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Contributors

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ILMINSTER

Urban District Council.



THE

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health,

FOR THE

ILMINSTER URBAN DISTRICT,

FOR THE YEAR ENDING . . .

. . . DECEMBER 31st, 1906.

MEMBERS OF THE
 ILMINSTER URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL,
 (FOR 1906.)

- Mr. John Taylor, (*Chairman.*)
 „ J. Grabham, (*Vice-Chairman.*)
 „ F. T. Adams,
 „ R. Coombes,
 „ T. B. Edmonds,
 „ H. M. Hext
 „ J. R. Paull,
 „ A. Poole,
 „ S. Rowe,
 „ J. F. Sanders,
 „ H. H. Shepherd,
 „ R. P. Wheadon.

-
- „ M. B. Baker, *Solicitor, Clerk.*
 „ G. W. Warry, *Surveyor and*
Sanitary Inspector.

Dr. Maidlow, *Medical Officer of Health.*

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present you with the eighth Annual Report of the sanitary condition and vital statistics of your district for the year ending December 31st, 1906.

ESTIMATED POPULATION,	..	2,287.	} At Census 1901.
NUMBER OF INHABITED HOUSES,		542.	
Average Number of Persons per house		4·20.	
ACRES	529.	

OCCUPATION. Chiefly industrial and trading, some dairy production.

GEOLOGY. On Liassic Division (chiefly upper and middle layers) of the Jurassic System: Argillaceous limestone (marlstone), micaceous sand, and clays, being the predominant elements.

***TABLE I.**

Year.	Popu- lation. Estim'd to middle of each year.	Births.		Total Deaths reg. in the District.				Deaths of residents reg't' red in public Instit'ns beyond the District.	Nett Deaths at all ages belonging to the District.	
		Number.	Rate per 1000 of estim'd popu- lation.	Under 1 Year.		At all ages.			Number.	Rate per 1,000 estim'd pop'ion.
				Number.	Rate per 1,000 Births reg't' red	Number.	Rate per 1,000 estim'd popu- lation.			
1899	†2,282	56	24·5	8	142·8	34	14·8			
1900	2,284	54	23·6	5	92·5	31	13·5			
1901	2,287	48	20·9	8	166·6	40	17·4			
1902	2,289	48	20·9	6	125·0	29	12·9	I	30	
1903	2,291	53	23·1	2	37·7	32	13·9			
1904	2,293	52	22·6	4	76·9	22	9·5			
1905	2,295	47	20·9	5	106·3	35	10·8			
1906	‡2,297	48	20·8	2	41·6	19	8·2	I	20	

*Tables I to V after form required by Local Government Board.

†Year of formation of Ilminster Urban District Council.

‡For the method of arriving at these figures see Annual Report for 1905.

TABLE II.

Vital Statistics of separate Localities in 1906 and previous years.

In small districts without recognised divisions of known population this table need not be filled up.

TABLE III.

(Act of 1889.) Cases of Notifiable Diseases.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE.	At all ages.	Under 1	1 to 5	5 to 15	15 to 25	25 to 65	65 and upw'ds
Erysipelas ...	2					2	
Scarlet fever	8		2	5	1		
Totals	10	0	2	5	1	2	0

TABLE IV.

Causes of, Ages at, Death during the Year.

CAUSES OF DEATH.	Deaths in the whole District at subjoined ages.						
	At all ages.	Under 1	1 to 5	5 to 15	15 to 25	25 to 65	65 and upw'ds
Diarrhœa ...	1	1					
Pulmonary Tuberculosis } Other Tubercular diseases }	2					2	
Cancer ...	2						2
Pneumonia ...	1					1	
Diseases and Accidents of parturition }	1					1	
Heart diseases	3					1	2
Senile decay ...	3						3
All other causes	6					2	4
All Causes	20	2	0	0	0	7	11

TABLE V.

Giving the Causes of Death of Children under 1 year
i.e.—the “Infantile Mortality.”

Diarrhœa 1, aged 7 months.
Meningitis 1, „ 6 „

= a Rate of 41·6 per 1,000 births registered.

Calculated from 48 births and an estimated population
of 2,297.

Zymotic Death Rate for the 7 chief epidemic diseases
= 0.

List of Nuisances Remedied during 1906.

Nuisance.	Defective Drainage.	Stone-ware Gullies in place of defective D traps.	Lime Washing.	Overflowing Cess-pools.	Choked Closets.	Total 42.
	12	8	10	2	3	
Nuisance.	Deposit of Refuse on Highway.	Dirty Farm-yards.	Foul Closets.	Nuisances from Ventilators.		Total 42.
	4	1	1	1		

GEO. W. WARRY,
Sanitary Inspector.

VITAL STATISTICS.

These present some remarkable peculiarities. The Death Rate both "at all ages" and "below one year" (infantile mortality) are probably amongst the lowest recorded in the United Kingdom. We have however, no scientific right for great self congratulation in this matter—our population is small, variations due to chance and epidemics have to be eliminated, and if we are too elated we risk corresponding ~~com~~^{de}pression when the rate jumps to the other extreme from causes such as epidemics, the why and wherefore of which we are decidedly ignorant.

Of the deaths, nine were males, eleven females. Of the births, the sexes were equal, 47 were legitimate. The continued low death rate from "the seven chief epidemic diseases" is very satisfactory, more especially the absence of typhoid, than which there is no surer criterion of good sanitation.

The Inhabited Houses number 591 as against 542 of Census 1901, but it is difficult to believe our population with the above rates can be much higher than that estimated (see Table 1).

INFECTIOUS AND CONTAGIOUS DISEASES.

These consisted of but two of those "notifiable" viz:—eight scarlet fever and two erysipelas. Five of the former occurred in three houses (one in one house and two each in the others) in the New Road district, during the earlier months of the year. It was not found possible to trace definitely the origin of the first case and there was no connection or common factor between the infected houses. There is a great tendency on the part of the public to exaggerate when it hears of several cases in a small district of a small area; and people would do well if they made enquiries at the proper quarters to find out

the true facts of the matter. Great harm is often done to business by careless gossip and exaggeration. In the houses of the three other cases were out-workers from the factories. Steps were taken to prevent dissemination by their means, but there is much difficulty in enforcing such orders and probably no sufficient care will be taken till the official penalty of a fine is inflicted. There is also a tendency to look upon the precautions taken as personal unkindness—but the individual must recognise some temporary inconvenience is to be undergone for the sake of the community; the person infected is a source of danger; and moreover the precautions advised are frequently advantageous, in the end, to the sufferer also.

INFLUENZA. This rather mysterious disorder after two years of comparative quiescence broke out with considerable vigour in November, it is still with us, and has been responsible for much danger and illness. It seems to flourish most where atmospheric conditions are those of dampness and mugginess, and to lessen with dryness and cold, although there are probably many more factors, of which little is known, concerned. It seems clearly to follow the lines of human intercourse, and case-to-case infection best explains the spread. Still, the difficulty of explaining its sudden epidemicity is very great, a difficulty however which it shares with such diseases as measles, mumps, etc. Amidst all the obscurity the correctness of one piece of advice appears certain, *i.e.*: do not try to "fight" it by keeping about, but go to bed early and stop there till you are better. This pays in the long run. The preventive measures that appear of some value are avoidance of badly ventilated and crowded rooms, isolation, fumigations of the rooms, and gargling of the throat with some suitable antiseptic. Most of the drugs recommended in the papers are probably more harmful than otherwise. Maintenance of good

general health is everything.

Some steps have been taken to secure the use of the *Steam Disinfector* of a neighbouring district, in certain cases.

SEWAGE FARM.

The farm has been inspected usually about once a month and has been fairly well managed. Complaints of sewage getting into the back streams have been received and the manager has made every effort to prevent this. It is probably caused by rats and moles burrowing under the surface and so causing sewage to leak out of the carriers. New carriers must be cut further inland.

WATER SUPPLY.

The Court Barton supply has somewhat failed during the summer months, a fact probably attributable to the extra water used, fresh connections and deficient rainfall, the reserve being too small to meet emergencies. The inhabitants near Cross appear to find useful the water collected from a spring on the top of the neighbouring hill; and, in spite of some question as to its liability of contamination there is no evidence of the water being otherwise than wholesome.

DISPOSAL OF REFUSE.

This may be considered fairly satisfactory. It is sufficiently out of the town and no complaints have been received respecting it. The residents in the districts of Lister's Hill and the Railway Station have made requests for its collection from their houses—not unreasonably.

DAIRIES AND COWSHEDS, ETC.

These have been inspected and kept under observation and the milk stores found satisfactory. The remarks made in previous Reports regarding hoarding up manure by the byres, and want

of lime-whiting, together with insufficient air spaces, bad floors, etc., apply still in one or two cases. The adoption of the By-laws which have recently been approved by the Local Government Board will in the course of time improve matters and give the Council's Officials more authority than in point of fact they at present possess. They differ but little from rules hitherto "unwritten," and if able to be enforced will prove of great value. Milk as an agent in the spread of tuberculosis has long been recognised by most authorities on the subject.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOP ACT.

Details of this as far as concerns Ilminster have been sent in a Special Report to the Home Office. There are, within the meaning of the Act, 8 Factories, 32 Workshops, and 6 Workplaces; there are 24 out-workers living within the Urban District who are attached to the 4 Collar Factories. An order has been made to systematically inspect their dwellings. This has been done, and with the exception of such minor defects as want of white-washing, deficient sanitary conveniences, no faults can be found.

The exact work demanded from the Medical Officer of Health by the Act is hardly clear in some cases and some of the demands are rather difficult to perform. On the whole the condition of the factories, workshops, and their workers, is very satisfactory.

METEOROLOGY.

The total rainfall for the year was 27·82 inches, a figure considerably below the average for the last ten years, and this was especially the case with December when the fall was but 1·42 in. January was the wettest with 5·16 in., September the driest with ·80. October had 24 days on which more than ·01 in. fell, June 7; and the total number of such days for the year

was 191. Rain, besides its value in replenishing wells and water-courses has a very decided power of bringing down suspended atmospheric impurities and so cleansing the atmosphere. For the figures I am indebted to Mr. Beckwith, of Laurel Bank.

GENERAL SANITATION.

There has been a steady improvement in the general sanitation of the district. Frequent inspections are made, all complaints thoroughly investigated and nuisances remedied as soon as possible. There is still a steady increase of new houses. The various Rates and varieties of diseases as shown in the Tables speak for themselves.

I am, gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

W. H. MAIDLOW, M.D., F.R.C.S.,

(Medical Officer of Health.)

Ilminster, January, 1907.



