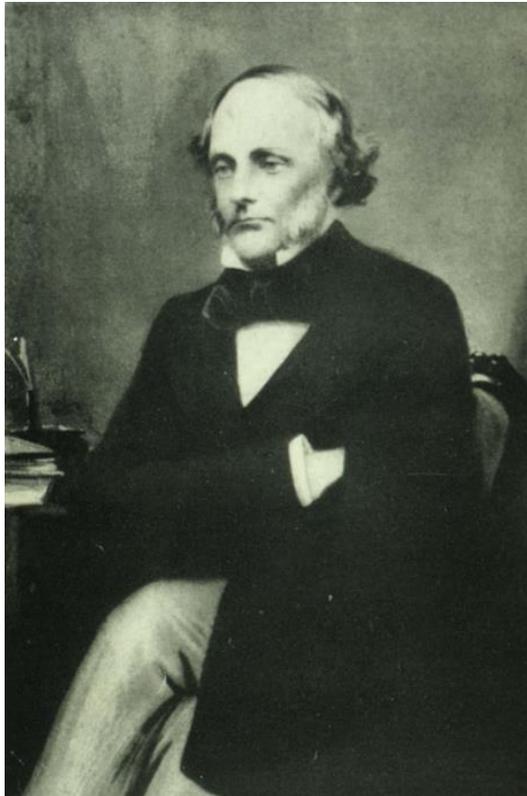


A (VERY BRIEF!) HISTORY OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Dr Victoria Turner
Public Health Consultant

Directors of Public Health
175 Years
———— 1847 - 2022 ————



William Henry Duncan

175th Anniversary of the first English
Medical Officer for Health

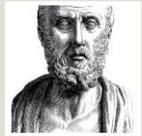
BUT – didn't come from nowhere

Public health had been going on for
thousands of years already

EARLY PUBLIC HEALTH



Code of Hammurabi



Hippocrates



Galen

6 'non-naturals': diet, exercise, sleep, environment, psychological state, evacuations

“If we could give every individual the right amount of nourishment and exercise, not too little and not too much, we would have found the safest way to health.”

Hippocrates. *Hippocratic Writings*. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1955

MEDIEVAL PUBLIC HEALTH

'Black Death' (1347-8) and subsequent plague waves

Response to pandemics

- Increase in legislation
- Increase in public information
- Particular focus on environmental health

Everyone's health is important, not just yours



Citizens of Tournai burying plague victims
By Pierart dou Tielt (fl. 1340-1360) -
<http://balat.kikirpa.be/photo.php>

MEDICAL OFFICERS FOR HEALTH

Liverpool (1846 Liverpool Sanatory Act)

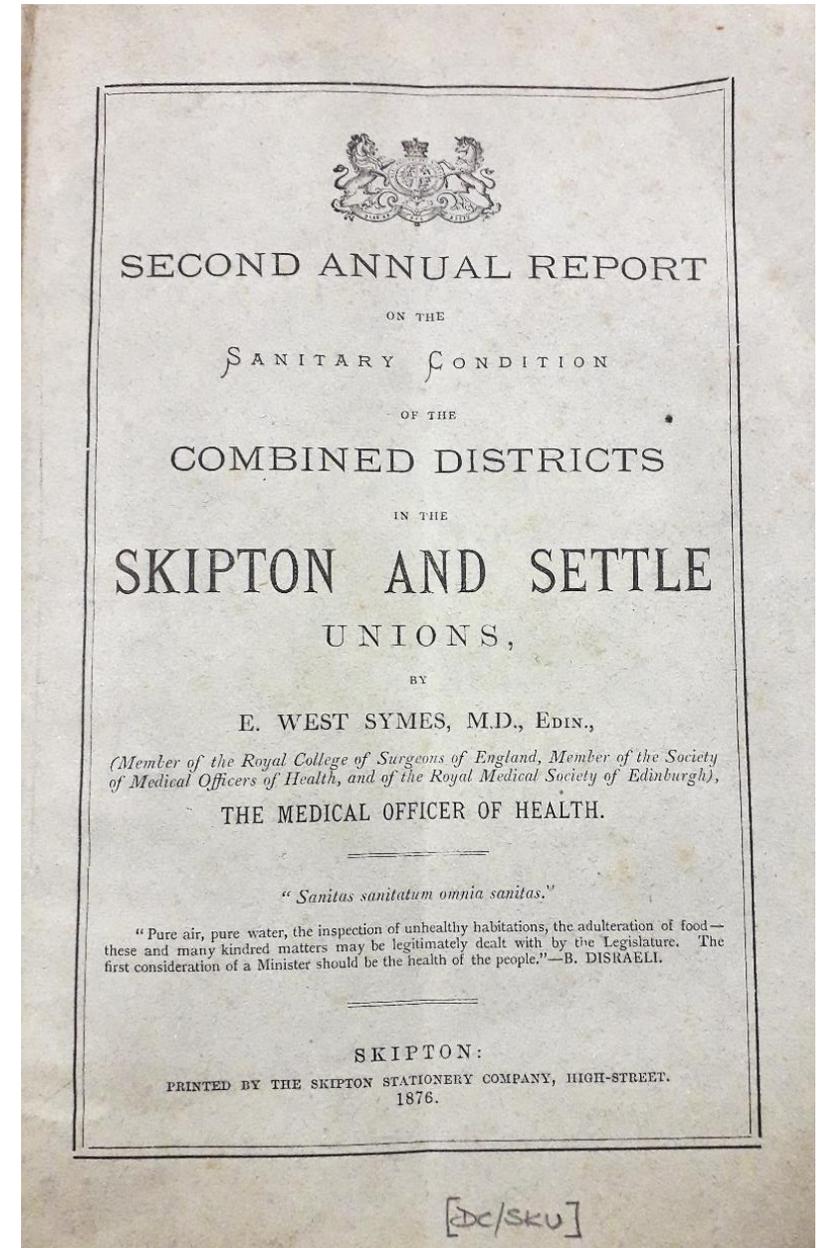
- Medical Officer for Health – William Henry Duncan
- Inspector of Nuisances – Thomas Fresh

1848 Public Health Act

- Local Boards of Health
- MOH, inspector of nuisances

Medical Officer for Health Annual Reports

- Vital statistics
- Sanitation
- Food, water and air quality
- Infectious diseases
- Housing



EVOLVING REMIT OF LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH

Increased medicalisation

- Health visitors, screening
- Social care, community health services

1970s NHS reform

- Increasing prevalence of chronic conditions
- Financial pressures
- Impact of 'lifestyle' on health
- Public health joins NHS in 1974



“When the national health service was started an opportunity was lost to organise medical practice in such a way that a tradition of early intervention could have replaced the normal clinical practice of waiting for patients to present themselves. In other words, medicine in this country is not organised for the prevention of disease but for the treatment of the obviously ill.”

H. Hunter, Medical Officer for Health. Annual Report for the year 1967 No 1 (Craven) Health Division by the MOH and Senior Public Health Inspectors

HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE ACT 2012

1st April 2013 Public Health returns to local authorities under Directors of Public Health

Includes remits around sexual health, tackling addiction, NHS Health Checks etc.

Reunites public health with environmental health, housing, social care

Public Health England established

- Since Autumn 2021 disbanded
- Functions split between UKHSA, OHID, NHS England

