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Contributors

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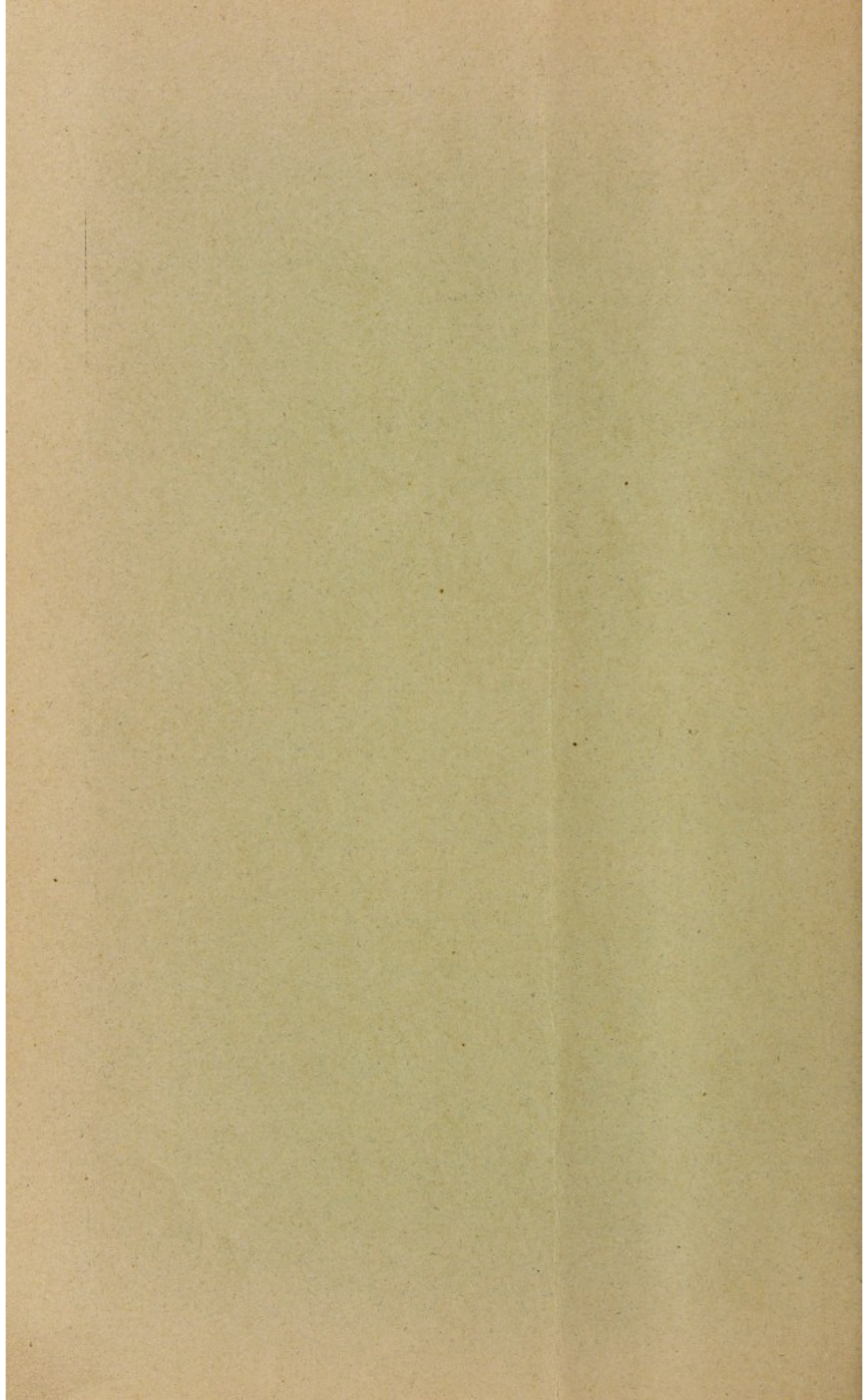


1898.

THE
ANNUAL REPORTS
OF THE
Medical Officer of Health
AND OF THE
Sanitary Inspector
FOR THE
PAIGNTON URBAN DISTRICT.

PAIGNTON :

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THE ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

For the year ending December 31st, 1898.

*To the Chairman and Councillors of the Paignton Urban
District Council.*

GENTLEMEN,

In presenting this my Eighth Annual Report I have again the pleasure of congratulating you on the continued healthiness and prosperity of the town.

The death rate is 12·3 per thousand per annum, and is a very satisfactory record, although it is 0·7 per thousand more than last year, but below the average of the last five years, which is 13·8 per thousand per annum.

The birthrate is 20·9 per thousand per annum, and a decrease on last year of 3·3 per thousand per annum; further it is less than the average of the last five years, which is 22·8 per thousand per annum.

The natural increase of the population, excess of births over deaths, was 71.

Paignton has no staple industry to induce the young to remain in the town, and our increase of population is due to new residents consisting largely of people in advanced life taking up their residence here.

The year has been notable for activity in works for the benefit of the town. The Paignton Improvement Act, obtained this year, should be of immense service, more especially so if the new bye-laws sanctioned are quickly made, and when made strictly carried out.

Negotiations for the purchase of the ground in Torbay Road are being carried on as quickly as legal forms will admit, and it is to be hoped that before next summer something will be done to remove this ugly eyesore. The sanitary clauses of the Act will prove of great advantage, more especially the one in relation to the removal of cases of infectious disease, which runs as follows, viz. :—“The words without proper lodging and accommodation in Sec. 124 of the Public Health Act of 1875 shall be construed to include any person without proper lodgings or accommodation having regard to the danger of infection to other persons in the same house, and that Section shall extend and apply to all persons suffering from any dangerous infectious disease and being in or upon any house or premises where such person cannot be effectually isolated, so as to prevent the spread of the disease.”

Another section of the Act provides that "any dairyman sending produce into the district, whether residing within or without the district, must notify to your Medical Officer of Health any case of infectious disease occurring either on his own premises or amongst his workpeople." Now also the proprietors of a laundry must furnish a list of their customers if desired to do so by your Medical Officer of Health, if he considers it necessary for the suppression of infectious disease.

The subject of tuberculosis has been much before the public of late, more particularly as to how to deal with cases of phthisis. I cannot advise that this disease be placed upon the list of notifiable diseases, but as the Council has supported me in applying Sec. 120 of the Public Health Act, 1875, which enables an authority on the receipt of a certificate from any registered medical practitioner "that the cleansing and disinfecting of any house, or part thereof, or of any articles therein likely to retain infection, would tend to prevent or check infectious disease," to disinfect. I think much good will be achieved by disinfecting, as after other infectious disease, all premises where any case of death has occurred from phthisis.

Now the public is better informed on the subject of tuberculosis, they will be prepared for some legislation for their protection in the control of the meat and milk supply, but some time must elapse before the public will be able to obtain assistance from Parliament. In the meantime, by self help, the public can do a good deal for themselves. Let it be understood that tuberculosis is a contagious disease and preventable, and that, seeing that phthisis, consumption, is the most common manifestation of the disease, and its cause is due probably to the inhalation of the tubercle bacillus in the form of dust, and that the natural foes to this tubercle bacillus are sunlight and fresh air, clean air, indoors and out of doors; then the public may be aroused to take more interest in their home surroundings, and to see to it that the sun has free access to their homes, that the house is thoroughly ventilated every day, and also that the air shall not be polluted by accumulation of refuse in their own back yards and gardens.

Perhaps here it will be well to issue a word of warning to the public, even at the expense of a little reiteration. It would be deplorable if, in our efforts to deal with this disease, needless suffering were caused to the unfortunate patients. No panic is necessary—a consumptive ought not to be shunned, nor by little acts of thoughtlessness made to feel uncomfortable. This disease is not communicable in the same way as scarlet fever or diphtheria by the exhalations

from the body. Let the sufferer and the public both grasp the fact that all the danger lies in the dried sputium being disseminated into the air in the form of dust, then care will be exercised to see that all their expectoration is destroyed. It does not require an Act of Parliament to make the Public understand that all sputium should be carefully destroyed, and that destruction by fire is the best, or that ALL milk should be boiled before using, or that all meat should be well cooked,—self help is the best help. District Councils can also do much in promoting the building of healthy dwellings, by insisting that the bye-laws are strictly carried out with regard to sub-soil drainage of damp sites, provision of ample air space, concreting of ground under dwellings, and efficient damp courses.

In common with most Medical Officers of Health I am in a difficulty as to the advice to give you with regard to making provision for the isolation of small pox, for should a case occur it is not desirable to use the present hospital.

If necessity arise I will do my best, with the authority you have given me, by resolution to deal with a case. I cannot but express my opinion that the last Vaccination Act is likely to cause very serious expense to the ratepayers.

Much good work has been done by putting in motion the Private Streets Works Act, but many more roads, especially back roads, remain to be dealt with.

The Housing of the Working Classes Act has been useful in obtaining the removal of an obstructive building, and a good public improvement effected; also several unsanitary buildings have been dealt with. At some future period I should like to see Millbrook Terrace opened up, so as to get through ventilation.

Inspections under the Workshops Act have been useful in preventing overcrowding.

Although last summer and autumn were again exceptionally dry, no serious inconvenience was experienced with regard to the water supply, and this I attribute to the care exercised in the management of distribution by the Water Superintendent; but houses are being so rapidly built that this question of water supply should receive your early serious consideration. There is no need for panic, but as soon as you receive the report of your expert, Mr. Baldwin Latham, some decision should be come to, as works of the character required will take some time to execute.

The work at the Isolation Hospital is being gradually finished, the boundary wall is nearly completed, the disinfectant is in place, and the other work and material is ordered for its completion. During the year 13 cases were

admitted—4 scarlet fever, 2 diphtheria, and 7 enteric fever. When the Isolation Hospital is finished, and with the powers given under the new Act, Paignton will be provided for dealing with infectious disease in a more effectual manner than most towns.

Surface
Drainage

The part of this work carried out so far has not been successful in preventing the occasional flooding of the Dartmouth Road district, but before any more money is spent I advise a most careful survey being made of the drainage, both foul and surface, of this particular part of the town.

Preston.

Many of the houses here have been connected with the new drainage system, but a few still remain to be dealt with, and this work should be pushed on.

Births.

There were 160 births registered during the year—boys 90, girls 70,—giving a birth rate on an estimated population to the middle of the year of 7,700 of 20·9 per thousand per annum.

Deaths.

The deaths registered during the year were 95, of these 41 were males and 54 females, giving a death rate of 12·3 per 1000 per annum.

The following table shows the number of deaths at the various ages :—

Under 1 year of age	...	..	...	...	19
1 year and under 5	...	...	...	...	5
5 „ „ 15	...	...	...	...	0
15 „ „ 25	...	...	...	...	4
25 „ „ 65	...	...	...	...	32
65 and upwards	...	...	...	...	35
					—
					95

Of 27 deaths 16 were over 70 years, 10 over 80, and one 90.

The following is a summary of the causes of death registered during the year.

Diarrhœa	...	...	...	...	3
Enteric fever	...	...	...	...	1
Influenza	...	...	...	...	4
Phthisis	...	...	...	...	6
Cancer	...	...	...	...	4
Diseases of the organs of respiration	...	...	...	...	17
Diseases of the organs of circulation	...	...	...	...	9
Diseases of the nervous system	...	...	...	...	17
Injuries	...	...	...	...	3
Other diseases	...	...	...	...	31
					—
					95

The deaths registered as due to zymotic disease were 4; of these 3 were due to Diarrhœa, giving a death rate from all zymotic diseases of 0·5 per 1000 per annum. This is very much below the average of all England.

The infant mortality was 19, and, measured by the proportion of one year and under to the number of births registered was 118 per 1000, and is an increase on last year, but well below the all England average.

The following comparative table of vital statistics will be interesting to you.

VITAL STATISTICS FOR 1898.

	England and Wales.	Paignton.	} per 1000 living
Birth rate ...	29·4 ...	20·9	
Death rate ...	17·6 ...	12·3	
Zymotic rate	2·22 ...	0·5	
Infant mortality per 1000 births registered	161 ...	118	

The following notifications were received during the year, viz. :-

Scarlet fever	...	...	...	...	7
Enteric fever	...	...	...	...	9
Diphtheria	...	...	...	...	5
Erysipelas	...	...	...	...	7
					—
					28

One notification was received under the new Paignton Improvement Act of a case of enteric fever occurring on the premises of a farmer living outside the district, but sending milk into the town. The Council instructed me to visit this farm and report. At the inspection the Sanitary Inspector and I found the water supply very open to contamination, and the Medical Officer of Health of the district was communicated with.

Only 7 cases were notified during the year, 4 of which were treated at the Isolation Hospital. All made good recoveries. No return cases occurred.

Notification was received of 5 cases, 2 of which, adults, were treated at the Isolation Hospital. My firm opinion is that this disease will prove to have some close connection with birds and animals, and I should advise a crusade against the keeping of poultry in confinement in small back yards, and also the very frequent removal of manure from stable yards, particularly when in close proximity to dwelling houses.

School
Attendance,
in relation to

In no case was I able to connect this disease with attendance in our public schools, but representation was made as to the desirability of having the drainage of the schools overhauled, and at the request of the School Board Mr. Crathorn, the Sanitary Inspector, made a thorough examination. Many and serious defects were found in the drainage, all of which were remedied, and in one case practically a new system was laid down. Now I can feel confident that should cases occur amongst the scholars, it will not be due to any sanitary defect of the public schools.

Enteric
Fever.

Nine cases were notified—this would seem a large number—but ought all these cases to have occurred, could they have been prevented?

The cases fall naturally into three groups:—

1st group.—Three cases notified in January. These were the two children and nurse of a case notified in December, 1897. Paignton had its Isolation Hospital, but you had not the power to compel removal of the cases there. Not until the father had two children down with fever, as well as his wife, would he submit, and even then, when it was manifest to anybody that there was not efficient isolation, [the two children were in a small room without a fireplace and with a very small window] a magistrates' order had to be obtained before all three were taken to the Isolation Hospital. Later, the nurse, who was also washerwoman for these people, fell ill. To me it seems plain that these three cases might and ought to have been prevented.

2nd group.—Two cases notified in June. These were two fishermen working together; both were in the habit of collecting and eating large quantities of mussels, three or four quarts daily, collected in the Paignton Harbour, through which a stream runs, and in which they washed their mussels. At one point our main sewer crosses this stream, in fact, the two culverts are immediately one upon the other, and unfortunately there was a sinkage of the fresh water culvert, which had recently been relaid, and with this sinkage came a fracture of the sewer culvert, thus permitting contamination of the stream. As soon as this leak was discovered it was remedied, and no fresh case has occurred attributable to this cause, but here also we had a secondary case. Neither of these men would go to the Isolation Hospital, and in one case the nurse, sister to one of the young men, was taken ill with fever. This secondary case was removed to the Isolation Hospital, and is another example of locking the stable door too late.

3rd group.—This group consists of three isolated cases: No. 1, an adult who was working in a neighbouring town came home ill with fever. No. 2, also an adult, who had certainly been visiting out of the town well within the

incubation period of the disease, and no unsanitary condition to account for the illness was found in the house from which the case was removed. No. 3, a young adult, a domestic servant, and the illness was clearly traceable to a contaminated well, which I had closed at once, and town water put into the house.

This disposes of all the cases notified; four of these cases were due to carelessness or ignorance, perhaps both, and clearly would not have occurred had use been made of the Isolation Hospital; certainly they were not due directly to any insanitary condition of the town. Two cases were the result of an accident, a burst in the sewer; and an interesting point here arises as to the length of time the typhoid bacillus will survive in sewers; fully six months elapsed between the two sets of cases. Another point here is also interesting; many people collect mussels in the Paignton Harbour and eat them, and although warned, continued to go on as usual, yet no other case occurred. This I think points directly to the cause being washing the mussels in an infected stream. One case was traced clearly to a contaminated well, which was closed; thus leaving only one case the origin of which is doubtful. Hitherto Paignton has been singularly free from this disease, and with your Isolation Hospital and the power to compel removal of cases having regard to any chance of spreading to any inmate of the house where a case occurs, the public will have increased confidence in coming to your town.

The following is the report of Mr. Revell the Vaccination Officer:—

Births registered during 1898 in Paignton	160.
Successfully vaccinated	96
Died unvaccinated	13
Posponed by Medical Certificate	2
Insusceptible	2
Conscientious objectors	2
Unvaccinated	45
	160

Most of the 45 unvaccinated are under 4 months old but whether many of them will claim exemption under the new Vaccination Act remains to be seen.

Mr. Crathorn the Sanitary Inspector will deal fully in his report on the routine work done during the year.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

Chas. W. VICKERS, D.P.H.

February 20th, 1899.

Medical Officer of Health.

Routine
Work.

THE ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
SANITARY INSPECTOR

For the year ending December 31st, 1898.

— • —
*To the Chairman and Councillors of the Paignton Urban
District Council.*

GENTLEMEN,

I have great pleasure in submitting to you my fourth Annual Report, by which you will see that the town is making continual and steady progress both as regards the building industry, and sanitary improvements generally.

Drains.

Many houses during the year have been tested both with the Water and Smoke tests, and although a good number were found defective, which were all put in order under my supervision, I am glad to say that not nearly so many as formerly were in bad condition. In some cases on account of the drains being so badly laid and others being only old stone drains, and land drain pipes, it was found necessary to have them taken up, and proper stoneware pipe drains substituted. There still remains a large number of Mason's, D, and Bell traps and in the case of the two former when found defective and have to be taken out, proper Interceptor and Gully traps are put in their places. In the case of the Bell traps whenever found they are condemned as being dangerous to health. Nearly all the houses on the Torquay Road leading to Preston which were compelled to drain into cesspools, have been provided with new systems of drainage and carried into the new sewer; there only remains I think four properties not connected, and if they are not done very shortly I shall have to ask the Council to take proceedings against the owners to have the work carried out. I have refrained from taking this course sooner, as I have found in some cases it has meant a large outlay to some of the owners of small property for which they were unprepared.

Great improvement still continues to take place in the sanitary arrangements of the houses let in lodgings and apartments ; several owners of large houses have had the drainage and sanitary arrangements all taken out, the drains remodelled, and sanitary fittings of modern type put in, so as to put the premises into thorough sanitary condition, not on account of any serious defects being found but so that the houses should be above suspicion in this respect. Several new water closets have been erected. Many pan contains and long hopper closet pans have been taken out, and replaced by others of better and more modern type, all washdown pattern. All soil pipes, where found defective in the walls have been taken out and carried outside the building. Water waste preventers have been fitted to a good number of W. C's, which were without water. In several instance I have found the waste pipe from lavatories emptying into the soil pipe which is very objectionable and dangerous, and would advise householders to pay particular attention to these waste pipes, and if unable to see where they go, to have them examined as soon as possible. The Council, having approved of plans for the erection of sanitary conveniences for the Public Park, which I hope soon to see erected, I would suggest that as soon as possible others should be erected in different parts of the town, as they are not only necessary for the centre but also for other parts of the district.

Several samples of well water have been taken and handed to the Medical Officer of Health for analysis. In one case the well was closed, and in another where the water was contaminated by surface water from the road draining into it, was cleaned out, the pump, well, and stonework of the well raised, the ground excavated to some depth around the outside and well puddled with clay ; since the completion of the work samples have been taken and found upon examination to be good. Town water has been laid on to some houses having no supply upon the premises. Where water cisterns have been found uncovered notices have been given to have covers provided. In many instances I have found cisterns very dirty through neglect of having them cleaned, and I would seriously impress upon consumers generally the risk they put themselves to by not keeping them clean and covered over, so as to prevent contamination.

The scavenging of house refuse is being carried on with very few complaints, and the same is being carted for filling up the Park. As the summer approaches it is very necessary that it be kept covered over as soon as tipped so as to

save any cause of complaint. The carts having to go over the level crossing and being compelled at times to wait at the gates it is very necessary that covers be provided for them.

Infectious Diseases.

All houses in which any case of Infectious Disease has been notified have been visited by me, disinfectants have been supplied, and after recovery or removal to the Isolation Hospital the houses have been disinfected, and where considered necessary to strip and clean the rooms, notice has been served on the owners and the works carried out.

Daires and Cowhouses.

All the Daires and Milkshops that are registered in the district have been periodically inspected by me, and the same are kept in fairly good condition. Some of the Cowhouses are very dark and in a dilapidated condition, and if the cows are to be kept healthy they should be kept in light and well ventilated houses and I would suggest that in every case they should have not less than 800 cubic feet of air space per cow. I would also ask that steps be taken to revise the Register this year.

Bakehouses.

These have been visited several times during the year, and although in one or two instances I have required that whitewashing be done, on the whole they are kept in good condition.

Slaughterhouses.

These are kept fairly clean as regards limewashing, but upon several occasions I have found a quantity of offal and manure about the premises which should have been removed. One license has been granted during the year. Every new license granted will make it more difficult and expensive when it becomes necessary to have a public slaughter house and I believe such provision will be made compulsory in the near future.

New houses.

I have examined and tested the drains of all new houses that have been completed, many of which are provided with inspection chambers, and now that many people find the advantage of them, I hope that soon we shall have them in all cases where new buildings are erected. Nearly double the number of houses were erected than in 1897.

Food and Drugs Act. Notices.

Several samples of milk were taken and forwarded to the County Analyst, all which were certified as genuine.

Where found necessary notices have been served for the abatement of nuisances, removal of animals, offensive accumulations, etc. In some cases it was found necessary to apply to the Council for leave to serve legal notices and in nearly every case they proved effective. Legal notice having been served in one case of overcrowding the nuisance was abated. Two houses have been closed as unfit for human habitation, in one of which it was found necessary to get an

order from the Court to close the same, which after being thoroughly cleansed and put in order, an application was made to the magistrates to reopen the same for occupation; no opposition was made by the Council and the order was granted.

Herein I have submitted a tabulated report of some of the works carried out during the year :—

Complaints received and attended to	...	31
Houses inspected	... ..	520
Notices preliminary	... ..	25
„ legal	... ..	16
Drains tested	... ..	70
„ choked	... ..	15
„ defective repaired	... ..	16
„ taken up and relaid	... ..	20
„ new system of drainage	... ..	23
Interceptors where drains not trapped	...	8
„ in place of defective Mason's traps	...	16
Gullies in place of D and Bell traps	... ..	85
Washdown W.Cs. in place of defective pan containers	... ..	19
Washdown W.C.'s in place of defective long hoppers	... ..	29
Water waste preventers fitted	... ..	35
Soil pipes defective taken out of wall	... ..	15
„ „ repaired	... ..	17
Rain and overflow pipes taken out of drain	... ..	50
Ashpits repaired	... ..	12
Galvanized bins	... ..	20
Offensive accumulations removed	... ..	10
Animals removed	... ..	11
Water closets built	... ..	6
Town water laid on to old houses	... ..	6
Infectious cases visited	... ..	28
Houses disinfected	... ..	26
„ cleansed	... ..	10
Cesspools closed	... ..	6
Water samples taken	... ..	4
„ contaminated	... ..	2
„ cisterns covered	... ..	18
Slaughter houses cleared	... ..	3
„ „ new license	... ..	1
Cowhouses cleaned	... ..	4
Bakehouses	... ..	6
New houses tested	... ..	68
Letters and reports	... ..	250

In conclusion I am happy to say that great improvement has and is taking place in respect to private roads, and that powers have been conferred upon the Council under the Paignton Improvement Act 1898 to compel secondary access to buildings for the removal of refuse, providing lavatories, filling up cesspools, defination of new buildings, etc., which will greatly add to the sanitary condition of the town, I would again respectfully ask that the Council will make Bye laws under the Public Healths Amendment Act 1890, in respect to the removal of offensive matter through the streets during certain hours of the day, the better cleansing and paving of back yards, the alteration of the drainage of any building, the supply of water to W.Cs., etc. ; and would also like to call attention to section 27 of the same Act, which provides for the keeping clean of back roads and courts, where any court or passage leading to the back of several buildings not being a highway and repairable by the inhabitants at large, is not kept regularly swept and kept clean and free from rubbish to the satisfasfaction of the Council, they may have the work carried out and charge the occupiers for the same.

I remain,

Your obedient Servant,

J. CRATHORN, C.S.I.,

Sanitary Inspector.

February 20th, 1899.