps into Tuttle Street.

The local government is powerless for sanitary purposes and its responsibilities too much divided, to be conducted efficiently. Matters requiring practical knowledge, such as the construction of sewers and roads, are entrusted to unskilled persons whose tenure of office is besides too brief to allow any settled plan to be adopted.

Greater power, with direct responsibility, is what is needed. Such a government the Public Health Act will at once provide under the name of a Local Board, elected by the ratepayers.

 **George T. Clarke,**
Supt. Inspector of Health, General Board of Health, 1850.

How would the town respond?

Sut fyddai'r dref yn ymateb?

Roedd carthffosiaeth yn Wrecsam yn echrydus. Roedd 600 o gytiau moch, 12 lladd-dy, geudai a charthbyllau di-rif, a dim carthffosiaeth. Roedd pawb yn ofni haint y geri. Galwodd George Cunliffe, Ficer Wrecsam, gyfarfod cyhoeddus i sefydlu Pwyllgor Glanweithdra. Gwnaeth y Pwyllgor ei orau i lanhau'r dref, ond ychydig o bwerau oedd ganddo a fawr ddim arian.

Rhannwyd y dref yn hanesyddol. Roedd llysoedd maenorol Wrecsam y Brenin a Wrecsam yr Abad yn aneffeithiol. Nid oedd Festri'r Plwyf, corff llywodraeth leol arall, yn ddim gwell. Roedd pobl oddi allan i'r dref yn gwrthwynebu talu unrhyw drethi i wella bywyd yn y dref. Roedd anghydfurfwr yn gwrthwynebu talu unrhyw drethi o gwbl i Festri'r Plwyf.

Yn rhwystredig, deisebodd y Pwyllgor y Bwrdd Iechyd i gynnal ymchwiliad yn Wrecsam ac argymhell flordd ymlaen. Ym mis Hydref 1849 cynhaliodd George T. Clarke yr ymchwiliad yn Neuadd y Dref, gwnaeth arolwg o'r dref ac, ym mis Ebrill 1850, cyhoeddodd ei adroddiad.

Roedd yr adroddiad yn ddigalon i'w ddarllen:



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