

## **Changing Times, Changing Places.**

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

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?

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## The Wrexham Telegraph 1857

### Editorial

#### Charter of Incorporation: The Public Enquiry

Wrexham will not have to wait long for a decision on whether the town is to be granted a Charter of Incorporation. The Public Inquiry opened Thursday last at the Town Hall.

Mr Buckton detailed the case for change: the lack of a recognised head for the whole town, no unanimity amongst the public officers when appointed, Wrexham Regis is divided from Wrexham Abbot, and the Lighting department is split into four districts. Pigsties and slaughterhouses abound unchecked by a Nuisance Removal Committee that has no power to affect any change. Everything depends upon the exertions of private individuals, and therefore is fitful and incomplete. Consequently nothing is done as it should be.

Mr Griffiths of Kings Mills opposed the Charter asserting that the expense to the ratepayers would be trebled and yet would still fail to solve the problems highlighted.

We feel the Charter will most unquestionably be advantageous to the town, but we doubt whether it will do away with the necessity of extra powers in an Improvement Bill, or through adopting the Health of Towns Act, if its supporters truly wish to clean up our town. *(February 1857)*

## **News**

### **Wrexham Incorporated.**

Information was received on Wednesday last that the Privy Council has decided to grant a Charter of Incorporation to the town of Wrexham. The borough is to comprise the whole of Wrexham Abbot and Wrexham Regis and part of Esclusham Below. Objections by Sir Watkin, Mr Yorke and others have been accepted: the Racecourse, land adjoining the railway and property around Kings Mills will be excluded from the borough.  
*(May 1857)*

### **Situations Vacant & Wanted**

Wanted a sober steady man as HOUSESERVANT, who knows the duties of the situation and waits well at table.

Wanted by a Young Woman, a situation as WET NURSE.

### **Wrexham Petty Sessions**

#### **Workhouse Escapees Go to Jail**

Four boys of the ages of 11 and 12 were charged by Mr Bragger, the governor, with running away from the Wrexham Workhouse. Three of the runaways said nothing in their defence, but the fourth gave as a reason that he had been beaten by the schoolmaster. The Chairman of the Bench said this sort of thing must be prevented and sent them to the House of Correction in Ruthin for 21 days with hard labour. *(May 1857)*

## **New Home For Militia**

The Sergeant Major and six sergeants have taken formal possession of the new Depot. The armoury upstairs can hold arms for 450 men. The rooms of the officers are very snug, while that of the Sergeant Major most commodious. The depot is most timely as the Government has indicated its intention to call out one third of the militia for exercises owing to worsening relations with China. *(June 1857)*

## **Announcements**

### **BRITISH SCHOOL – GIRLS' DEPARTMENT**

Miss Coghill, the Mistress, imparts instruction of such character as cannot fail to be the means of fitting Girls to fill the various spheres of industrial and domestic life. The branches taught are Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, English Grammar, Geography, History, Sewing and Knitting. The fees are 2d, 3d and 6d. *(January 1857)*

### **BRITISH SCHOOL – BOYS' DEPARTMENT**

The school has recently been fitted with spacious galleries divided by curtains to allow the separate and efficient instruction of each class. The courses of instruction consist of the following branches: Reading, Writing, English Grammar, Arithmetic, Measurement, Geography, History, Latin, Drawing, linear and perspective. Fees vary according to age and attainment of the pupils, 2d to 6d. *(January 1857)*

## **Dreadful and Fatal Accident at the Talwrn Colliery, near Wrexham**

## **Four Lives Lost.**

On Friday morning a fearful explosion of firedamp took place at the Talwrn Colliery, Coedpoeth. The accident occurred at 9 o'clock and when the explosion was heard, utmost consternation was felt by all, as there were 24 men known to be working down the pit. Out of the 24 men, only 12 escaped, four were found dead on the spot, five others were badly burnt and the others less so.

*(August 1857)*

## **Unwelcome Visitor During March Fair**

An excitable bull entered the premises of Mr Powell, confectioner, Charles Street on Monday last. Mr Powell feared for his stock, but luckily for him, the bull did not have a sweet tooth and was coaxed out by its owner before any damage was done. *(March 1857)*

## **Situations Vacant & Wanted**

TO BLAST FURNACEMEN: Wanted as UNDER FURNACE MANAGER, an active steady man, capable of taking charge occasionally if required. Apply Plas Isa Iron Works, Ruabon.

## **The Wrexham Telegraph 1857**

## **Burgess List To Be Made Public**

The list of all the ratepayers qualified to vote in the forthcoming elections to the Borough Corporation is to be published later this week. About 600 names will feature on this list. We would caution the burgesses to choose wisely and to vote for none who are not friends of economic expenditure. Men of sense and worth are

preferable to stereotypical politicians of either party.  
*(September 1857)*

## **Letter to the Editor**

Sir, it is said strenuous efforts are being made in certain quarters to secure a council which will be select and respectable, obedient and tractable, sworn to support certain men and certain measures and to oppose all others. If the inhabitants of Wrexham allow themselves to be hoodwinked in this manner they richly deserve all the evils which are sure to follow. Should any but the constitutional mode of electing this council be resorted to, I trust the indignation of the whole of the inhabitants will be unmistakeably aroused!

Yours T.B., Yorke street

*(September 1857)*

## **Editorial**

### **Glorious Triumph of the Liberal Party**

#### **Eight Liberals Returned**

The Returning Officer, James Buckton, announced the results for the first elections to the Borough Council. Mr Edgworth, the respected and consistent liberal topped the poll with 371 votes, while five other liberals joined him as the six most popular candidates. The four Conservatives were elected because they were known to be honest, talented and conscientious townsmen. 380 burgesses voted, out of an electorate of 640.

Wrexham was called on to elect its best men and this it has done. We may now surely safely state that Thomas Edgworth, leader of the Liberals in the town, will be the first mayor of Wrexham. *(November 1857)*

### **Russian Gun for Wrexham**

Wrexham is to have a Russian gun, captured in the recent war in the Crimea, to display outside the Militia Depot. The town's successful petition is recognition of Wrexham's long military tradition. Mr John Clark is collecting subscriptions to cover the cost of making a carriage. *(July 1857)*

### **Situations Vacant & Wanted**

Wanted by the Council of this Borough a SERGEANT AT MACE. His duties will be to summon and attend meetings of the Council and of Committees and to act generally as Bailiff, Messenger, and Porter to Mayor and Corporation. Salary £8 per annum.

### **Wrexham Petty Sessions**

#### **Angry Wife Assaults Man**

Mary Williams was summoned for assaulting Mr Catherall in the Talbot, Wrexham. Mr Catherall said he had been having a quiet pint when the accused hit him and referred to the ginger colour of his hair in terms by no means delicate or complimentary. The accused explained that Mr Catherall was in the habit of speaking ill of her husband to others and she wished to silence him. Fined 9s 6d and

advised to let her husband look after his own affairs.  
*(December 1857)*

## **Rhos Girl in Bid for Australia**

Ann Cartwright, of Rhos, is back at home with her parents after her latest attempt to emigrate. Caught last month in Liverpool docks trying to stow away on a ship, destined for Australia. This time, dressed in her brother's clothes, she only got as far as Wrexham, where she got tipsy and attracted the notice of PC Sheen. Speaking after her discharge from Wrexham Bridewell, Ann stated "I want to go to Australia as a cabin boy. I have made several voyages in that capacity!" *(August 1857)*

## **Too Much Food at the Workhouse**

The Board of Guardians criticised the master at their last meeting for the amount of food wasted and the weekly cost of feeding each pauper. They noted each pauper costs 3s 6d a week to feed, whereas in other workhouses the cost is as low as 2s 9d. The clerk was ordered to write to neighbouring workhouses to ascertain the cost of their rations and to obtain a copy of their dietary tables.  
*(October 1857)*

## **Market News**

### **Wrexham Market**

Wheat per bushel	7s to 7s 4d
Barley (ditto)	5s 6d to 6s
Oats (ditto)	3s 6d to 3s 9d
Butter	4s to 4s 6d
Fowls, per couple	2s 3d to 2s 8d

Ducks, per couple 3s to 3s 9d  
Turkeys, per couple 7s 6d to 8s 9d  
Geese, per lb 6¼d to 7d  
Eggs 7 eggs for 6d  
*(November 1857)*

## **Announcements**

### **LIBRARY INSTITUTE** HOPE STREET, WREXHAM

OPEN EVERY WEEK DAY from 8 am to 10 pm and on SUNDAYS (for the perusal of religious books and periodicals only) from 4 to 6 and 8 to 10 o'clock pm.

Terms of Membership:

Gentlemen 10s per annum, Working men, Apprentices and Youths under 15 6s per annum, Ladies 6s per annum.

The Room is provided with draughts and chess.  
Materials for letter writing may be had from the Room-keeper.

*(September 1857)*

## **The Wrexham Telegraph 1907**

### **Wrexham New Public Library**

Sir Foster Cunliffe opened the new library on Friday, in the company of the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors. The ground floor consists of a lending library, newsroom, magazine room and a ladies' room. The first floor encompasses a very fine lecture hall, bookstore, and offices. The library, as of course is known, is the gift of Mr Andrew Carnegie. *(February 1907)*

### **Manure Causes Stink in Council Chamber**

An alleged nuisance in Watery Road caused heated arguments at the last meeting of the Health Committee. The Sanitary Inspector and Alderman Thomas Jones disagreed over whether keeping a cartload of horse manure below the bedroom window of a neighbour's house constituted a nuisance.

The Sanitary Inspector stated the owner had been ordered to stop using his dung pit, but had started using a cart to store manure for several days. Alderman Jones stated "I can't agree with the Inspector that a bit of horse manure in a yard is a nuisance." The Sanitary Inspector replied "It is underneath a bedroom window, sir." The Chairman intervened "I would not like to sleep in that bedroom!" Cllr. Edward Jones added "We are advocating open windows and I defy anyone to open a window if there is manure below." It was agreed to serve a notice on the owner calling on him to remove the manure cart. *(March 1907)*

## **Slums in Wrexham Worse Than London**

Wrexham's Medical Officer condemned the continued existence of slum housing in the Borough in his latest report to the Health Committee. Dr D. LI. Williams stated that the extraordinary number of infant deaths last summer was caused by the unsanitary conditions in which too many of our town live. Some of the houses were worse than those he had visited in the East End of London. Councillor Glascodine called on the Health Committee to condemn these properties and force the owners to fulfil their responsibilities. Cllr. Edward Jones backed the Medical Officer stating if the Corporation built and rented out its own houses at 3s or 3s 6d a week, private landlords would face some competition. Cllr. Taylor called for caution as many of the people who lived in such houses were accustomed to it and preferred to live in slums. *(April 1907)*

## **Other News**

### **Mayoress Serves Up a Treat**

Over 1200 children had tea at the Drill Hall thanks to fundraising by the Mayoress, Mrs Edward Hughes. The subscriptions, raised, paid for tea, cake, bread and butter, mince pies, meat pies and oranges followed by an entertainment show by Professor Garland. *(February 1907)*

## **District Intelligence**

### **Holt & Farndon**

Chapel Elders have condemned sales of Sunday newspapers in both villages. Wrexham newspaper vendors have been blamed.

## **Coedpoeth**

Excitement in the village last Sunday. A man paraded High Street shouting at the top of his voice " Prepare, Prepare to meet your God!" The man was found to be from Rhos and he continued on to Minera, still shouting.

## **Cefn Mawr**

A lively debate took place at the Sion Literary Society. The subject – “Should the Church be disestablished?” At the close 67 voted in favour of disestablishment, 11 against.

## **The Wrexham Telegraph 1907**

### **Disastrous Fire in Wrexham**

#### **Public Hall Guttled**

PC David Thomas noticed smoke coming from the rear of the building while on patrol at a quarter to three last Wednesday morning. He alerted the fire brigade who succeeded in preventing the fire from spreading to adjacent properties. The fire destroyed the Public Hall, the printing works of Messrs Breese & Co., Mr Palmer's cabinet works, a sweet shop and the Exchange Club.  
*(August 1907)*

### **New Colliery at Gresford**

The first sod for the new colliery was cut at Acton Grange last Wednesday. The guests arrived in a special rail motor car at the expense of the owners, the United Westminster & Wrexham Collieries Ltd. Sir Theodore Martin cut the sod for the first shaft and Mrs Dyke Dennis cut the sod for the second shaft. *(November 1907)*

### **Town Meeting Backs Parciau Scheme**

A public meeting organised by the Borough Council to discuss suggestions for marking the Corporation Jubilee has unanimously backed a scheme to turn the Parciau into the town's first public park. The Borough Council has faced some criticism for purchasing the ground, but no one spoke against the proposal to set up a subscription fund to pay for making a park for future generations and thereby providing a recreation ground for the town's children. *(August 1907)*

### **The Corporation Jubilee**

The Corporation Jubilee will take place on September 27<sup>th</sup>. The Town Clerk is writing to the Traders Association to request that shops close for the whole of the day. *(August 1907)*

### **Other News**

#### **Theft of Rabbit Skins**

Wrexham Borough police Court sentenced Richard Williams, aged 13, and John Prytherch, 12, both of Wrexham for stealing 34 rabbit skins from Charlotte Willcock, fruiterer etc., of Charles St., Wrexham. Williams, owing to previous offences, was sentenced to 7 days at Shrewsbury and committed to a reformatory, while Prytherch received six strokes of the birch. *(November 1907)*

#### **Black Beer & Rum**

The Police charged John Jones of Gwersyllt with being drunk on the highway. The accused said "Every time I

have a drink, the constable is after me. I had had a cold that night and took some black beer and rum to cure it." The magistrates asked "Do you often suffer from colds?" The accused answered "Yes, every Winter." The prosecution reminded the magistrates that the accused had been before the Court in June for the same offence. The chairman concluded the proceedings "June is a rum time to get a cold. You will be fined 5s and 5s 6d costs."  
*(February 1907)*

### **Ruabon Hero Makes News in Australia**

Mr Frank Hughes, diver, formerly of Ruabon, won the Albert Medal for his bravery in saving the life of a miner trapped in a flooded mine in Western Australia. Frank Hughes made repeated descents into the waters to take food, drink and an airline to the trapped miner until the waters lowered enough to successfully rescue the man.  
*(September 1907)*

### **Situations Vacant**

Wanted Thirty Thin COAL MINERS for hand-getting or machine filling. Apply Denby Grange Colliery, Wakefield.

Wanted Good Hans & Rock drill MEN to drive Levels and Cross Cuts at the Minera Mines, in contract and at price per yard. Apply United Minera Mining Co.

## **The Wrexham Telegraph 1957**

### **New Town Hall Is A Must**

Mayor Cllr. John Albert Davies told the Commercial Travellers Association Annual Dinner 'The present town of Wrexham leaves much to be desired. There are many improvements we would like to make – a new town hall, for instance, is an immediate essential.' *(January 1957)*

### **18,000 Queue for Tickets**

Thousands of fans queued outside Wrexham Racecourse on Saturday morning for tickets for the Wrexham and Manchester United Cup Tie. Some fervent supporters made sure of a ticket by staying outside the ground all night. *(January 1957)*

### **Griffiths Scores 3 goals in Wrexham 18<sup>th</sup> unbeaten game**

Brian Griffiths made a dynamic return to the senior side by scoring three goals in Wrexham's victory over Darlington. After a lacklustre start 12, 829 fans saw Wrexham win 5-0 over the Quakers. Wrexham are currently 6<sup>th</sup> in the Third Division North. *(January 1957)*

### **Fewer Deaths, More Births**

The Medical Officer told the Rural District Council Health Committee that a major factor in the especially high death rate amongst the old in 1956 was the weather. They had

had very little sun, as a result people got run down and old people in particular seemed to die off. *(January 1957)*

### **New Council Houses for Hungarians – And a Sunday Joint Too!**

Wrexham welcomed two Hungarian families on Saturday. The two families left Hungary when fighting flared up during the revolution. The days of tragedy ended for them when the Mayor of Wrexham welcomed them to their new homes. A grant from the Lord Mayor's Refugee Fund enabled the houses to be furnished. *(January 1957)*

### **Parents Angry About Dearer Dinners**

'Daylight Robbery' - that's the verdict of Wrexham's angry parents. This is the result of the proposed 2d increase announced last week, following hot on the heels of another 2d rise in the price of school dinners in January. School dinners will cost one shilling from April 1<sup>st</sup>, All Fools' Day. 'And that's what we would be to pay it, all fools!' was the judgment on one Wrexham mother. *(February 1957)*

### **Houses at Bargain Prices**

Properties in Garden Village, the pioneering housing estate, have all now been sold to their sitting tenants. Prices, at well below market value ranged from £200 - £450 for the smaller dwellings and from £750 - £1,350 for the larger villas. One smaller house has just been resold for £1,200. *(February 1957)*

## **Faithful Chorister Stole Heifer to Pay for His Wedding**

Ivor Bellingham, aged 25, farm labourer of Holt, pleaded guilty to stealing a heifer and selling it at Chester Market for £44 15s. He explained that he needed money for his honeymoon after he had had to spend his savings on winter feed for his own animals. A supporting letter from the Vicar of Holt led the Court to conditionally discharge Bellingham, who had already lodged £50 with the Police as reparation.

## **Inside**

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p.9 Council May Cut Housing Programme – Outlook bleak for young married couples

p.10 Court Told of the Man who Stops Cars – Trevor resident asks motorists to admire the view

## **Situations Vacant**

APPRENTICE SURVEYOR required by Hafod Colliery, Ruabon. Apprentice not older than 18 years. O level

passes in four subjects including Maths & Science. Salary £2 to £3 10s.

FEMALE general clerk wanted by well known Wrexham drapers. Good prospects, must be able to accept responsibility.

YN EISIAU Mab neu ferch ifanc gyda chwaeth at Lyfrau a Llenyddiaeth Cymraeg i Siop Lyfrau. Hughes Evans a'i feibion, Lerpwl.

### **Celanese Shut Down Rumours 'Absolute Nonsense'**

Current rumours that British Celanese's Wrexham factory might close were firmly denied at the company's London headquarters last Friday. (*October 1957*)

### **Farewell Parade in Wrexham**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Royal Welch Fusiliers are going into 'suspended animation' and on December 6<sup>th</sup> a farewell parade will be held at the Hightown Barracks. The battalion are just back from their three-year tour of duty in Malaya, where they killed 27 terrorists and captured two. They were awarded one DCM, two Military medals and one MBE, and received nine Mentioned in Dispatches. (*November 1957*)

## **Lager Label Has Upset Wrexham**

The decision, announced last week, by parent company Ind Coope, to phase out the world famous Wrexham Lager Beer label has led to a storm of protest in the town. Reactions to the announcements showed the town was in no two minds. Wrexham's first citizen, the Mayor, Cllr. Evans said of the change 'It is definitely a loss of prestige for Wrexham. I don't often have a drink but when I do, it is a pint of Wrexham Lager.' A local man summed up the general mood 'Anyone who knows anything about beer has heard of Wrexham Lager. I've travelled about this country a bit and Wrexham is best known for its beer and its football team.' *(August 1957)*

## **New School Opens**

St David's Secondary School, Rhosnessney, opened on Tuesday. The school cost £180,000 and took two years to build. There are 550 pupils in the school, which has a smart new maroon uniform.

## **Piece of Sputnik Found In Marchwiel Tree**

A strange object found in a tree in Marchwiel has baffled local people and workers on the industrial estate. One theory is that it is some part of the lining material from the Russian satellite rocket.

## **Visitors to Wales Like Sunday Closing – Claims Minister**

'Visitors to Wales find Sunday closing no hardship' claimed Revd. Alwyn Thomas, Secretary of the North Wales Temperance Union at their annual conference. He continued 'Visitors prefer Wales as it is and not as the brewers would want it.' The conference passed a resolution condemning any reform of the Welsh Sunday Closing Act.

## **Inside**

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p.7 Schools 'Our Town' Competition winners on show at Centenary Exhibition

pp.8-9 General Stockwell Opens the Victory Memorial Hall

pp.10-11 30,000 Visit Wrexham's Centenary Ideal Home & Industries Exhibition

## **Situations Vacant**

MAN wanted for farmwork, good house on made road, garden and land for pigs and poultry, good wages.

YN EISIAU fel cowman am flwyddyn gyflawn ar fferm fynyddig, gyda amaethwr parchus. Disgwylir cyflog amaethyddol. Porthwr glan – Roberts, Oswestry

EGWLYS MYNYDD SEION, LERPWL. YN EISIAU Gofalwr  
capel. Ceir manylion gan D.G.Jones

ASTONS require an experienced TYPIST, maximum age  
33, for their typing pool.

A YOUTH, aged about 16, of good education and  
appearance, is required by Astons to train as a salesman.

## **Countdown to the Charter** **Cyfri'n Ôl i'r Siarter**

Wrexham's response to the Board of Health report was quick.

There were broadly three groups:

- The reactionaries - opponents of any change
- The Improvement Committee – they were keen to improve the town, but felt a Local Board of Health would cost too much and be an arm of central government in London.
- The Sanitary Committee – they supported the creation of a Local Board of Health to solve the town's social problems.

A public meeting at the Town Hall on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1850 backed the status quo. The meeting called on the Surveyors of Highways to levy an annual rate to improve sanitation in the town. The Surveyors levied the rate, only to discover they had no power to spend the money on sewerage and water supplies.

The Improvement Committee then took the initiative. In 1851 they presented a bill in parliament to establish the Wrexham Improvement Commission. This bill was opposed by both the Sanitary Committee and the reactionaries. Petitions were sent to Parliament appealing to MPs and peers to vote down the bill. The bill was defeated. Meanwhile Wrexham's problems worsened.

In 1856, the Improvement Committee and the Sanitary Committee, by now reconciled, decided to petition the Privy Council for a Charter of Incorporation for Wrexham.

At the Inquiry in the Town Hall in early 1857, Thomas Edgworth, local solicitor and leading reformer, listed the many reasons Wrexham needed its own government: to improve the low moral and sanitary conditions in the town, to improve the roads, and maintain law and order. The local gentry sent their lawyers to ensure that their estates would remain outside the boundaries of the new borough.

In May 1857 news reached the town that Wrexham would have its own borough council with 12 councillors and 4 aldermen. There was huge excitement surrounding the first elections in November 1857. A list was drawn up, and posted outside the Town Hall, of all those entitled to vote. Thomas Edgworth topped the poll and was chosen to be Wrexham's first mayor.

The Councillors appointed John James as Town Clerk, John Jones as Town Crier, and David Higgins as Sergeant at Mace and an Inspector of Nuisances & Common Lodging Houses. There was much work for them to do.

*“We urged the Ratepayers to be awake, to be vigilant and on their guard. Let them be aware of certain ‘hole and corner’ meetings held for the purpose of hatching some notable project - nothing less than the Incorporation of this Town... We have now the pleasure of congratulating our fellow townsmen the said project has been strangled at birth, never again we hope to be conceived.”*

Wrexham Recorder, 1848

*“We fear that for sometime to come the town of Wrexham is condemned to remain in that filthy and unhealthy state in which it cannot be denied to be in, and a disgrace to its inhabitants.”*

George Cunliffe, Chairman,  
The Sanitary Committee, 1850

*“The principal benefit to be derived from a Charter will be that the town will have a recognised head to direct its affairs and in this will be an advantage of no ordinary magnitude.”*

Wrexham Advertiser, 1857

## **Wrexham Incorporated**

In 1857, 646 people were entitled to vote as burgesses<sup>1</sup> and 206 were entitled to stand as councillors, but the Borough Council's duty was to all the town's inhabitants.

The Council's priority was to tackle the poor sanitation and housing in Wrexham. Between 1863 and 1867, the Council installed a proper sewerage system and the last cesspool privy was closed by 1894. The Council built an isolation hospital for people with infectious diseases, appointed a health visitor to advise mothers of new born children, and opened public baths (for washing as well as swimming!) on Tuttle Street.

The health benefits were obvious. The town's death rate fell from 29 per thousand in 1857 to 11 per thousand in 1957. The health visitor helped reduce infant mortality from 152 per thousand in 1907 to 29 per thousand in 1957.

The Council's Medical and Sanitary Officers also worked to improve living conditions in the slums of Wrexham, often contrary to the moralising attitudes of the time. By 1907 the Council realised that improving life in the slums was not enough, they had to be cleared away and new housing built. Wrexham's first council estate, designed by the renowned architect, Patrick Abercrombie, was built on land in Acton Park in the 1920s. After the Second World War, Queen's Park was built as Wrexham's New Jerusalem in the Caia fields. The slums were cleared away, but ending poverty and social exclusion is a task that the Council still works to achieve today.

<sup>1</sup>Burgesses were men with voting rights. You could become a burgess if you owned enough property or a business in the town.

*No project was entered upon without the closest investigation as to the cost to the ratepayers, and careful regard for the healthy progress and advancement of the Borough.'*

Thomas Bury, second Town Clerk , writing in 1907