

[Report of the Medical Officer of Health for Lambeth Borough].

Contributors

Lambeth (London, England).

Publication/Creation

[1941]

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The annual report is again circulated for members' studies in those which circulated since the report for the year 1939 was drafted with the staff and since that time the building up of members of the permanent staff has made its preparation more arduous.

The various rates are based upon the Registrar-General's estimate of the total population at the middle of the year of 510,000. The number of persons in the district holding various cards are given below in Table I towards the end of the year so that the value of the population for purposes of comparison is not lost. In 1939 the year conditions were not so favourably affected as in 1938 and remarkable changes which took place during the year in Britain both in population and in health conditions. The facts concerning the year 1939 are given in the report and even out the following.

R E P O R T

on the

H E A L T H

of the

B O R O U G H O F L A M B E T H

during the year

1 9 4 0

(85th Annual Report)

By

A.G.G. THOMPSON, M.A., M.D., B.C., D.P.H.,

Medical Officer of Health

PREFACE

The annual report is again curtailed for reasons similar to those which obtained when the report for the year 1939 was drafted with the additional cause that the calling up of members of the permanent staff has made its preparation more arduous.

The various rates are based upon the Registrar-General's estimate of the resident population at the middle of the year of 210,650. The number of persons in the district holding ration cards was however below 160,000 towards the end of the year so that the value of the statistics for purposes of comparison is not great. In the first half of the year conditions were not strikingly abnormal but the sudden and remarkable changes which took place during the Battle of Britain both in population and in environment, conceal the facts concerning the first half of the year and at the same time even out the extremes of the second half.

As can be well imagined the work of the Public Health Department has been completely disrupted by the events of the autumn when all members of the staff were asked to undertake work quite outside the ordinary scope of their normal duties which were perforce left in abeyance. The change in policy forced upon the government with respect to the use of public shelters added many difficult problems to the extraordinary complexities with which the local authority were faced. More and more duties and instructions were constantly being added to the already almost intolerable responsibilities imposed by circumstances and by higher authorities so that there was little wonder to find urgent improvements in shelters, billets, war damage repairs and so on, lagging behind. The good will shewn by the staff of the department in cheerfully taking in their stride so much additional responsibility is a testimony to the resilience of the department.

The additions to the peace time responsibilities of the department practically all of which still remain include (i) a large temporary staff on A.R.P. and allied services of some 800 made up of stretcher bearers, M.T.C. drivers, doctors, nurses, auxiliary nurses, cooks, cleaners and clerical staff whose pay, sick and accident pay, leave and so on present a formidable item, (ii) the six first aid posts, six medical aid posts in large shelters, three mobile first aid units, five stretcher party depots, two mobile cleansing units and five public cleansing stations, (iii) the A.R.P. casualty services store where some 500 principal kinds of equipment are held not counting the large numbers of accessory items, the tailoring and repair of uniforms and (iv) the four mortuaries in which war casualties are received. There are also (v) some 70 motor vehicles which were badly worn when purchased owing to the low maximum prices fixed by higher authority and these have always been a source of trouble. (vi) the checking of petrol issues, log books and repairs all add their quotas to the work and responsibilities which have to be shouldered.

The really amazing feature of this heterogeneous combination of temporary and permanent staff is that, in spite of drawbacks such as lack of proper disciplinary powers and lack of any previous experience, it has remained a combination which has withstood all strains and maintained its cohesion. Great credit is due to the many who have cheerfully accepted long hours of work and extra responsibility without any added remuneration, and thus made success possible.

There have been delays in action on some of the worst occasions and difficulties have arisen inseparable from being answerable to several higher authorities not apparently in close touch with each other but the public for whose safety and benefit the organisation has been erected have not been ill-served.

It should not be forgotten also that home guard and fire watching duties fill up any spare overtime of the staff to which some departmental charge has not already been allotted.

Thanks are gratefully tendered to the Mayor, Alderman and Councillors for much help and keen appreciation of difficulties, to the chief officers and their departments with whom relations have never been more cordial and especially to the members of the staff of the Public Health Department who have all taken the rough with the smooth in their respective places in the team.

July, 1941

A.G.G.T.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Summary of Vital and Mortal Statistics, Etc.

(The comparable figures for the previous year appear in brackets)

Area of Borough 4,083 statute acres (inclusive of land and inland water, but exclusive of tidal water and foreshore), divided into 4 Registration Sub-Districts, 4 Parliamentary Divisions, and 12 Wards. The Parliamentary Divisions and Registration Sub-Districts have been adjusted so that they and the Wards are co-terminous.

Population Registrar-General's estimate resident
population mid 1940 210,650 (270,800)

Live Births

	Total	M	F	Birth rate per 1,000 estimated resident population
Legitimate...	3,039	1,549	1,490	Corrected 15.52 (13.17)
Illegitimate.	232	125	107	Uncorrected 17.44 (17.88)
	<u>3,271</u>	<u>1,674</u>	<u>1,597</u>	

Notification of births

Total number of notified births.....3,674 (4,844)

Stillbirths

	Total	M	F
(103)	114	60	54

Deaths (3,444)4,286 2,195 2,091 Death rate per 1,000 estimated average population as adjusted by comparability factor
19.72 (13.37)

Deaths from puerperal causes

Puerperal sepsis..... 3 (0) Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births 1.97 (1.18)
Other puerperal causes...3 (4)

Infantile Mortality Rate..47 (57)

Marriages....3,270 being 15.52 per 1,000 population

Zymotic Death Rate (Corrected) 0.09 per 1,000 population
(Total zymotic deaths.....21)

Rates for England and Wales and London

	England and Wales	London
Live Births	14.6	13.7
Deaths	14.3	17.8
Infantile Mortality	55	50
Puerperal Causes	2.16	(not available)

CAUSES OF, AND AGES AT, DEATH (CORRECTED) DURING THE YEAR, 1940

Total deaths = 4286

Mortality 19.72 (13.37)

CAUSES OF DEATH	AGES - BOTH SEXES						Totals	
	Under 1	1 and under 5	5 and under 15	15 and under 45	45 and under 65	65 and upwards	M	F
	year							
All causes	144	60	59	657	1248	2118	2195	2091
1. Typhoid and paratyphoid	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
2. Cerebro-spinal fever	3	3	-	1	1	-	6	-
3. Scarlet fever	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4. Whooping Cough	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5. Diphtheria	1	3	3	-	-	-	3	-
6. Tuberculosis, Resp. Syst.	2	2	2	101	62	9	102	-
7. Other Tuberculosis	-	6	-	13	3	2	15	-
8. Syphilitic diseases	-	-	-	5	18	10	24	-
9. Influenza	2	-	-	4	16	14	24	-
10. Measles	2	2	-	-	-	-	2	-
11. Ac. Poliomyelitis and Polioencephalitis	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-
12. Ac. Infectious Encephalitis (Lethargic)	-	-	-	4	1	-	3	-
13. Cancer, Buccal Cavity and Oesophagus (M) Uterus (F)	-	-	-	7	24	22	32	-
14. Cancer, Stomach and Duodenum	-	-	-	4	36	40	47	-
15. Cancer, Breast	-	-	-	5	24	15	2	-
16. Cancer, All other sites	-	-	1	19	138	149	176	1
17. Diabetes	-	-	-	2	9	15	10	-
18. Cerebral Vascular Lesions	-	-	-	4	71	164	108	1
19. Heart diseases	-	-	1	42	181	347	482	3
20. Other Circulatory diseases	-	-	-	5	33	60	45	-
21. Bronchitis	12	3	-	10	102	196	169	1
22. Pneumonia	15	12	1	20	63	121	126	1
23. Other Respiratory diseases	2	1	-	4	27	15	35	-
24. Ulcer, Stomach and Duodenum	-	-	-	7	34	32	58	-
25. Diarrhoea (under 2 years)	8	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
26. Appendicitis	-	1	1	6	1	2	4	-
27. Other Digestive diseases	6	3	1	16	40	42	57	-
28. Nephritis	-	-	1	12	19	26	33	-
29. Puerperal and Post Abortive Sepsis	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-
30. Other Maternal Causes	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	-
31. Premature Birth	42	-	-	-	-	-	31	-
32. Congenital Malformations, Birth Injury, Infantile diseases	37	3	1	3	2	-	29	-
33. Suicide	-	-	-	12	19	7	26	-
34. Road Traffic Accidents	-	1	-	11	6	14	22	-
35. Other Violent Causes	7	18	42	303	242	122	375	-
36. All other causes	4	2	5	32	74	193	146	-

GENERAL PROVISIONS OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA

Nursing in the Home

The number of visits paid to children under five years of age was 3,884 (5,012) and to persons over five years of age 1,506 (1,622)

Welfare Centres

Total individual cases dealt with	21,537	(22,517)
" sessions held	2,620	(3,825)
" attendances A/N cases	10,151	(16,235)
" " P/N cases	2,179	(3,758)
" " nursing mothers	33,694	(41,989)
" " infants under 1	34,902	(46,449)
" " children 1 - 5	23,071	(32,188)
Visits paid to A/N cases	6,636	(8,300)
" " P/N cases	2,494	(2,217)
" " nursing mothers	22,323	(24,945)
" " infants under 1	20,471	(23,212)
" " children 1 - 5	37,681	(44,872)

The fall in numbers attending is due to evacuation and to the Government milk scheme. Visits are reduced to some extent by the loan of health visitors to reception areas.

The Voluntary Welfare Centres were faced with serious financial troubles and a number were obliged to ask for further help from the Council. This was readily granted and as a war measure subject to a closer financial control among other things they have agreed to a reduction in their voluntary status. They are however still administered by voluntary committees upon all of which the Council is represented. The movements of families due to destruction of dwellings has made the task of keeping in touch with them both difficult and time wasting.

The duties of the staffs of the centres have been hard but contact with the population has been maintained well throughout the year by visits to the homes.

Child Life Protection

794 visits and re-visits were made to foster mothers and nurse children.

Foster mothers on Register at 31.12.40	28	(39)
Nurse children on Register at 31.12.40	29	(42)

Maternity Home

417 (372) cases were admitted during the year.

The home was closed in the autumn after severe damage when mercifully there were no casualties, and the staff now run the Home Farm Maternity Home, Tring, for the Herts. County Council.

Assistance towards cost of Midwives

24 (35) applications - 1 cancelled
23 (35) midwives provided - cost to Council £30:10s:6d.

Home Helps

207 (169) applications - 4(3) cancelled
203 (164) home helps provided -
cost to Council £184:17s:6d.

Sterile Maternity Outfits

21 (29) applications - 2 (2) cancelled
19 (27) sterile maternity outfits issued - £2:1s:9d.
cost to Council

Obstetric Consultants

Called once (1)

Puerperal Fever and Pyrexia Consultants

Nil (0)

Milk Assistance Scheme

42,277 (63,167) gallons of milk were provided free during the year.

Summary of work done by the four official health visitors

Ante-natal visits	1,119
Ante-natal re-visits	274
Births 1st visits	777
Births re-visits	283
Births stillborn	59
Ophthalmia 1st visits	83
Ophthalmia re-visits	71
Measles 1st visits	256
Measles re-visits	3
Infantile deaths visits	9
Welfare centres attendances	190
Diphtheria prevention clinic attendances	47
Post natal visits	967
Visits to children 1 - 5 years	317
Puerperal Pyrexia visits	28
Puerperal Pyrexia re-visits	7
Tonsil and Adenoids visits	3
Special visits :- refugees, evacuation, rest centres, shelters, scabies etc.	1,944

Two of these health visitors were seconded for temporary duty in reception areas where they remained for several months. They were recalled towards the end of the year to the regret of the reception authorities under whom they were working.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

Male Sanitary Inspectors

Total number of inspections	4,047
Total number of re-inspections	10,857
Total number of intimation notices served	1,443
Total number of nuisance notices served	223

Female Sanitary Inspectors

Total number of visits and inspections (factories, workplaces etc.)	1,920
Total number of re-visits	351
Total number of intimation notices served	161
Workshops in which defects were found	180

The sanitary inspectors were withdrawn at intervals from A.R.P. duties as they could be replaced and all but one are now back with three still maintaining supervision over their first posts and mobile units. The one not back has been lent to the billeting officer and is engaged in repairs to requisitioned billets among his many other duties.

Public Health (London) Act, 1936. Section 224.

Orders were applied for and granted for the compulsory removal to hospital of two persons under this section.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

2,000 samples of food and drugs were submitted to the Public Analyst during the year of which 33 were adulterated. Unfortunately legal proceedings had to be instituted in six cases because fraudulent dealings seemed to be intentional. 33½ tons of unsound food were condemned during the year and utilised to the best advantage in various processes.

SCABIES AND VERMINOUS PERSONS

The incidence of scabies has materially increased during 1940 and 1941 but the arrangements made many years ago with the adjoining councils of Battersea and Southwark have coped satisfactorily with the increased numbers. The spray baths at first aid posts for gas cleansing have been used on several occasions by refugees and other members of the public desirous of obtaining a hot bath. A total of 327 persons were treated at the cleansing stations and given 721 baths.

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES

The incidence of no particular infectious disease calls for comment but the exceedingly small numbers of all kinds is puzzling when they received every encouragement to spread from environmental conditions of shelter life and black out.

Notifications received during the year ended 31st December, 1940.

Scarlet Fever	184	(261)
Diphtheria	117	(238)
Typhoid Fever	4	(4)
Erysipelas	85	(89)
Puerperal Fever	16	(6)
Puerperal Pyrexia	29	(42)
Cerebro-spinal Fever	47	(10)
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	33	(37)
Measles	448	(118)
Whooping Cough	51	(896)
Primary Pneumonia	83	(125)
Influenzal Pneumonia	49	(64)
Malaria	1	(0)
Dysentery	4	(14)
Food Poisoning	29	(8)

Tuberculosis

Notifications received during the year ended 31st December, 1940.

Pulmonary	297	(446)
Non-pulmonary	41	(74)

Deaths certified	202	(241)
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