

GLAMORGAN RECORD OFFICE/ARCHIFDY MORGANNWG

Reference code: GB 0214 LBMT

Title: Merthyr Tydfil Local Board of Health

Dates : 1854-1894

Level of description: Fonds

Extent and medium: 0.09 cubic metres (7 vols., 1 box)

Name of creator(s): Merthyr Tydfil Local Board of Health

Administrative/biographical history

Local boards of health were set up under the Public Health Act of 1848 (11 and 12 Vict. c.23), amended by the Local Government Act of 1858 (21 and 22 Vict. c.98). These Acts did not impose a uniform system of local public health authorities on the whole country simultaneously, but enabled individual localities, following certain procedures, to adopt the provisions of the Acts and become local boards of health if they so wished. Consequently, local boards were set up at different dates in different areas, and in some areas none were set up at all. They were usually set up only at the request of local inhabitants (a petition of one tenth of the ratepayers had to be presented) but in areas with a very high death rate it was possible for the Acts to be imposed by the General Board of Health.

It was not until the passing of the Public Health Act of 1872 (35 and 36 Vict. ch.79) that an attempt was made to establish a comprehensive system of local authorities for public health matters. The country was divided by the Act into urban sanitary and rural sanitary districts. Where local boards of health had been set up, these became the local authorities in the urban sanitary districts (except in municipal boroughs, where the borough council was the sanitary authority). The poor law boards of guardians became responsible for public health in rural sanitary districts, which consisted of all those parts of the poor law unions which were not included in urban sanitary district. In 1875, a new Public Health Act (38 and 39 Vict. ch.55) revised, consolidated and superseded all previous acts relating to public health.

Local boards of health were responsible for matters relating to public health and civic amenities: the provision of a water supply and sewerage, the cleansing of streets, maintenance of highways, approval of building plans, registration of slaughter houses, and provision of parks, as well as other functions. They were also in some cases responsible for burial grounds, although in some areas these were provided by separate burial boards. Members of the boards were elected by all those in the local board area who

paid rates; a system of multiple votes based on the value of the ratepayers' property was in operation and there was a property qualification for those who wished to stand for election. The boards appointed a salaried clerk, treasurer, surveyor, inspector of nuisances, and usually a medical officer of health, although this was not compulsory until 1872.

Local boards of health and urban sanitary districts were superseded in January 1895 by urban district councils, under the Local Government Act of 1894 (56 and 57 Vict. c.73). Under the same Act, rural sanitary districts ceased to be the responsibility of the poor law unions and separate rural district councils were established. The powers and boundaries of the districts remained unchanged, and in many cases the members and officers of the authorities also remained the same, although elections for the new district councils were held in December 1894. For these reasons, it is not unusual to find that the minute book used by the local board of health for the urban sanitary district remained in use by the successor urban district council.

Local boards of health were supervised centrally to a greater or lesser extent, first by the General Board of Health (1848-58), then by the Local Government Act Office, a department of the Home Office, (1858-71), and finally by the Local Government Board (1871-94).

Merthyr Tydfil Local Board of Health was established in 1850, following an enquiry carried out by Thomas Webster Rammell, inspector of the General Board of Health, on the petition of one-tenth of the ratepayers. It covered all of the parishes of Merthyr Tydfil and Dowlais, but excluded Cefn-Coed-Cymmer. A medical officer of health was first appointed in 1852; Dr. T.J. Dyke, a leading figure in public health provision in Merthyr Tydfil, was appointed medical officer of health in 1865, a position he held until 1897. The Local Board of Health was succeeded in 1895 by Merthyr Tydfil Urban District Council.

Archival history

The custodial history of these records has not been documented, but they appear to have been inherited by Merthyr Tydfil Urban District Council in 1895, and subsequently transferred to Merthyr Tydfil Library.

Immediate source of acquisition

See file 11/0143

Scope and content

Minutes, 1850 - 1894; annual reports of Medical Officer of Health, 1854 - 1894 (with gaps).

Appraisal, destruction and scheduling information

All records which meet the collection policy of the Glamorgan Record Office have been retained.

Accruals

Accruals are not expected

System of arrangement

See detailed list.

Conditions governing access

Open access

Conditions governing reproduction

Normal Glamorgan Record Office conditions apply.

Language/scripts of material

English

Physical characteristics and technical requirements

All items in good condition. Volumes have been re-bound, but are wrongly labelled as 'Parish Minutes' on spine.

Finding aids

Detailed list available.

Existence and location of originals

The minutes are original. The MOH reports are photocopies of originals in Merthyr Tydfil Library.

Existence and location of copies**Related units of description**

UDMT: Records of Merthyr Tydfil Urban District Council

DXGE/30/1-8: Deeds mortgaging rates, 1858 - 1862

DXGC/280/1-4: Printed reports and lectures of Dr. T.J. Dyke, Medical Officer of Health for Merthyr Tydfil, 1869 - 1872

Records relating to individual local boards of health can be found among the records of the General Board of Health (1848-58), the Local Government Act Office (1858-71), and the Local Government Board (1871-94) held at the Public Record Office in London. In particular, Class MH 12 (Correspondence to the Local Government Board) contains Annual Reports of the Medical Officer of Health for Merthyr Tydfil for 1874 and 1876.

Publication note

The Local Board of Health minutes were consulted for R.K.J. Grant, 'Merthyr Tydfil in the mid-nineteenth century: the struggle for public health', published in the *Welsh History Review*, vol.14 no.4, 1989 (Record Office library reference W/107); J. Gross, chapter on 'Health' in *Merthyr Tydfil. A Valley Community* produced by the Merthyr Teachers Centre Group, 1981 (Record Office library reference 4/38)

Note

Archivist's note

Compiled by Richard Morgan for the Glamorgan Record Office.

Rules or conventions

This description follows Glamorgan Record Office guidelines based on ISAD(G) compatible cataloguing guidelines for fonds level descriptions used by the Archives Network Wales.

Date of description

Description compiled in the Glamorgan Record Office in November 1999.

Amended February 2007

Minutes books

Volumes are incorrectly marked 'Parish Council' on spines

LBMT/1/1	Minutes book	Oct 1850-Dec 1954
LBMT/1/2	Minutes book	Jan 1855-Dec 1857
LBMT/1/3	Minutes book	Jan 1858-Mar 1860
LBMT/1/4	Minutes book	Apr 1860-Feb 1863
LBMT/1/5	Minutes book	Mar 1863-May 1864
LBMT/1/6	Minutes book	Aug 1880-Jan 1891
LBMT/1/7	Minutes book [7 vols.]	Oct 1894-Dec 1894

Treasurer

LBMT/2	Ledger [1 vol.]	1880-1885
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Annual reports on sanitary conditions

In 1854 the temporary Medical Officer of Health was William Kay. From 1865 to 1897 the Medical Officer of Health was Thomas Jones Dyke. All of the reports are photocopies taken from original reports in Merthyr Tydfil library. Reference numbers are allotted to missing reports. Dates refer to that of the relevant year, not date of publication.

LBMT/3/1	Report of the sanitary conditions of Merthyr Tydfil drawn up at the request of the local board of health by William Kay	1854
LBMT/3/2	Report of Thomas Jones Dyke	1865
LBMT/3/3	Third report	1866
LBMT/3/4	Fourth report MISSING	
LBMT/3/5	Fifth report	1869
LBMT/3/6	Sixth report	1870
LBMT/3/7	Seventh report	1871
LBMT/3/8	Eighth report	1872
LBMT/3/9	Ninth report	1873
LBMT/3/10	Tenth report MISSING	
LBMT/3/11	Eleventh report MISSING	
LBMT/3/12	Twelfth report. Supplementary only	1876
LBMT/3/13	Thirteenth report	1877
LBMT/3/14	Fourteenth report	1878
LBMT/3/15	Fifteenth report	1879
LBMT/3/16	Sixteenth report	1880
LBMT/3/17	Seventeenth report MISSING	
LBMT/3/18	Eighteenth report	1882
LBMT/3/19	Nineteenth report	1883
LBMT/3/20	Twentieth report	1884

MERTHYR TYDFIL LOCAL BOARD OF HEALTH**LBMT**

LBMT/3/21	Twenty-first report	1885
LBMT/3/22	Twenty-second report	1886
LBMT/3/23	Twenty-third report MISSING	
LBMT/3/24	Twenty-fourth report MISSING	
LBMT/3/25	Twenty-fifth report MISSING	
LBMT/3/26	Twenty-sixth report	1890
LBMT/3/27	Twenty-seventh report MISSING	
LBMT/3/28	Twenty-eighth report	1892
LBMT/3/29	Twenty-ninth report	1893
LBMT/3/30	Thirtieth report	1894
LBMT/3/31	Thirty-first report MISSING	
LBMT/3/32	Thirty-second report MISSING	
LBMT/3/33	Thirty third report [23 bdles of photocopies]	1897
LBMT/3/34	Report of T.J. Dyke 'On the downward intermittent filtration of sewage' read at the annual meeting of the South Wales and Monmouthshire branch of the British Medical Association held at Merthyr Tydfil [1 file of photocopies]	17 Jul 1872
LBMT/3/35	Paper written by T.J. Dyke 'On the work of a Medical Officer of Health and how to do it' [1 file of photocopies]	1872
LBMT/4	Report of the sanitary condition of Merthyr Tydfil drawn up at the request of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Board of Health by William Kay [1 bound file of photocopies]	15 May 1854