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TORPOINT
Urban District Council

ANNUAL REPORT

FOR 1905

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

AND

Sanitary Inspector.

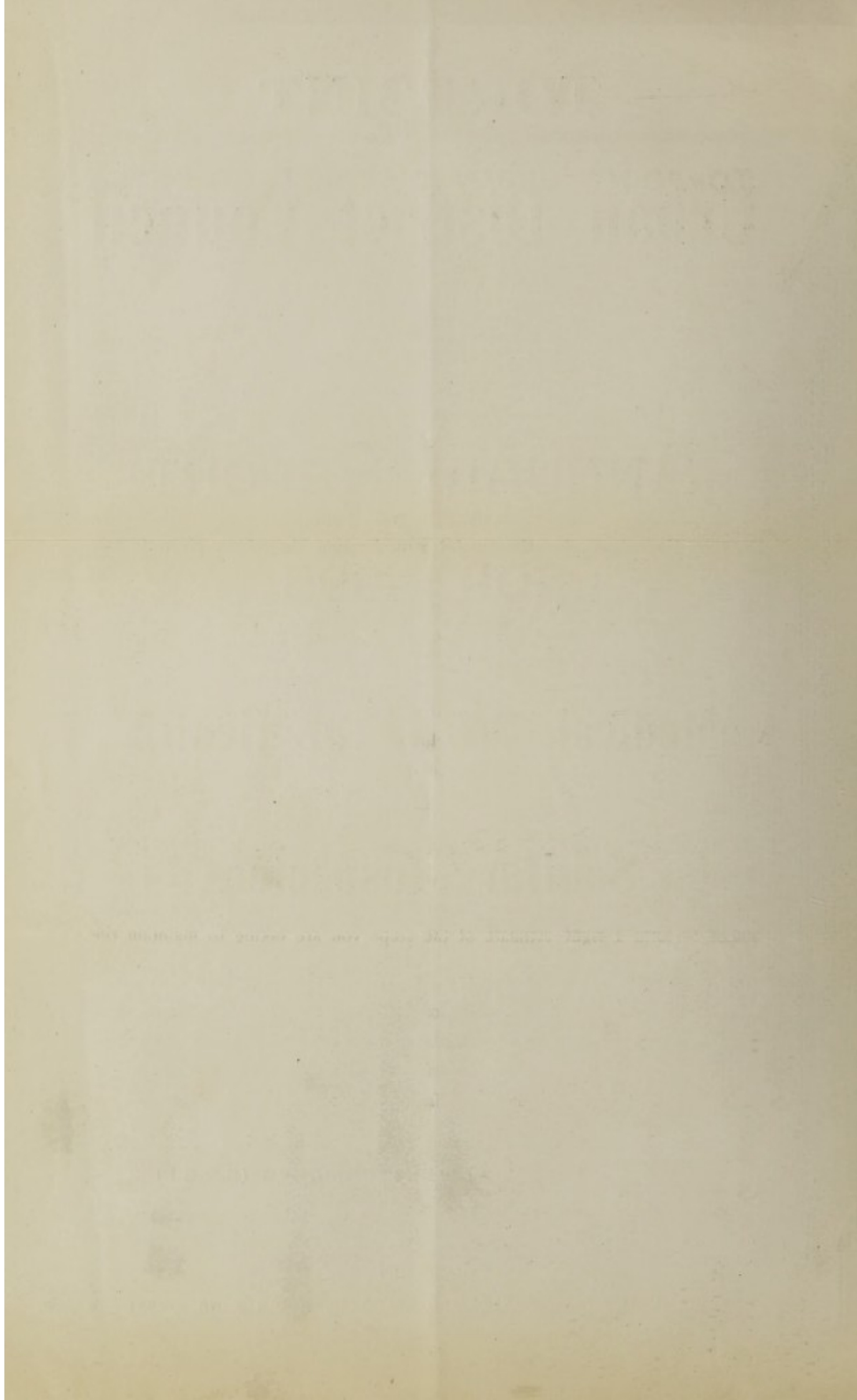
SYDNEY G. VINTER,

D.P.H., M.R.C.S. Eng., L.R.C.P. Lond.

W. BRITTON-JONES (C.R.S.I.)

Plymouth :

FRANK R. THOMPSON, PRINTER AND STATIONER, 31 OLD TOWN STREET



TO THE
TORPOINT URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Gentlemen,

I beg to submit to you the second annual Report relating to the health of your district.

It will be seen that Torpoint still maintains its right to be regarded as a very healthy district, which indeed, its situation and the occupations of its inhabitants would lead one to expect.

I wish to tender my thanks to the Council, but especially to the Sanitary Committee, for the careful consideration they have given to any matters I have had to refer to them. I wish also to thank your Surveyor, Mr. Frank A. Clark, for his help and advice, and also the Sanitary Inspector, Mr. Britton-Jones, whose report accompanies this, for the assiduous manner in which he has carried out his duties.

I hope to attend the annual Congress of the Royal Sanitary Institute in Bristol next July, and am glad to learn that the Sanitary Inspector also proposes to be there, such congresses are very helpful to those engaged in Public Health work.

The necessity for sending copies of this Report to the Local Government Board and to the County Council leads to the inclusion of some points already well known to yourselves. but which may help those bodies to form a right estimate of the steps you are taking to maintain the health of the District.

It is a source of satisfaction to your Public Health department that Mr. Smith, whom, on our recommendation, you allowed Mr. Britton-Jones to take as a pupil, has been appointed Sanitary Inspector to the Urban District of Sheerness from among a large number of candidates.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

SYDNEY G. VINTER,

Medical Officer of Health.

LOCAL TOPOGRAPHY.

The Torpoint Urban District is roughly a triangular piece of land bounded on one side by the Hamoaze, and on the other by the St. John's Creek, the base being the division between this district and that of St. Germans; it is represented by a line drawn from Efford's Bridge by district road to main road, thence by main road to a district road leading to Wilcove Creek.

It gets the sea air blown across from Maker and the Whitsands and moor air from Dartmoor; the Hamoaze around it is three quarters of a mile in width.

The area of the district is 1,324 acres.

The occupation of its inhabitants is found almost exclusively either in the Royal Navy or the Devonport Dockyard.

HOUSE ACCOMMODATION.

The present number of inhabited houses is 704, compared with 689 last year, an increase of 15, the present population is estimated at 4,200 as compared with 4,104 last year, an increase of 96.

House to house inspection was carried out of the older properties; one house was closed on my complaint to the owner, and will be put in thorough repair before further use, no application of the Act was needed.

During the year 60 houses have been repaired and put into proper Sanitary Condition by the owners after notice from the Authority as compared with 95 in 1904. A just cause of complaint in 14 of these houses was that the work had already been done within the last four or five years and should not have required to be done again.

There was, however, prior to your becoming an Urban Council no resident Sanitary Inspector, and inspection during the progress of the work was impracticable

DRAINAGE.

The principal drainage work carried out was that behind Grosvenor Terrace, at a cost of £72

The proper ventilation of sewers at the higher levels by shafts is much needed, an undue pressure of gas is otherwise liable to exist at the top of the town.

PLACES OVER WHICH THE COUNCIL HAVE SUPERVISION.

These as far as they occur in this district, omitting schools which are reported upon separately, consist of slaughter houses, dairies, cowsheds and milkshops, bakehouses, factories, and workshops. They have all been inspected, and I am glad to report a very considerable improvement since my last inspection in those cases where improvement was called for. They have not been registered pending the publication of the bye-laws. I would like again to impress upon the owners of slaughter houses that no application for a license will be entertained for premises which are used also as stables. In one case a cowshed consists of the slightly extended end of stables, this also cannot be registered.

With these exceptions, the buildings are in all cases suitable for the purposes for which they are used, and due care has been taken with regards to cleanliness, white-washing, &c.

SCHOOLS.—At the Wesleyan Schools the whole of the drains have been relaid, intercepted, and ventilated.

THE NATIONAL SCHOOLS.—These, which were a source of anxiety to my predecessor, continue in an unsatisfactory condition, in June an epidemic of follicular tonsillitis, confined to the children attending these schools caused me to inspect them, I attributed the illness to the insanitary condition of the children's offices, they are cramped, covered in by class-rooms, and have a most offensive ammoniacal odour, I drew the attention of the managers to this; in August I again inspected them, I then learnt that the smell in the Infants' School was so offensive on one or two days that the classes had to be taken out of doors, this was caused by a soakage through the wall of the Infants' School from the Boys' Urinal, this has been partially remedied by the extension of the impervious slabs of slate, but owing to no half-channel glazed pipe or other device having been placed at

the angle between the pavement and the slabs, the wall in the Infants' School is still damp.

A Sub-committee of your Sanitary Committee was appointed to inspect the premises with me, they were unanimously of opinion that the school offices were inadequate, and that they should be much enlarged and removed to some more suitable spot away from the class-rooms.

At the St. Germans' Workhouse, which is in your district, the Guardians have built a suitable lavatory and w.c. with cross ventilation, to replace a w.c. in the Women's Ward, which was a cupboard-like arrangement opening directly into the ward.

WATER.

The Water-works are owned by the Urban District Council. A Bill was brought before a Committee of the House of Lords early in the year to obtain sanction for drawing a supply from the Withey Brook, a distance of 26 miles. The Bill however failed, owing to the withdrawal of Admiralty support, the Admiralty having decided not to proceed with the building of barracks on land acquired by them at Trevel for that purpose, this has had a retarding effect upon the growth of the town, the possibility of increasing the supply from other neighbouring sources is being considered.

I am pleased that steps have been taken to increase the thickness of the sand at the filter beds, which has in the past been only 8 inches or less, it is the fine sand only which has to be taken into account in estimating the removal of organisms and efficiency of a filter bacteriologically. It probably should form a layer not less than 3 feet to 3 feet 6 inches in thickness; by increasing the thickness of the sand, and thus reducing the rapidity of filtration, increased efficiency is obtained; shallow filters also require more frequent scraping than the deeper ones, due to the greater head available in the deeper filters, and cause more interference with the zooglœa mass which forms on the surface, and which does not become effective for two or three days after removal of the top layer of sand; to this gelatinous layer great importance is now attached.

There are at present 36 houses which use wells instead of the town supply, 4 less than last year, three having been closed on account of giving rise to typhoid, and the fourth on account of shallowness and contamination.

A pipe for emptying the filter beds without interfering with the clear water chamber has been placed at a cost of £20, so as to improve the supply to higher levels.

NUISANCES.

The long-standing nuisance caused by the unloading of town refuse, brought from the neighbouring towns for agricultural purposes, has been remedied by the bye-law which states that

“No person shall unload or deposit within two hundred yards from any street or from any building used for human habitation, or as a school or place of public resort, or in which any person is employed in any manufacture, trade, or business, any filth emitting a stench and brought to the place of unloading or deposit for the purpose of being removed therefrom.”

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

There have been 24 cases of infectious disease notified during the year, 2 of these were diphtheria, 5 erysipelas, 9 scarlet fever, and 8 typhoid.

Of the 9 cases of scarlet fever 7 occurred in the first quarter of the year, 2 towards the end of the year; 7 of the cases were clearly traced to contact with scarlet fever in other districts, 2 were contracted in this district in houses where there was already a case, in one case a child and in the second an aunt being the second case.

Both cases of diphtheria were very slight.

Of the 8 cases of typhoid, 3 were caused by contaminated wells, the water in each of these cases was analysed by the Clinical Research Society and found to be unfit for drinking purposes, though in one case the water had a deceptive, bright and clear appearance. Defective drains accounted for 2 cases. With regard to 2 of the remaining 3, they were undoubtedly caused by the eating of shell fish which had been picked up in the Millbrook Creek, the Medical Officer of Health for Devonport wrote to me on June 8th telling me that he had some cases in Devonport which he attributed to this cause, and asking me whether I had had a similar experience. The attention of the St. Germans Rural District Council in whose district the Creek lies has been already drawn to the matter. The remaining case was a contact case contracted from one of these.

I have received two notices from other districts that persons residing in Torpoint had been in contact with those who had since developed small-pox. There has been a small but steady series of cases occurring in the Three Towns, and in case we should be unfortunate enough to have a case in Torpoint I made enquiries of the neighbouring Sanitary Authorities to learn whether they would be prepared to take a case for us. Plymouth and Devonport decline, but Stonehouse is hoping to acquire a training brig for the purpose of a small-pox ship and the Medical Officer of Health tells me that he has spoken to his Sanitary Committee on the subject. They find that arrangements are so far from being sufficiently advanced that they cannot at present entertain my application, but in the event of their acquiring a ship they will be pleased to state terms. At present they do not know what the probable cost of maintenance will be, but there is no doubt it will be reasonable.

A Joint Committee of the St. Germans, Saltash and Torpoint Sanitary Authorities have met to consider the possibility of erecting a joint Infectious Diseases Hospital; while it is recognised that a single hospital for several Authorities is likely to be more economical and also more efficient, owing to its more constant use, so far no suitable site has been found, the difficulty being to find a spot sufficiently accessible to these different Authorities.

VITAL STATISTICS.

Appended to the report are the various tables of Vital Statistics required by the Local Government Board and the Home Office, which this year includes a table showing the incidence of mortality among children under one year of age, this for last year was 7 or 51·85 per 1000 births, and as compared with 132 per 1000 births for the whole country in 1903, the last published return of the Register General; the Register General's figures for 1903 for the whole country are also inserted in Table I for the sake of comparison.

THE MIDWIVES' ACT.

The County Council is itself the Local Supervising Authority under the Act, as long so that remains so, the midwives in the District are practically without the supervision which the act intended. In case

of stillbirths, for instance, where a registered medical practitioner is not in attendance, it is directed by the Rules of the Central Midwives' Board, framed under the Midwives' Act that the midwife shall, as soon as possible after the occurrence of a stillbirth, notify the same to the local Supervising Authority, which is at Truro, thus no opinion is obtained, except that of the midwife, that all that was possible was done to encourage the viability of the child. There is also no periodical inspection of the midwife's home or appliances. The Medical Officers of health of the various districts in the County were called together during the year at Truro, to discuss the working of the Act, and the incompleteness of its working was evident.

SYDNEY G. VINTER,

D.P.H., M.R.C.S. ENG., L.R.C.P. LOND.,

Medical Officer of Health.

Factories, Workshops, Laundries, Workplaces, and Homework.

Number of Inspections, including those made by Sanitary Inspector: 22

DEFECTS FOUND.

	Found.	Remedied.
Sanitary accommodation—Insufficient ...	1	About to be remedied.

HOMEWORK.

Addresses of Out-workers :		(Forwarded to other Authorities ...	0
		(Received from other Authorities ...	1

WORKSHOPS on the Register, (S 131) at the end of the year :

Bakehouses ...					6
Plumber's Workshops ...					2
Carpenters ...					5
Tailors ...					2
Bootmakers ...					1
Blacksmiths ...					1
Dressmakers ...					4
Saddlers ...					1
				Total	22

TABLE II.

Vital Statistics of Whole District during 1905 and previous Years.

TORPOINT URBAN DISTRICT.

YEAR	Population estimated to Middle of each Year.	BIRTHS.		Total Deaths Registered in the District.				Total Deaths in Public Institutions in the District	Deaths of Non-residents registered in Public Institutions in the District	Deaths of Residents registered in Public Institutions beyond the District	Nett 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	Number	Rate					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
United Kingdom 1903			27.9		132.0							15.8
Torpoint Urban District created in 1904	4104	163	39.7	13	76.07	68	16.5	6	5	0	63	15.3
1905	4104	135	32.89	7	51.85	66	16.08	18	12	0	53	12.9

Area of District in acres, (exclusive of area covered by water)	...	...	1324
Total Population at all Ages	...	(Census 1901)	3404
Number of Inhabited Houses	...	" "	549
Average Number of persons per house	" "	" "	6.2

TABLE III.

Cases of Infectious Disease notified during the Year 1905

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES.	CASES NOTIFIED IN WHOLE DISTRICT.					
	At all ages	Under 1	1 to 5	5 to 15	15 to 25	25 to 65
Small-pox	...	...	...
Cholera	...	...	...
Diphtheria	2				1	1
Membranous Croup	...	...	...
Erysipelas	5					5
Scarlet Fever	9		1	6		2
Typhus Fever	...	...	...
Enteric Fever	8		1	4	1	2
Relapsing Fever...	...	...	...
Continued Fever	...	...	...
Puerperal Fever	...	...	...
Plague	...	...	...
TOTALS	24		2	10	2	10

TABLE IV.

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

CAUSES OF DEATH.	Deaths at the subjoined ages of "Residents" whether occurring in or beyond the District.						
	All ages	Under 1 Year	1 and under 5	5 and under 15	15 and under 25	25 and under 65	65 and upwards
	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Small pox							
Measles							
Scarlet fever							
Whooping cough							
Diphtheria and Membranous croup							
Croup							
Fever—Typhus							
Enteric							
Other continued							
Epidemic influenza	1						1
Cholera							
Plague							
Diarrhœa	1	1					
Enteritis	3	2				1	
Puerperal fever							
Erysipelas							
Other septic diseases							
Phthisis, (Pulmonary Tuberculosis)	8	1			1	6	
Other Tubercular diseases	1					1	
Cancer, malignant disease	5					3	2
Bronchitis	4					1	3
Pneumonia	2				1		1
Pleurisy	2		1			1	
Other diseases of Respiratory organs							
Alcoholism, Cirrhosis of liver	2					1	1
Venereal diseases							
Premature birth							
Diseases and accidents of parturition							
Heart diseases	7				1	5	1
Accidents	1					1	
Suicides							
All other causes	16	4			1	1	10
All causes	53	8	1	0	4	21	19

TABLE V.

Infantile Mortality During the Year 1905.

CAUSES OF DEATH.	Under 1 week.	1-2 weeks.	2-3 weeks.	3-4 weeks.	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 1 year.
All Causes—	3					2	1	1						1		6
Certified																
Uncertified																
Common Infectious Diseases																
Small-pox																
Chicken-pox																
Measles																
Scarlet Fever																
Diphtheria: Croup																
Whooping Cough																
Diarrhœal Diseases																
Diarrhœa, all forms						1										1
Enteritis						1	1									2
Gastritis, Gastro-intestinal Catarrh																
Wasting Diseases																
Premature Birth																
Congenital Defects	2															2
Injury at Birth																
Want of Breast-milk																
Atrophy, Debility, Marasmus																
Tuberculous Diseases																
Tuberculous Meningitis																
Tuberculous Peritonitis																
Tabes Mesenterica																
Other Tuberculous Diseases								1								1
Erysipelas																
Syphilis																
Rickets																
Meningitis														1		1
Convulsions	1															1
Bronchitis																
Laryngitis																
Pneumonia																
Suffocation, overlying																
Other causes																
	3					2	1	1						1		8

Births in the Year: Legitimate 134. Illegitimate 1.

Deaths from all causes at all ages: 54

Report of the Sanitary Inspector,

For the Year 1905.

TO THE TORPOINT URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL,

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present for your consideration, my Annual Report for the year 1905.

Over three hundred premises have been visited during the year, (several premises having required to be visited many times while the work was in progress), and 116 sanitary amendments have been made.

Number of Drains relaid or repaired	...	...	61
„ W.C.'s Flushed	...	...	11
„ Houses newly supplied with Town water			4
„ New W.C.'s built	..	...	3
„ Refuse receptacles provided	...	...	7
„ Houses cleansed, disinfected, and lime-washed			20
„ Old, exposed and dangerous wells filled in or covered	...	...	5
„ Houses found with defective ventilation under the floors and remedied			5
		Total	116

Several courtyards have also been relaid or repaired.

It is indeed gratifying to be able to again report so many improvements without having had to take action in a single case, and we have cause to be pleased with the amount of work accomplished, as the work of converting a Rural into an Urban District cannot be carried out all at once, it being difficult for some to realize that we have greater powers and must be far more particular over Sanitary matters than hitherto.

I am pleased to report, that owing to the complaint made to the St. Germans Rural District Council of the unsatisfactory condition of the Sanitary arrangements in the female infirmary at the workhouse, it has been remedied, and a very fine improvement has been made there by the building of a wing containing a w.c., lavatory, and wash-up trough.

I have to again call attention to the cleansing and lime-washing of the schools, which is not done so often as I think necessary.

The new Wesleyan School for Infants has been completed, and been in use now for some time; this has allowed of the construction of additional sanitary conveniences, and also the removal of two old W.C.'s, which were under the staircase, and very poorly ventilated; the whole of the drainage in the old schools has been relaid, and is now intercepted and ventilated.

These are great improvements, and were much needed, and with a little alteration, to the Urinal in the Boy's school, would be all that could be desired.

I am sorry to say the Sanitary accommodation at the National schools are far from satisfactory, and is the subject of a special report by the Medical Officer of Health.

Great trouble is still experienced from badly constructed ash-pits, and the keeping of fowls; I have not pressed these points very much, except where I have received complaints of nuisances existing, owing to the absence of bye-laws.

As soon as possible, I intend to make a house-to-house inspection of the whole District; I have inspected a portion at the bottom of the town, but owing to so many defects, thus discovered, and other duties taking up so much time, I have been unable to devote as much attention to this matter as I should wish.

I am pleased to report that the work of collecting the house refuse has been carried out by the contractor regularly and efficiently, no complaints having been received, except from the contractor as to ashpits.

At present the collection is made once a week; I find that in many cases, such as common courts, business houses, and where the accumulations are large, it would be desirable and beneficial if the collections could be made twice a week.

During the summer, when the water-cart was in use, I used a Pine disinfectant, this I found to have been of great benefit, causing the roads to remain moist longer, and the general effect was greatly appreciated by the inhabitants.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

All cases of Infectious Diseases reported have been visited, and instructions given as to isolation, &c.; disinfectants have also been supplied, and when the patients have recovered, the premises have been fumigated.

I should like to mention that I feel the need of the Formalin Sprayer for disinfecting purposes, which I mentioned in my last report.

SLAUGHTER HOUSES.

The Slaughter Houses have been regularly inspected, and are kept fairly clean; up to the present the owners have not been called upon to register their houses, owing to the bye-laws not having been adopted; this has now been done, and as soon as the bye-laws are printed, the owners will be called upon to register, and we shall be enabled to prevent the undesirable practice of using the places as stables, coach-houses, &c., and overcome any defect that may exist.

DAIRIES, COWSHEDS AND MILKSHOPS.

I am pleased to report that the cowsheds are kept regularly cleansed and limewashed, I have visited them very frequently and have upon nearly every occasion found them in good condition; there are one or two minor defects which I hope will be remedied now that the bye-laws have been adopted.

The Dairies and Milkshops have also been visited, and are now well kept and clean, as are also the utensils in use.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOPS ACT 1901.

Under this Act 22 work places have been visited, including 6 bake-houses, as against 20 last year; these have all been found in fair condition; there is an absence of proper sanitary accommodation for workpeople in 4 cases, and notices requiring this to be provided have been issued.

SEWERS.

During the past year the sewers have given very little trouble in the way of repairs or chokeage, the greatest troubles arose from the shortage of water which caused a great deal of loss of time and expense in pumping water for flushing purposes, we were consequently unable to flush quite so frequently, and a few complaints of bad smells arising

from the manhole were received, to overcome this I added disinfectants to the water which greatly improved matters.

A new manhole has been made in the sewer, where the sewer from Barrossa Place joins the sewer in Ferry Street ; this is a great improvement, and has enabled us to clear this portion of the sewer, which has been very bad for some considerable time.

The ventilating shaft at the back of Moor View Terrace was found to be connected to one length of the sewer only, we have now opened this up and connected the other side as well, this has greatly relieved the sewer in the Main road of gases.

DRAIN TESTING.

This has again proved a very useful and reliable means of ascertaining the state of the drainage, either upon old or new work, the various work-men know that all the work has to stand the test, and this has been the means of obtaining a far higher standard of work than hitherto, it is also useful in convincing owners of defects, the escaping smoke being absolute proof.

I should like to mention that I find it very difficult to manage without proper expanding stoppers the want of them adds considerably to the work.

Number of drains tested 71

WATER.

This year has been exceptionally trying to nearly every District in connection with their water supply, we have therefore every reason to be pleased with the result of our supply during the year, we started at a great disadvantage having emptied the reservoir to enable it to be cleaned out, which was quite necessary, we therefore had to start the pumps working in February, and were not able to pick up any reserve ; it became necessary to shorten the hours of supply considerably during the summer months, but upon the whole no serious inconvenience was felt by the users, the hours least likely to inconvenience them being chosen for the stoppage of supply.

The supply to the higher levels has been improved by the addition to each filter bed of a wash-out valve, thus enabling a bed to be emptied without lowering the clean water chamber.

The filter beds are being coated with a much needed coat of clean sand.

Number of new houses supplied	28
Old wells closed and Town water taken in	4
Washers supplied and fixed by the Council	107

NEW HOUSES.

The inspection of new houses has again been of great importance and caused a great amount of work, 28 new houses having been erected during the year.

In each case the "bottom for foundations," "the foundations" the damp course, "ventilation under the floors," etc. have all been inspected, the drains are also tested in each case.

The adoption of bye-laws will be a great assistance in this work, and will simplify matters very much.

My best thanks are due to the various committees, and to the Medical Officer of Health, for the kindness and the support they have accorded me in carrying out my duties.

I have the honour to remain,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

W. BRITTON-JONES, (C.R.S.I.)