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EXMOUTH
Urban District Council.

REPORT


OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER.

For 1905.

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REPORT.

JANUARY, 1906.

*To the Chairman and Members of the Exmouth Urban
District Council.*

GENTLEMEN,

I have pleasure in submitting to you my Report upon the health and sanitary condition of the District for the year 1905.

Speaking in general terms, the town of Exmouth may be roughly divided into two portions—a low lying portion situated near the sea level, of which the subsoil consists of sand and alluvial deposit—and a higher portion, rising to an elevation of 150ft., situated on a subsoil of clay and containing in many places veins and patches of coarse gravel.

This clay subsoil, which usually cannot be called good from a sanitary point of view, is in the case of Exmouth redeemed by the fact that it is nowhere level, the surface everywhere having a good fall towards the sea, thus securing the rapid drainage of surface water, and providing a comparatively dry subsoil and excellent sites for building.

It is in the higher part of the town that most of the better class houses have been built, and building has been carried on extensively during the past year.

The houses of the working-classes are practically confined to the lower level, which is for sanitary reasons to be deplored.

The fact that practically all the land on the eastern and higher side of the town is leasehold, and a restriction is placed upon the erection of houses below a certain value,

is for economic reasons, no doubt, desirable. But from a sanitary point of view it is to be regretted, because it forces the extension of working-class dwellings in one direction only, viz., in the direction of Withycombe, along the surface of the Marsh, on made ground.

Nothing can be said against the houses themselves which are built on the Marsh. On the contrary, I consider them excellent and in every way preferable to the majority of the small houses in the centre of the town, but I think it is much to be regretted that there exists in the district no alternative sites for working-class dwellings, of which the supply in this district is unequal to the demand.

During the year 1905 forty-five new houses were completed, and plans for 36 new dwellings were approved by the Council.

The climate of Exmouth is remarkable for its equability. It is cool in summer and comparatively warm in winter.

The mean temperature for the six months from April to September inclusive last year was 56·6 degrees, and that for the six winter months 44·4 degrees, giving a mean range of 12·2 degrees. The highest temperature registered during the summer was 78 degrees.

The rainfall is probably less than that of any place on the South Devon Coast. Last year rain fell upon 160 days, making a total rainfall of 25·74 inches.

Sunshine was registered on 316 days, the total duration for the year amounting to 1,620·20 hours.

The place is yearly becoming more popular as a health resort, and it has natural advantages which entitle it to a wider appreciation as a resort for invalids than it at present enjoys.

The health of the district during 1905 was on the whole good.

The death-rate was higher than that for the two previous years, but the excess was confined to the two extreme periods of life, viz., under 1 year and over 65. At all ages between these limits the mortality was lower than it has been for many years.

The number of cases of infectious disease notified, though not excessive, was higher than in 1904, owing to an epidemic of scarlet fever, which visited the district during the last two months of the year, probably due in the first instance to importations from Exeter, and certainly afterwards spread by infection from the Board Schools.

The epidemic was practically confined to the Withercombe district. There was strong reason to suspect that several cases were being concealed and, by being exposed during the infective period, served to convey the disease to other children.

I did my best to detect these cases, but failed to secure any reliable or decisive evidence.

Too much care cannot be exercised in excluding from school all children who are suffering from any ailment in the least degree suspicious.

I may state here that I have invariably received every assistance from the teachers at the schools.

Mothers send their children to school in many instances merely for the purpose of getting rid of them, and apart from the danger of their spreading or catching infection, the custom is very much to be condemned. Children 2, 3 or 4 years old are sent to school to be confined in a close atmosphere with perhaps 50 others, where they are made to sit at a desk, are kept quiet, and their attention fixed upon more or less small objects at a time of life when freedom of limb, plenty of exercise, fresh air and sunlight are an absolute necessity for their future physical and mental welfare.

In my opinion, an opinion which is held by the highest medical authorities, the exclusion of children from school below the age of 5 should be just as rigidly enforced as is their attendance after that age. If this were done we should see fewer children wearing spectacles and more robust specimens of juvenile humanity than we do at present.

Water Supply.—Considerable extension has taken place during the year, the most important of which was the extension of the town supply to Littleham Village, which was completed in November, thus remedying a serious sanitary defect to which I referred in my annual report last year.

The total amount of water supplied to the town as registered by the out-going meter at the filter beds was 98,081,246 gallons, equal to a daily consumption of 24·34 gallons per head.

In arriving at these numbers no deduction has been made for visitors.

If the number of visitors could be accurately gauged, the daily consumption of Exmouth would probably be reduced to something like 22½ gallons per head.

In 1901 the quantity of water supplied to the district was 330,000 gallons per day, equal to a consumption of 31·73 gallons per head, based upon a normal population of 10,400.

The waste prevention system of the Council has reduced the daily consumption, or rather the waste of water, by nearly 7½ gallons per head, equal to a total of 28 million gallons yearly, the result being that whereas in previous dry seasons the supply was insufficient, in 1905, one of the driest years on record, a full supply was maintained throughout the whole year and the level of the water in the impounding reservoir never fell lower than 2ft. 10in. below the overflow.

The reports of the Analyst shew that both the chemical and bacterial purity of the water has been maintained at a very high standard, a standard equal to that of any water supply in the country.

The Council are now directing their attention to the construction of high level filter beds and storage reservoir, the Water Engineer having already prepared the preliminary plans and estimates. The work will be commenced during the present year, thus providing an ample water supply for the highest parts of the district, and allowing for all probable extension for many years to come.

Sewerage.—The new system is working admirably. There has been a total absence of flooding in the lower parts of the town.

Several short extensions have been made to connect up new property.

Twenty-one houses have been entirely redrained, and 37 partly so.

All the Boathouses at the Point, about 50 in number, have been drained and connected with the sewer.

In connection with the above the smoke test was applied 155 times.

Notification Act.—48 cases of infectious disease were notified under the Infectious Diseases Notification Act, as compared with 29 cases in 1904, 55 in 1903, 65 in 1902 and 266 in 1901. There were very few notifications during the first ten months of the year, the number of cases of scarlet fever during November and December spoiling what had every appearance of being a record year.

Isolation.—16 cases—15 of scarlet fever and one of diphtheria—were removed to the Sanatorium at Whipton. The prejudice against sending patients to this institution is evidently not so strong as it was a few years ago, but it still exists, and I think it may be very reasonably accounted for by the distance—11 miles—at which the Sanatorium is situated from the district. I can fully sympathise with the reluctance felt by parents to send a child, possibly very seriously ill, so long a journey by road, and I hope the time is not far distant when we shall possess an Isolation Hospital of our own.

Disinfection has been carried out as thoroughly as possible with the means at our disposal, which are at present very inefficient.

Five lots of bedding and clothing were sent to Exeter to be disinfected by steam.

However, it is a consolation to know that there is at length a definite prospect of our being in possession of a good steam disinfector.

A site has been fixed upon and purchased, and the work of erection will be carried out during the present year.

Dairies.—The dairies and cow sheds in the district have been inspected, and with two exceptions were found in good sanitary condition.

In one instance a set of cow sheds are deficient in everything necessary for the health and cleanliness of the cattle, and the purity of the milk. The buildings are of the most elementary character and possess neither drainage nor water supply. They stand in the midst of a sea of semi-liquid filth. The Inspector has this matter in hand.

In the other case, manure has been allowed to accumulate for months. Complaint has been made of this particular case on several previous occasions. I would suggest that the time has now come to use measures of compulsion.

Bakehouses.—There are 22 in the district, all of which have been inspected. There is a distinct improvement in their condition, though the state of the floors in several is still far from perfect.

In one instance, the floor was very dirty, and there were rat holes in it, through which I was informed the rats obtained access to the bakehouse at night. As this bakehouse is situated in a neighbourhood where there are probably several old brick drains in existence, where the rats take up their residence during the day, I would suggest that the owner be called upon to make good the floor and the

occupier be requested to use more diligence in keeping it clean.

I would refer here to a custom which prevails among the bakers of this district with which I have only recently become acquainted.

It appears to be a general practice to leave a number of loaves of bread at a house, and when calling on the following day, to take back any which have not been used. It will be scarcely necessary to remind the Council that there is considerable danger attached to this custom.

An instance came to my knowledge where bread was taken back by a baker from a house where there was a case of diphtheria.

I am not sure that this practice can be compulsorily put a stop to, but probably a letter from the Sanitary Authority to the bakers of the district would have the desired effect.

Common Lodging Houses.—There are only two in the district, both of which were inspected and found clean and in good sanitary condition.

Workshops.—There are 96 registered in the district. These have been inspected, and with three exceptions were found free from overcrowding or other sanitary defect.

In three cases statutory notices were served requiring sanitary improvements, and these were complied with.

Vital Statistics.

The statistics are based upon an estimated population of 11,040 at the middle of the year 1905.

The births numbered 216—111 being males and 105 females—giving an average annual birth rate of 19·56 per 1000; the average for the past five years being 20·74 per 1000. The low birth rate may to some extent be accounted for by the fact that the district contains an abnormally large proportion of inhabitants who have reached middle age and upwards.

There were 168 deaths—equal to an average annual death rate of 15·21 per 1000 ; the average for the past five years being 14·86.

Here again the death rate is influenced by the same factor as the birth rate, viz., an abnormally high average age of the population.

Twenty-six of the deaths were of infants in their first year, eleven between the ages of 1 and 5, two from 5 to 15, six from 15 to 25, thirty-eight from 25 to 65, and eighty-five over the age of 65.

Of this latter number thirty-eight died between the ages of 70 and 80, twenty-eight between 80 and 90, and four were over 90 years old.

So that of the total number of deaths, 41½ per cent. occurred at ages over 70 years.

The deaths from the seven principal **zymotic diseases** were 7 in number, equal to a zymotic death rate of 0·63 per 1000.

Infant Mortality.—There were 26 deaths of infants under 1 year, equal to an infant mortality of 120·37 per 1000 children born, against 64·78 per 1000 in 1904, 93·13 in 1903, 102 in 1902 and 136 in 1901—an average of 105·25 for the last five years.

This average is much higher than it should be ; probably bread feeding plays an important part in producing it.

As Public Vaccinator I am brought into contact with a large number of children, and have been astonished at the number of mothers who feed their babies upon bread, often where no natural incapacity or plea of poverty can be brought forward as an excuse.

Twelve persons died from **phthisis**, giving a phthisis mortality of 1·08 per 1000.

Cancer caused 15 deaths, equal to a cancer mortality of 1·35 per 1000.

There were 41 cases of **Scarlet Fever** and one death.

Measles caused 4 deaths.

Diphtheria—There were 5 cases, and one death.

Typoid fever, I am glad to be able to state, was conspicuous by its absence. There was not a single case in the district during the year.

The Council have every reason to be satisfied with the sanitary progress of the district during the year. It is true that some of the numbers given in the statistics compare unfavourably with the corresponding numbers of last year, but it must be remembered that in a place of the size of Exmouth we are dealing with comparatively small numbers—numbers which are too small to be of any real value for purposes of comparison unless they are taken as an average extending over a long series of years.

It is very gratifying to me, as it must be to the Council, to be able to look back upon the sanitary improvements which have been carried out in the district during the past five years, and I have a pleasurable anticipation of further improvements to come.

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

O. EATON, D.P.H. CAMB.,

Medical Officer of Health.

METEOROLOGICAL REPORT FOR 1905.

	January	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Rainfall in Inches...	1.46	0.78	4.39	2.42	0.79	2.16	0.42 0.42	4.41	1.59 1.59	2.14	4.25	0.98
Sunshine in Hours	75.45	95.08	127.83	77.30	250.75	144.40	229.07	198.54	145.96	124.49	101.36	46.97
Barometer (corrected)	30.349	30.108	29.759	29.870	30.157	29.963	30.088	29.908	30.005	30.137	29.714	30.269
Mean Maximum Temperature	46.6	49	51.8	53.3	60.3	63.7	70	66	63	54.3	49.6	48.5
Mean Minimum Temperature	36.3	39.7	39.9	44.4	45.2	53.1	57	54.6	50.5	41.4	35.3	40
Extreme Maximum Temperature	55	58	58	59	71	74	78	70	68	62	56	52
Extreme Minimum Temperature	25	29	30	36	37	45	51	49	40	30	26	32

Total Rainfall—25.74 inches

Rain fell on 160 days

Total Sunshine—1612.20 hours

Mean Barometer—30.027

Mean Maximum Temperature for the year—56.3 degrees

Mean Minimum Temperature for the year—44.8 degrees

Highest Temperature—78 degrees

Lowest Temperature—25 degrees

Table I.
Vital Statistics of Whole District during 1905 and previous Years.
Name of District—EXMOUTH URBAN.

YEAR.	Population estimated to Middle of each Year.	Births.		Total Deaths Registered in the District.			Deaths of Non-residents in Public Institutions in the district	Total Deaths in Public Institutions in the district	Net Deaths at all Ages belonging to the District.		
		Number.	Rate.	Under 1 Year of Age.		At all Ages.			Number	Rate.	
				Number.	Rate per 1,000 Births registered.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11.	12
1900.	10332	230	22.26	32	139.1	141	13.61			141	13.64
1901.	10472	206	19.67	28	136.1	163	15.56			163	15.56
1902.	10645	245	22.91	25	102.04	180	16.9		1	179	16.76
1903.	10774	204	18.93	19	93.13	140	12.98			140	12.98
1904.	10905	247	22.64	15	64.78	152	13.93			151	13.84
1905.	11040	216	19.56	26	120.37	170	15.39		6	168	15.21

Area of District in acres (exclusive of area covered by water)—4000.
 Total population at all ages—10472
 Number of inhabited houses—2218
 Average number of persons per house—4.72

} At Census
 of 1901.

Table III.
Cases of Infectious Disease notified during the Year 1905.
Name of District—EXMOUTH URBAN

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE.	CASES NOTIFIED IN WHOLE DISTRICT.						
	AT ALL AGES.	At Ages—Years.					
		Under 1	1 to 5.	5 to 15.	15 to 25.	25 to 65.	65 and upwards
Small-pox							
Cholera							
Diphtheria... ..	5	.....	1	3	.....	1	
Membranous croup ...							
Erysipelas	2	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	1
Scarlet fever	41	1	7	26	3	4	
Typhus							
Enteric fever							
Relapsing fever							
Continued fever							
Puerperal fever							
Plague							
Totals	48	1	8	29	3	6	1

Isolation Hospital—WHIPTON NEAR EXETER; DISTANCE 11 MILES.

Table IV.

Causes of, and Ages at, Death during Year 1905.

Name of District—EXMOUTH URBAN.

Causes of Death. 1	Deaths at the subjoined ages of "Residents" whether occurring in or beyond the District							Total Deaths whether of Residents or non Residents in Public Institutions in the District. 9
	ALL AGES 2	Under 1 year 3	1 and under 5 4	5 and under 15 5	15 and under 25 6	25 and under 65 7	65 and up- wards 8	
Small-pox								
Measles	4	3	1					
Scarlet fever	1	...	1					
Whooping-cough	1	1						
Diphtheria and membranous croup	1	...	1					
Croup								
Fever { Typhus								
{ Enteric								
{ Other continued								
Epidemic influenza	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	
Cholera								
Plague								
Diarrhoea	5	3	1	...	..	...	1	
Enteritis	4	2	1	...	...	...	1	
Puerperal fever								
Erysipelas	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	
Other septic diseases								
Phthisis (Pulmonary Tubercu- culosis)	12	...	...	...	4	7	1	
Other tubercular diseases								
Cancer, malignant disease	15	...	...	..	...	5	10	
Bronchitis	14	...	...	...	...	1	13	
Pneumonia	11	1	4	...	...	2	4	
Pleurisy	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	
Other diseases of Respira- tory organs								
Alcoholism)								
Cirrhosis of liver)	1	...	...	...	..	1		
Venereal diseases								
Premature birth	7	7						
Diseases and accidents of parturition								
Heart diseases	22	...	...	...	1	13	8	
Accidents	1	...	...	1				
Suicides	1	...	...	...	...	1		
All other causes	65	9	2	1	1	10	44	
All causes	168	26	11	2	6	38	85	7

Table V.

URBAN DISTRICT OF EXMOUTH.

INFANTILE MORTALITY DURING THE YEAR 1905.

Death from stated Causes in Weeks and Months under One Year of Age.

CAUSE OF DEATH.				Under 1 Week.	1-2 Weeks.	2-3 Weeks.	3-4 Weeks.	Total under 1 Month.	1-2 Months.	2-3 Months.	3-4 Months.	4-5 Months.	5-6 Months.	6-7 Months.	7-8 Months.	8-9 Months.	9-10 Months.	10-11 Months.	11-12 Months.	Total Deaths under One Year.	
				11	1	1	...	13	...	1	2	..	4	...	1	2	...	1	2		...
ALL CAUSES.	Certified	...	...	...	11	1	1	...	13	...	1	2	..	4	...	1	2	...	1	2	26
	Uncertified																	
Common Infectious Diseases.	Small-pox	...	...	...														
	Chicken-pox	...	...	...														
	Measles	...	...	...									1	...	1	...	...	1			
	Scarlet Fever	...	...	...														
	Diphtheria: Croup	...	...	...														
Diarrhoeal Diseases.	Whooping Cough	...	...	...														1			
	Diarrhoea, all forms	...	...	...													1				
	Enteritis	...	...	...									2								
	Gastritis, Gastro-intestinal Catarrh	...	...	...							1										
Wasting Diseases.	Premature Birth	...	...	...	6	1															
	Congenital Defects	...	...	...														
	Injury at Birth	...	...	...	1																
	Want of Breast-milk	...	...	...														
Tuberculous Diseases.	Atrophy, Debility, Marasmus	...	...	...	3	...	1	...	...	1	1										
	Tuberculous Meningitis	...	...	...														
	Tuberculous Peritonitis:	...	...	...														
	Tabes Mesenterica	...	...	...														
	Other Tuberculous Diseases	...	...	...														
	Erysipelas	...	...	...														
	Syphilis	...	...	...														
	Rickets	...	...	...														
	Meningitis (not Tuberculous)	...	...	...														
	Convulsions	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1								
Bronchitis	...	...	...															
Laryngitis	...	...	...															
Pneumonia	...	...	...															
Suffocation, overlaying	...	...	...															
Other Causes	...	...	...															
				11	1	1		13	1	2		4		1	2		1	2			

Births in the year { legitimate 215
 { illegitimate 1

Population, estimated to middle of 1905, 11,040.

Deaths from all Causes at all Ages 168