

A VERY SCARCE MAIDSTONE TYPHOID MEDAL 1897



MAIDSTONE TYPHOID MEDAL 1897, SILVER, 'C. H. MEEK', WITH INTEGRAL TOP RIBAND BAR, IN CASE

'A major epidemic of Typhoid Fever broke out in Maidstone, Kent during late August 1897. By 9 September, 117 cases had been reported, rising to 774 by the end of the month and by 9 October the number had risen to 1,200, with 42 deaths. The cause was never fully identified but the reservoir at Barming, the spring at Tutsham, and various pumping stations were all found to be contaminated - all this compounded by the poor sewage system then in operation at Maidstone. In the highly charged atmosphere of the times, irresponsibly defecating hop-pickers also were blamed for the outbreak! The Town Council also came in for some criticism in having, as an economy measure, reduced the number of times a year the water purity was tested. In response to the outbreak, suspect water supplies were cut and Barming Reservoir was chlorinated. The Town Council issued handbills to the townspeople recommending the boiling of all drinking water and a free laundry was opened for the washing of all clothes and bedding from infected households; these same houses were then thoroughly disinfected. Emergency hospitals were opened, and such was the need, that doctors and nurses from outside the area were brought in to tend to the sick and dying. A subscription to help the poorer townsfolk was also opened. By rigorous methods the epidemic was brought under control, and by the end of December it was largely over; the total number of reported cases being 1,847, with 132 deaths.'

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maidstone_typhoid_epidemic

"Medals were awarded to the nursing staff who served in the town during the epidemic. Many were presented by the Mayor of Maidstone at a special ceremony held at the Museum and Technical School on Wednesday 8 December 1897; an account of the presentation being given in the South Eastern Gazette of 14 December 1897. Some 700 people attended the presentation, including members of the Town Council, Magistrates, Clergy and other people of note. The Mayor of Maidstone (Councillor J. Barker) gave a speech before the presentation, paraphrased by the newspaper, '... While they must be filled with regret for those who had been taken away ... it was a matter of congratulation to know that the epidemic which overtook them three months ago, had been stamped out thanks to the efforts of their Medical Officer, the medical men of the town, and ... through the sturdy and gallant conduct of every inhabitant of Maidstone ... and, in addition to the help received from the residents in the town and neighbourhood, they had an army of trained nurses to assist them. ... He now wished on the part of every inhabitant of the borough of Maidstone, ... to thank the nurses who had assisted them during their great trouble ... and he was going to ask them to accept a small medal as a token of esteem for the work they had done ...'"



Medal is contained in an old case. Whether the medals were issued in cases is unknown, all those seen by Jager Medals have been uncased. Therefore the recipient either kept this medal in this case or it is an extremely rare case of issue.



Condition EF, a fine and very scarce award