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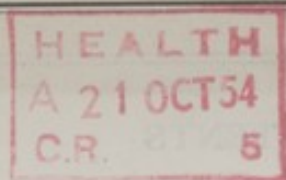
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METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF WOOLWICH



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# ANNUAL REPORT

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on the Health of the  
Metropolitan Borough of Woolwich  
for the Year 1953

BY

T. STANDRING, M.D., B.S., D.P.H., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., F.R.San. I.

Medical Officer of Health

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## HEALTH COMMITTEE

at 31st December, 1953.

THE WORSHIPFUL THE MAYOR (Councillor S. L. COLLINS, J.P.)

Councillor G. E. OFFORD (*Chairman*)

Councillor L. A. HEATH (*Vice-Chairman*)

### Aldermen—

Mrs. J. E. CARROLL

E. A. J. DICKERSON

Mrs. E. R. M. MIDDLETON

### Councillors—

T. G. BLANN

W. R. KENNETT

Mrs. S. M. BRADLEY

Mrs. A. E. MAXWELL

Mrs. E. G. BUNCE

Miss M. N. REES

A. H. GILDER, M.B.E., J.P.

Mrs. E. M. WOOD

Miss E. M. JARVIS

S. W. WOOD



## PREFACE

---

*To the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors of the  
Metropolitan Borough of Woolwich.*

MR. MAYOR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I have pleasure in submitting the Fifty-third Annual Report on the health and sanitary conditions of the Borough of Woolwich. The Report has been compiled as outlined by the Ministry of Health.

The home population of the Borough at mid-1953 was 151,100, being 700 less than that for the previous year, but still over 3,000 more than at the time of the 1951 Census.

The post-war trend in the Borough's birth and death rates continued, there being a slight decline in both the birth and death rates. Due to an increase in the population of the Borough during the past three years, and because of the fewer total births, the birth rate is now below the National and London averages, although the local stillbirth rate compares favourably with that for the rest of the country.

The corrected Woolwich death rate for 1953 was 10·3, compared with 11·4 for England and Wales, and 12·5 for London.

The principal causes of death were again cancer and heart diseases, which together accounted for over 50 per cent. of the total deaths. There were three fatal cases of poliomyelitis, and no maternal deaths. Motor vehicle accidents were responsible for eleven deaths of Woolwich residents.

The majority of the 48 infant deaths occurred in the first week of life. The infant death rate was 21·4 compared with 26·8 for England and Wales, and 24·8 for London.

The latest local tuberculosis death rate is very encouraging. Total Woolwich deaths from tuberculosis in all its forms during 1953 was 29; only 12 years ago there were as many as 127 deaths from this disease, and even in the year 1947 there were 101 local deaths from tuberculosis.

No case of diphtheria occurred and, in fact, there has been no fatal case from this disease in the Borough for the past seven years.

There was again an absence of any serious outbreak of food poisoning, the few cases occurring locally being confined to a small number of families and they call for no particular comment.

The inspection and supervision of food premises plays a large part in the work of the Department, and in 1953 over 4,000 inspections were made of food shops and other food premises in the Borough. Once again a large number of food samples has been obtained by the Council's Sampling Officers for analysis, in order to ensure that the food is of the nature, substance and quality expected, and is free from adulteration. Food premises in the Borough are visited regularly, and with the co-operation of the occupiers it has been possible to secure improvements by means of this informal approach. Much time and attention has again been devoted to the inspection of meat at the Garland Road Abattoir, where the total kill has again been heavy, due mainly to the large number of pigs slaughtered.

During 1953, considerable progress was made by the Council towards the redevelopment of the St. Mary's Redevelopment Area, which comprises some 72



acres. In order to provide for the relocation of population and the commercial and other interests displaced from parts of the area, the Council has proceeded with the acquisition of land contiguous or adjacent to the redevelopment area, and during the year the Council approved schemes for the erection of 122 dwellings on the south side of Lord Warwick Street, 49 dwellings in Rectory Place and 24 in St. Mary's Street.

The Council's agreed slum clearance programme for the period 1951-1956 is to be followed by a further 5-year programme. Detailed proposals to cover this further programme to be undertaken by the Borough Council are now being formulated.

During the year, much valuable information concerning the housing and social conditions in the Borough was made available in the County of London Census Report for 1951, and several interesting facts and figures are included in summary form in the body of my report. Largely due to the housing activities of the Council during the last 20 years there has been an increase of 33 per cent. in the number of dwellings in the Borough. Overcrowding and congestion have been reduced, and although we can still see many inadequate houses overdue for clearance, it is gratifying to know that there are fewer congested housing conditions than in most other areas in London.

There are now nearly 16,000 persons residing in the Borough over the age of 65, an increase of over 6,000 during the last 20 years. Happily, the great majority of these persons are able to get about reasonably well, and apart from occasional ill health can attend to most of their needs. Those who, through force of circumstances such as ill health, are unable to look after themselves, receive assistance from the Department and from other statutory and voluntary workers. Every case coming to our attention is immediately visited, and where circumstances warrant it, assistance and advice are readily given. There is, of course, close co-operation between the Council's staff, the County Council Health and Welfare services, the Hospital service, the general practitioners and the voluntary agencies concerned with old people. We are indebted to these bodies for much ready help in easing awkward problems. To an increasing extent the welfare of old people is being looked to in Woolwich, whether by means of more frequent home visitation, holidays and other outings, entertainment, lunch club facilities and Darby and Joan Clubs, or in dealing with personal problems, and in numerous other ways the workers in this field are helping to make the lives of these persons more comfortable.

During the year, accidents in the home and in factories were responsible for the deaths of 27 Woolwich residents. Although this is a slight improvement on the figure for the previous year, many of these accidents could have been avoided. The majority of accidents were to elderly persons from falls at home. Other common causes were burns and accidents sustained at work.

During the year the Council set up five air pollution recording and measuring stations. Each will furnish monthly information on the amount of pollution. Officers of the Health Department are increasingly engaged in advising on the correct working of industrial fuel burning plant, and in acquainting members of the public of the benefits to be derived from the use of smokeless fuel.

The Council's Health Education officers have again had a busy year. By the use of films and film strips, supplemented by informal talks, the work of the local authority, and particularly in relation to public health, is kept constantly before the public. Some of the most well received programmes are those dealing generally with the public health services, and with food hygiene and home accident prevention. Altogether 81 film programmes and 15 informal talks were presented during the year, in addition to several showings at local Civil Defence Centres. Repeat visits by the Council's Health Education Unit have been requested by several organisations; so much so that this service has more and more become recognised as an essential part of the work of the Health Department.



In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity of expressing my thanks to the Chairman and members of the Health Committee for their help and encouragement. My thanks are also due to members of the staff of my Department for their conscientious service.

I am,

Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

T. STANDRING.

## HEALTH DEPARTMENT STAFF

### *Medical Officer of Health—*

T. STANDRING, M.D., B.S., D.P.H., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., F.R.San.I.

### *Administrative and Clerical—*

Chief Administrative Assistant—T. H. PRESCOTT.

Senior Clerk—A. HEALEY.

### *Clerical Assistants—*

R. E. SWEETT

R. H. THOMAS

Mrs. E. C. COOPER

Miss M. H. RENTALL

Miss M. N. PRIGMORE

G. C. RYAN

J. E. KAY

D. M. GIBBS

K. E. DOUBLEDAY (returned from H. M. Forces, 19th October, 1953).

Miss E. E. PHILLIPS

B. ORDELL (transferred to Housing Department, 18th October, 1953).

### *Sanitary Inspectors—*

#### *Chief Sanitary Inspector—*

C. J. COUCH, F.R. San.I., Cert. San. Insp. Exam. Board ; Cert. Royal San. Inst. ; Cert., Meat and Other Foods ; Cert. Smoke Insp., R.S.I. ; Cert. Advanced Inspectors, R.S.I.

#### *Sanitary Inspectors—*

H. W. PENDRILL (retired from the Council's service, 31st October, 1953).

F. A. ANDREW, Cert. San. Insp. Exam. Joint Board ; Cert. Meat and Other Foods. (Senior Food Inspector).

H. M. KERSEY, Cert. San. Insp. Exam. Joint Board ; Cert. Meat and Other Foods ; Cert. Smoke Insp., R.S.I. (Rodent Control Inspector).

F. J. HOINES, Cert. San. Insp. Exam. Joint Board ; Cert. Meat and Other Foods. (Food Inspector).

W. F. R. WHEAL, Cert. Insp. Exam. Joint Board ; Cert. Meat and Other Foods. (Housing, etc. Inspector).

W. E. McLELLAND, Cert. San. Insp. Exam. Joint Board ; Cert. Meat and Other Foods. (Disinfection, Disinfestation and Smoke Inspector).

Miss M. F. THOMAS, G.M., Cert. San. Insp. Exam. Joint Board ; Cert. Meat and Other Foods ; State Registered Nurse ; State Certificate Midwife ; Health Visitors' Cert. (Old People's Welfare, etc. Inspector).

E. R. REES, Cert. San. Insp. Exam. Joint Board ; Cert. Meat and Other Foods. (Food Inspector).

- W. F. N. TROUGHTON, Cert. San. Insp. Exam. Joint Board; Cert. Meat and Other Foods. (Catering Establishments, Milk premises, etc. Inspector).
- R. LINCOLN, Cert. San. Insp. Exam. Joint Board; Cert. Meat and Other Foods. (Restaurants and other food premises Inspector).
- K. S. COOPER, Cert. San. Insp. Exam. Joint Board; Cert. Meat and Other Foods. (District Inspector).
- K. J. COPPIN. (Resigned 30th August, 1953).
- J. A. ORRELL, Cert. San. Insp. Exam. Joint Board; Cert. Meat and Other Foods; Cert. Smoke Insp., R.S.I. (Food Inspector).
- J. B. O'CONNELL, Cert. San. Insp. Exam. Joint Board. (District Inspector).
- R. H. PASTERFIELD, Cert. San. Insp. Exam. Joint Board; Cert. Meat and Other Foods. (District Inspector).
- D. W. TOWNSEND. (Resigned 6th January, 1953).
- H. L. DAVIES, Cert. San. Insp. Exam. Joint Board. (Commenced duty 11th May, 1953. (District Inspector).
- J. HILLS, Cert. San. Insp. Exam. Joint Board, Cert. Meat and Other Foods. (Commenced duty 11th May, 1953. (District Inspector).
- F. W. HARMSWORTH, Cert. San. Insp. Exam. Joint Board. (Commenced duty 11th May, 1953). (District Inspector).
- J. HACKER, Cert. San. Insp. Exam. Joint Board; Cert., Meat and Other Foods. (Commenced duty 28th December, 1953). (District Inspector).

*Public Analyst (Part-time)—*

H. AMPHLETT WILLIAMS, Ph.D. (Lond.), A.C.G.F.C., F.R.I.C.

## GENERAL STATISTICS

Area of Borough	..	..	..	..	..	..	8,282 statute acres
Number of Houses	..	..	..	..	..	..	40,227
Number of Persons per acre	..	..	..	..	..	..	18.2
Rateable Value	..	..	..	..	..	..	£1,257,756
Sum represented by a Penny Rate	..	..	..	..	..	..	£5,129

## VITAL STATISTICS

Extracts from the vital statistics for the year, with comparative figures for 1952, are shown below :—

Table No. 1.

	1953.	1952.
Population (Home, <i>i.e.</i> , including members of H.M. Forces stationed in the district) .. .. .	151,100	151,800
Live Births—Legitimate .. .. .	1,990	2,104
Live Births—Illegitimate .. .. .	100	95
Total Live Births .. .. .	2,090	2,199
Birth Rate .. .. .	13.8	14.4
Stillbirths .. .. .	51	37
Stillbirths—Rate per 1,000 total births .. .. .	24.4	16.8
Total Deaths .. .. .	1,569	1,667
Death Rate per 1,000 population .. .. .	10.4	10.9
Maternal Deaths .. .. .	nil	nil
Death Rate from Puerperal Causes per 1,000 total births .. .. .	nil	nil
Deaths of Infants under one year .. .. .	48	47
Death Rate of Infants under one year .. .. .	22.9	21.4
Deaths from Tuberculosis (all forms) .. .. .	29	39
Deaths from Cancer (all ages) .. .. .	303	317
Deaths from acute poliomyelitis .. .. .	3	2



## Births.

The number of live births registered in Woolwich during 1953, was 2,133. After correction for inward and outward transfers, the net number of Woolwich live births was 2,090, being 101 less than in the previous year. Of the total births, 1,062 were boys and 1,028 girls. It is known that 2,925 births took place in public institutions in the Borough, of which 1,109 concerned Woolwich mothers. The birth rate was 13·8 which, when adjusted to allow for the differing age and sex distribution of the population in various parts of the country, gives a birth rate of 13·7, compared with the birth rate for England and Wales of 15·5, and for London of 17·5. There were 51 stillbirths during the year under review.

## Natural Increase in Population (*i.e.*, Excess of Births over Deaths).

In 1953 the natural increase in population was 521. In 1952 it was 532 and in 1951 it was 435.

## Deaths.

The number of deaths registered in Woolwich was 1,260, and after correction for inward and outward transfers the net number was 1,569, giving a death rate of 10·38 for the Borough, compared with 10·9 the previous year.

The adjusted death rate for Woolwich was 10·3, compared with 12·5 for London and 11·4 for England and Wales.

Deaths of Woolwich residents in hospitals in the Borough totalled 347, whilst 439 died in other hospitals outside the Borough.

## Motor Vehicle Accidents.

There were eleven deaths of Woolwich residents during the year due to motor vehicle accidents. No fatal accidents occurred to a child under five years of age. Five deaths concerned youths, and two were persons over 65 years of age.

Assistance was again given to the Council's Road Safety Committee by the showing of sound films on this subject at a number of the film sessions presented by the Health Department.

## Deaths from Cancer.

Of the total number of deaths, 303 (or 19 per cent.) were from Cancer, being a similar number as in the previous year. One hundred and eighty-one occurred in men and 122 in women. More than half the cancer deaths (165) took place in hospitals. From the following table it will be seen that there has been an increase in the number of deaths among men from cancer of the lung and bronchus since the end of the War.

**Table No. 2. Woolwich Deaths from Cancer**  
(including all other specified Malignant Tumours).

<i>Year.</i>	<i>Men.</i>	<i>Women.</i>	<i>Total Deaths.</i>	<i>Deaths in Hospitals.</i>
1945	134	133	267	88
1946	123	115	238	143
1947	130	130	260	135
1948	138	141	279	138
1949	172	128	300	159
1950	175	155	330	173
1951	149	139	288	152
1952	166	151	317	150
1953	184	125	309	169



**Cancer Deaths—Woolwich, 1953. By Age.**

<i>Age.</i>				<i>Males.</i>	<i>Females.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
1-5 years	..	..	..	—	—	—
6-15 years	..	..	..	—	—	—
16-25 years	..	..	..	1	—	1
26-30 years	..	..	..	2	1	3
31-35 years	..	..	..	1	2	3
36-40 years	..	..	..	3	3	6
41-45 years	..	..	..	6	4	10
46-50 years	..	..	..	10	9	19
51-55 years	..	..	..	16	13	29
56-60 years	..	..	..	28	12	40
61-65 years	..	..	..	19	16	35
66-70 years	..	..	..	26	14	40
71-75 years	..	..	..	25	19	44
76-80 years	..	..	..	29	14	43
Over 80 years	..	..	..	15	15	30
				—	—	—
Total	..	..		181	122	303
				—	—	—

**Table No. 3. Woolwich Deaths from Cancer of the Lung and Bronchus, 1945-1953.**

<i>Year.</i>				<i>Male.</i>	<i>Female.</i>	<i>Total.</i>	<i>Deaths in Hospitals.</i>
1945.	Lung	..	..	17	3	20	7
	Bronchus	..	..	4	4	8	4
1946.	Lung	..	..	10	4	14	9
	Bronchus	..	..	15	2	17	12
1947.	Lung	..	..	12	7	19	6
	Bronchus	..	..	18	1	19	15
1948.	Lung	..	..	13	1	14	3
	Bronchus	..	..	20	1	21	14
1949.	Lung	..	..	15	2	17	8
	Bronchus	..	..	24	5	29	20
1950.	Lung	..	..	26	4	30	8
	Bronchus	..	..	33	8	41	36
1951.	Lung	..	..	17	5	22	9
	Bronchus	..	..	40	8	48	29
1952.	Lung	..	..	22	5	27	9
	Bronchus	..	..	31	10	41	22
1953.	Lung	..	..	16	2	18	9
	Bronchus	..	..	40	9	49	29

Table No. 4. Cancer Deaths—Woolwich, 1953. Seat of Primary Disease.

					Male.	Female.	Total.	Deaths in Hospital.
Stomach	..	..	..	..	32	19	51	31
Bronchus	..	..	..	..	40	9	49	29
Lung	..	..	..	..	16	2	18	9
Breast	..	..	..	..	—	17	17	10
Colon	..	..	..	..	17	14	31	15
Prostrate	..	..	..	..	13	—	13	10
Rectum	..	..	..	..	15	7	22	9
Pancreas	..	..	..	..	7	—	7	2
Ovary	..	..	..	..	—	16	16	8
Bladder	..	..	..	..	4	—	4	3
Liver	..	..	..	..	1	4	5	3
Caecum	..	..	..	..	1	2	3	2
Cervix	..	..	..	..	—	2	2	2
Oesophagus	..	..	..	..	1	3	4	1
Glands of Neck	..	..	..	..	—	1	1	1
Jaw	..	..	..	..	6	—	6	1
Brain	..	..	..	..	—	2	2	—
Gall Bladder	..	..	..	..	4	1	5	—
Larynx	..	..	..	..	2	—	2	2
Throat	..	..	..	..	1	—	1	—
Pharynx	..	..	..	..	1	—	1	—
Uterus	..	..	..	..	—	10	10	3
Tonsil	..	..	..	..	3	—	3	3
Thyroid	..	..	..	..	—	1	1	—
Others and Unspecified	..	..	..	..	17	12	29	21
Total					181	122	303	165

**Maternal Deaths.**

There were no maternal deaths during the year, and none during the previous year.

**Inquests.**

There were 66 inquests held on Woolwich residents during the year and 358 post-mortems on Woolwich residents were carried out on behalf of the Coroner.

**Infant Mortality.**

The infant death rate was 22·9 compared with 21·4 in 1952.



Table 5. Deaths under 1 year, 1953.

Cause of Death.	Under 1 week.	1-2 weeks.	2-3 weeks.	3-4 weeks.	Total under 4 weeks.	1 month and under 3 months.	3 months and under 6 months.	6 months and under 9 months.	9 months and under 12 months.	Total deaths under 1 yr.
Premature Birth .. ..	7	1	—	—	8	—	—	—	—	8
Congenital Malformation .. ..	6	—	—	—	6	2	1	1	—	10
Broncho Pneumonia .. ..	1	1	—	—	2	2	2	1	—	7
Atelectasis .. ..	11	1	—	—	12	—	—	—	—	12
Enteritis .. ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Suffocation .. ..	1	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	2
Meningitis .. ..	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	1	—	2
Whooping Cough .. ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Injury at Birth .. ..	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
Cerebral Haemorrhage .. ..	4	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—	4
					35					48

The following table gives details of the infant deaths during 1953 :—

Table No. 6. Nett Deaths during the Calendar Year 1953.

	Nett Deaths at the subjoined ages of "residents" whether occurring within or without the district.								
	All Ages.	Under 1 year.	1 and under 5 years.	5 and under 15 years.	15 and under 25 years.	25 and under 45 years.	45 and under 65 years.	65 and under 75 years.	75 years and upwards.
All Causes .. .. .	1569	48	7	7	18	73	396	414	606
Tuberculosis, respiratory .. .. .	27	—	—	—	—	7	13	6	1
Tuberculosis, other .. .. .	2	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—
Syphilitic disease .. .. .	7	—	—	—	—	—	1	5	1
Diphtheria .. .. .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Whooping Cough .. .. .	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Meningococcal infections .. .. .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Acute poliomyelitis .. .. .	3	—	1	1	—	1	—	—	—
Measles .. .. .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other infective and parasitic diseases .. .. .	4	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	2
Malignant neoplasm, stomach .. .. .	51	—	—	—	—	3	20	15	13
Malignant neoplasm, lung, bronchus .. .. .	67	—	—	—	—	6	32	20	9
Malignant neoplasm, breast .. .. .	17	—	—	—	—	2	9	3	3
Malignant neoplasm, uterus .. .. .	10	—	—	—	—	—	7	1	2
Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms .. .. .	164	—	1	1	2	9	54	43	54
Leukaemia, aleukaemia .. .. .	10	—	—	2	1	2	2	2	1
Diabetes .. .. .	12	—	—	—	—	—	2	7	3
Vascular lesions of nervous system .. .. .	186	—	—	—	—	6	39	55	86
Coronary disease angina .. .. .	236	—	—	—	—	5	68	79	84
Hypertension with heart disease .. .. .	42	—	—	—	—	—	6	12	24
Other heart disease .. .. .	209	—	—	—	1	6	26	38	138
Other circulatory disease .. .. .	61	—	—	—	—	—	15	16	30
Influenza .. .. .	19	—	—	—	—	3	5	4	7
Pneumonia .. .. .	71	7	—	—	—	1	8	18	37
Bronchitis .. .. .	117	—	—	—	—	1	28	36	52
Other diseases of respiratory system .. .. .	12	—	—	—	—	—	4	7	1
Ulcer of stomach and duodenum .. .. .	23	—	—	—	—	—	11	5	7
Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea .. .. .	4	1	—	—	—	—	2	—	1
Nephritis and Nephrosis .. .. .	13	—	—	—	1	2	3	5	2
Hypherpasia of prostate .. .. .	9	—	—	—	—	—	2	3	4
Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion .. .. .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Congenital malformations .. .. .	11	10	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
Other defined and ill-defined diseases .. .. .	119	28	1	2	2	6	20	22	38
Motor vehicle accidents .. .. .	11	—	—	—	6	3	—	1	1
All other accidents .. .. .	27	1	3	1	4	4	7	3	4
Suicide .. .. .	22	—	—	—	1	4	10	6	1
Homicide and operations of war .. .. .	2	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	—



Table No. 7.

Birth Rates, Death Rates and Analysis of Mortality in the Year 1953.

	Rate per 1,000 Home Population.		Annual Death Rate per 1,000 Home Population.										Rate per 1,000 Live Births.	
	Live Births.	Still Births.	All Causes	Tuberculosis	Acute Poliomyelitis including Polio encephalitis	Smallpox	Whooping Cough	Diphtheria	Influenza	Pneumonia	Typhoid Paratyphoid Fevers.	Diarrhoea and Enteritis (under 2 years)	Total Deaths under 1 year.	
England and Wales .. ..	15.5	0.35	11.4	0.20	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.16	0.55	0.00	1.1	26.8	
160 County Boroughs and Great Towns, including London ..	17.0	0.43	12.2	0.24	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.15	0.59	0.00	1.3	30.8	
160 Smaller Towns (Resident Populations, 25,000 to 50,000 at Census, 1951) .. ..	15.7	0.34	11.3	0.19	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.17	0.52	—	0.9	24.3	
London (Administrative County)	17.5	0.38	12.5	0.24	0.01	—	0.00	—	0.15	0.64	—	1.1	24.8	
WOOLWICH.. ..	13.7	0.33	10.3	0.25	0.00	—	0.00	—	0.00	0.55	—	0.002	21.4	

The chief Vital Statistics for the Borough since 1923 are given in the following Table :—

Table No. 8.

YEAR.	Population estimated to middle of each Year.	Births.		Nett Deaths belonging to the District.			
		Nett.		Under 1 Year.		At all Ages.	
		Number.	Rate.	Number.	Rate per 1,000 nett Births.	Number.	Rate.
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
1923 <i>a</i>	143,530	2,867	20·5	123	43	1,387	9·9
1923 <i>b</i>	140,000						
1924 <i>a</i>	144,400	2,590	18·5	168	65	1,543	11·0
1924 <i>b</i>	139,980						
1925 <i>a</i>	145,440	2,582	18·3	141	55	1,519	10·8
1925 <i>b</i>	140,740						
1926 <i>a</i>	146,200	2,463	17·4	107	43	1,450	10·2
1926 <i>b</i>	141,900						
1927 <i>a</i>	144,770	2,242	15·9	95	42	1,491	10·6
1927 <i>b</i>	140,770						
1928 <i>a</i>	146,600	2,269	16·1	114	50	1,554	11·0
1928 <i>b</i>	141,100						
1929 <i>a</i>	146,800	2,312	16·3	144	62	1,780	12·6
1929 <i>b</i>	141,600						
1930 <i>a</i>	146,800	2,188	15·5	91	42	1,547	10·9
1930 <i>b</i>	141,600						
1931 <i>a</i>	147,400	2,155	15·1	128	59	1,654	11·6
1931 <i>b</i>	142,600						
1932 <i>a</i>	146,400	2,054	14·0	123	60	1,635	11·1
1933 <i>a</i>	146,200	1,857	12·7	116	62	1,634	11·2
1934 <i>a</i>	145,520	2,000	13·7	127	63	1,650	11·3
1935 <i>a</i>	146,400	2,053	14·0	91	44	1,500	10·2
1936 <i>a</i>	146,500	2,017	13·8	121	59	1,649	11·2
1937 <i>a</i>	149,400	2,125	14·2	86	40	1,660	11·1
1938 <i>a</i>	150,900	2,057	13·6	102	50	1,576	10·4
1939 <i>a</i>	150,800	2,133	14·1	103	49	1,592	11·1
1940 <i>b</i>	124,340	1,846	14·8	66	36	1,854	14·9
1941 <i>b</i>	103,630	1,459	14·0	65	42	1,627	15·7
1942 <i>b</i>	110,140	2,036	18·5	71	34	1,410	12·8
1943 <i>b</i>	112,700	2,174	19·3	77	35	1,558	13·8
1944 <i>b</i>	110,970	2,037	18·3	83	40	1,611	14·5
1945 <i>b</i>	115,270	2,021	17·5	83	41	1,478	12·8
1946 <i>b</i>	134,420	2,903	21·6	91	31	1,531	11·4
1947 <i>b</i>	140,150	3,193	22·8	87	27·25	1,626	11·6
1948 <i>b</i>	142,800	2,527	17·7	74	29·28	1,573	11·0
1949 <i>b</i>	144,000	2,504	17·4	72	28·75	1,572	10·9
1950 <i>c</i>	149,000	2,172	14·6	53	24·40	1,668	11·2
1951 <i>c</i>	149,800	2,273	15·1	63	27·70	1,838	12·3
1952 <i>c</i>	151,800	2,199	14·4	47	21·40	1,667	10·9
1953 <i>c</i>	151,100	2,090	13·8	48	22·90	1,569	10·4

*a*—Total population.

*b*—Civil population.

*c*—Home population.



### Marriages.

There were 1,224 marriages in the Borough during 1953, of which 780 took place in churches. The remaining 444 took place at the Woolwich Register Office. Of the number of marriages which took place in churches in the Borough, Registrars of Marriages attended on 93 occasions.

### Census, 1951—County of London Report.

In December, 1953, the Registrar General issued the County of London Report giving information regarding the Census taken in April, 1951.

The Report deals with population, dwellings, rooms and families, and with sex, age and marital conditions.

The population of the County of London has declined during the last 20 years by 1,049,021. Only three Boroughs—Lewisham, Hampstead and Woolwich—record increased populations during this period, whilst Stepney, Islington, Camberwell, Poplar, Southwark, Lambeth and Bermondsey all record decreased populations of more than 50,000.

The population of the Borough at the time of the Census was 147,891 (comprising 72,334 males and 75,557 females) being an increase of 1,010 compared with the 1931 Census.

The Registrar General estimates the population of the Borough at mid-1953 was 151,100.

The following table gives details of the increases and decreases in the population of the various Wards of the Borough during the last 20 years.

Table No. 9.

Wards.	1931, Persons.	1951, Persons.	Increase.	Decrease.
Dockyard .. ..	7,093	3,966	—	3,127
St. Mary's .. ..	6,344	4,185	—	2,159
River .. .. .	12,036	6,837	—	5,199
St. George's .. ..	8,863	6,468	—	2,395
Burrage .. .. .	8,100	5,902	—	2,198
Herbert .. .. .	8,451	10,703	2,252	—
Glyndon .. .. .	8,769	6,082	—	2,687
St. Margaret's .. ..	12,541	13,783	1,242	—
Central .. .. .	8,028	6,414	—	1,614
St. Nicholas .. ..	13,904	11,869	—	2,035
Abbey Wood .. ..	10,729	11,349	620	—
Well Hall .. .. .	13,122	11,448	—	1,674
Avery Hill .. .. .	11,603	23,639	12,036	—
Sherard .. .. .	17,298	25,246	7,948	—

The number of persons per acre in the Administrative County of London at the time of the Census was 44·7, and in the Metropolitan Boroughs this figure varied from 92·5 in Paddington to 17·9 in Woolwich.

The following table shows the age and sex group of the population at the time of the Census. For comparative purposes the number of persons in 1931 is also shown.

Table No. 10.

Age Group (Age last Birthday).	Persons 1931.	1951.		
		Persons.	Males.	Females.
0—4	10,391	12,522	6,445	6,077
5—9	12,181	10,558	5,500	5,058
10—14	12,164	8,669	4,352	4,317
15—19	13,528	8,958	4,905	4,053
20—24	13,300	10,098	5,209	4,889
25—29	12,555	11,613	5,725	5,888
30—34	11,485	11,178	5,512	5,666
35—39	10,740	11,273	5,657	5,616
40—44	9,649	10,923	5,524	5,399
45—49	8,995	10,498	5,132	5,366
50—54	8,543	9,657	4,555	5,102
55—59	7,505	8,607	3,905	4,702
60—64	6,032	7,459	3,397	4,062
65—74	7,239	10,560	4,510	6,050
75 and over	2,574	5,318	2,006	3,312
	146,881	147,891	72,334	75,557

The total of 15,878 persons over the age of 65, which is 10·7 per cent. of the population of the Borough, compares favourably with 11·1 per cent. for the Administrative County of London. The percentage of children of school age against the total Borough population is higher than the great majority of Metropolitan Boroughs, only Greenwich, Poplar and Shoreditch having higher percentages of school children.

The birth places of the persons residing in Woolwich at the time of the Census are recorded as follows: England, 136,111; Wales, 2,230; Scotland, 2,400; Northern Ireland, 637; Irish Republic, 2,357.

The number of occupied or retired males aged 15 years or over in the Borough was 53,869. Classified according to the Registrar-General's official classification of occupations or professions they fall into the following classes: Class 1, 2,049; Class 2, 7,081; Class 3, 31,305; Class 4, 5,425; Class 5, 8,009. Examples of occupations or professions classified within the five groups are as follows: Class 1—Clergymen, Solicitors, Doctors, Company Directors; Class 2—Teachers, Managers of retail business, Local Government Administrative, etc.; Class 3—Foremen, Skilled Workers, Clerical and Typists, Salesmen and Shop Assistants, Policemen, other ranks in the Forces; Class 4—Domestic servants, bus conductors, semi-skilled workers; Class 5—Labourers, Navvies, Porters, Messengers, Lift Attendants, etc.

The Report shows that 95·6 per cent. of the total population of the Borough are in occupation of private households, the remaining persons being in hotels, boarding houses, nursing homes and defence establishments, etc.

There has been a 33 per cent. increase in the number of dwellings in the Borough since 1931. Compared with London as a whole there are few one or two roomed dwellings, and comparatively few households sharing dwellings. The size of households is higher than average, and the proportion of households with non-married heads is comparatively small.



The total number of separate households (*i.e.*, persons sharing the same living room or eating at the same table) in the Borough of Woolwich was recorded as 45,366 (being a percentage increase of 18·8 compared with the number in 1931). The members of these households were occupying 40,511 structurally separate dwellings (being a percentage increase of 33·4 compared with the 1931 figure). Twenty-three per cent. of households were sharing a dwelling (the third lowest figure among Metropolitan Boroughs). Only 2 per cent. of occupied accommodation had less than three rooms. The average number of persons per Woolwich household is estimated to be 3·12 (the third highest average among the London Boroughs) compared with 3·61 in 1931. The average number of rooms per household was 4·27 being the highest figure among Metropolitan Boroughs.

The density of occupation (persons per room) for the Borough of Woolwich was 0·73. Ten per cent. of Woolwich households are one-person households. This is the lowest percentage among Metropolitan Boroughs. The average number of rooms per dwelling was 4·85 compared with 5·22 in 1931. 108 Woolwich households were occupying one room only; 699 were occupying 2 rooms; 3,533 were occupying 3 rooms; 9,775 were occupying 4 rooms; 16,451 were occupying 5 rooms; 6,423 were occupying 6 rooms; 2,085 were occupying 7 rooms; and 886 were occupying 8 rooms or more.

The report reveals that the percentage of Woolwich persons living at more than two per room is now 1·28 compared with 5·66 in 1931. Only one other Metropolitan Borough (Wandsworth with 1·26) had a lower percentage. Comparative figures for the Administrative County of London are 2·5 per cent. in 1951 and 13·1 per cent. in 1931.

Altogether, 15,534 households were without a fixed bath and 4,119 were sharing. Therefore, 43 per cent. of the total number of households in the Borough were either sharing a fixed bath or without one. However, only the city of London, Chelsea, St. Marylebone and Lewisham have lower percentages than Woolwich, the great majority of Metropolitan Boroughs having as many as 60 to 70 per cent. of their total households sharing a fixed bath or being without one.

## SANITARY ADMINISTRATION

### Sanitary Inspection of the Area.

During 1953 the Sanitary Inspectors carried out 30,701 inspections, including re-inspections. The nature of these inspections is shown in Table No. 11. As a result of these inspections, 1,393 intimation notices and 880 statutory notices were served.

### Complaints.

There was a slight increase in the number of complaints received during the year—2,026 compared with 1,878 in 1952. It remained, however, below the figure for 1951 which was 2,676. The necessary action was taken where complaints were made or nuisances discovered.

Table No. 11. Inspections.

Complaints investigated ..	2,026	Water sampling and testing ..	92
Complaints reinspected ..	5,835	Rodent Control ..	2,856
Outworkers' premises ..	305	Smoke Observations ..	88
Houses <i>re</i> overcrowding ..	195	Theatres and cinemas ..	6
New houses <i>re</i> water supply ..	492	Men's lavatories ..	74
Houses <i>re</i> infectious disease ..	740	Women's lavatories ..	63
Houses <i>re</i> smallpox contacts ..	3	Rag and bone dealers ..	5
Houses <i>re</i> vermin ..	579	Houses <i>re</i> choked drains ..	137
Woolwich Borough Council		Houses, visits with owners, builders, etc. ..	379
housing applicants <i>re</i> vermin	1,253	Houses <i>re</i> slum clearance and re-	
Houses <i>re</i> scabies ..	28	development ..	261
Houses <i>re</i> Housing Act ..	317		



House-to-house inspections ..	618	Drainage inspections .. ..	911
Houses <i>re</i> Rent Restrictions Acts .. ..	4	Houses <i>re</i> verminous persons ..	125
Aged and Infirm persons ..	2,520	Rag Flock premises .. ..	14
Common Lodging Houses ..	18	Pet Animals premises .. ..	31
Tents and Vans .. ..	331	Houses <i>re</i> requests for permitted numbers .. ..	160
Factories mechanically powered	319	Offensive trades .. ..	4
Factories non - mechanically powered .. ..	73	Visits <i>re</i> insect and other pests ..	84
Work places .. ..	11	Houses <i>re</i> disinfection or destruction of articles .. ..	18
Shops <i>re</i> Shops Act inspections	411	Marshes, ditches, pools, water-courses, static water tanks, etc.	76
Food premises .. ..	4,153	Stables .. ..	22
Itinerant vendors .. ..	39	Miscellaneous visits .. ..	639
Complaints <i>re</i> food .. ..	67	Non-effectual visits .. ..	4,270
Shops <i>re</i> Pharmacy and Poisons	7	Exhumations .. ..	1
National Assistance Act <i>re</i> burial of deceased persons ..	4	Atmospheric Pollution .. ..	38

Table No. 12. Nuisances Abated.

Dirty conditions remedied ..	487	Lighting and ventilation defects remedied .. ..	113
Roofs repaired .. ..	570	Areas and yards paved or repaired	23
Gutters, rainwater pipes, etc. repaired or renewed ..	334	Drains cleansed .. ..	218
Damp walls and other damp conditions remedied ..	1,604	Drains repaired or reconstructed	223
Fireplaces, hearths, etc. repaired or renewed .. ..	204	Combined drains repaired or reconstructed .. ..	5
Floors, skirting and other wood-work .. ..	240	Water closets cleansed and repaired .. ..	230
Windows repaired or renewed	552	Water closet pans and traps fixed	55
Ceilings repaired or renewed	286	Water closet seats renewed ..	27
Walls repaired or renewed ..	1,124	Water supply defects remedied ..	151
Other dilapidations remedied ..	109	Dustbins provided .. ..	138
		Foul accumulations remedied ..	46

### Sanitary Notices—Legal Proceedings.

During 1953, it was found necessary to institute legal proceedings in only five cases in order to obtain compliance with notices served by the Sanitary Inspectors under the Public Health (London) Act, 1936, and other relevant Acts, Regulations and By-laws. One Abatement Order was obtained and fines amounting to £4 were imposed.

### Water Supply.

The Borough of Woolwich is provided with a domestic water supply entirely by the Metropolitan Water Board, and samples of the water are subjected to routine chemical and bacteriological examination by the Board at its own laboratories.

The condition of the water supply locally during the year was satisfactory, both in regard to quality and quantity and no complaint regarding the quality of the water was received.

All the eight active wells in the Borough are used for trade purposes.

### Drainage.

A total of 441 drainage defects were discovered during the year and the Sanitary Inspectors supervised the necessary works of repair and reconstruction. Thirty-five smoke tests on suspected defective drains were carried out and ten of these produced a positive result, 21 proved to be sound, and a further four, which also produced positive results, were in respect of old disused drains which, when exposed, were permanently sealed off. One private drain was cleared during the year for which a charge of 11s. 0d. was made.



Altogether, 179 combined drains were investigated and over 100 smoke tests were carried out. Twenty-eight of these smoke tests produced positive results and twelve combined drains were found to be defective. In five cases, after the service of the necessary notices under Section 40 of the Public Health (London) Act, 1936, the Borough Engineer carried out the work of repair or reconstruction, the cost being apportioned among the responsible owners.

### **Shops Act, 1950.**

The provisions of the Shops Act, 1950, relating to the suitability of sanitary accommodation in shops is the responsibility of the local sanitary authority. Altogether 411 visits of inspection were made by the Sanitary Inspectors for this purpose during the year.

### **Common Lodging Houses.**

There are two licensed Common Lodging Houses in the Borough, with accommodation for 50 and 22 men respectively. Eighteen inspections were made of these premises during the year.

### **Rent and Mortgage Interest (Restrictions) Acts.**

During 1953 the Health Committee authorised the issue of certificates in respect of two houses on the application of the tenant that the houses in question were not in good and tenantable repair. The Committee also considered two applications for revocation of existing certificates of unfitness, and approved one such revocation on being satisfied that the necessary repairs to put the house concerned in a reasonable state of fitness had been executed.

**Pharmacy and Poisons Act, 1933.** This Act places upon the Council the duty of enforcing the provisions relating to poisons in Part II of the Poisons List. During 1953 the number of sellers of Part II poisons (other than registered pharmacists) on the list maintained by the Council was 146. This number included seven new registrations during the year.

### **Rats.**

Once again measures for the destruction of rats were continued throughout the year. 1,122 complaints were received and in addition to the investigation of the premises concerned in the complaints, the systematic inspection under "block control" was continued. A total of 7,572 premises were inspected under the block control system. The total number of properties found to be infested by rats or mice or both was 1,402, which included 209 business and industrial premises. All infestations found are systematically treated and where the cause of the trouble appears to be due to defective drains or other defects in the building the owner is requested to effect the necessary repairs. The Department carried out 31 smoke tests on suspected defective drains at rat infested premises and these tests produced evidence of 16 defective drains causing rat infestation.

The Council continued its practice of carrying out free treatment in respect of infestations in private dwellings. A charge is made for treatment carried out by the Council at business and industrial premises.

Owing to the flooding in February, 1953, in low lying areas in the Borough at Abbey Wood rats were driven to seek shelter in higher ground and this caused two major infestations. The areas were surveyed and a systematic poisoning campaign carried out using Zinc Phosphide, Arsenious Oxide and Warfarin, in that order. The areas were cleared of rats and some 185 bodies were recovered.

It is usual for rats to move from infested sewers to the surface by means of defects in the sewers or drains, but during the year a reversal of this procedure was discovered. In an area in the Borough where the sewers have always been clear of rats and the rat infestations have been purely surface ones, test baiting revealed a minor infestation in the sewers which was cleared after treatment. An open drain was found which the surface rats had used to gain access to the sewers.

As in previous years, with the co-operation of the Borough Engineer's Department, two sewer treatments and one test baiting were undertaken during 1953 and in this way the number of rats in the sewers has been kept under control. The



sewer treatment in June was carried out with the use of Zinc Phosphide and in the December treatment Arsenious Oxide was used.

### Factories Act, 1937.

Table No. 13. Details of Inspections carried out during 1953 are as follows :—

Premises.	No. on Register.	Number of		
		Inspections.	Written Notices.	Occupiers prosecuted.
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities .. .. .	34	73	10	—
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority .. .. .	339	319	38	—
(iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out-workers' premises)	—	—	—	—
Total .. .. .	373	392	48	—

### Cases in which Defects were found and remedied :—

Particulars.	Number of Cases in which defects were found				Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted.
	Found.	Remedied.	Referred		
			To H.M. Inspector.	By H.M. Inspector.	
Want of cleanliness ..	12	12	—	6	—
Overcrowding .. ..	—	—	—	—	—
Inadequate ventilation ..	1	1	—	—	—
Ineffective drainage of floors .. ..	5	5	—	—	—
Sanitary Conveniences :—					
(a) Insufficient ..	1	1	—	1	—
(b) Unsuitable or defective ..	42	42	—	24	—
(c) Not separate for sexes .. ..	1	1	—	—	—
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Outworkers) ..	—	—	3	—	—
Total .. ..	62	62	3	31	—

### Outworkers.

The latest return of outworkers made by employers of labour in the Borough shows that this type of work is increasing considerably. There were 257 outworkers in the list prepared in August, 1953, compared with 126 in 1952. The nature of their work was as follows : Lampshades, 120 ; Wearing Apparel (making, etc.), 115 ; Household linen, etc., 17 ; Artificial Flowers, 2 ; Feather Sorting, 3.

The woman Sanitary Inspector visits the homes of outworkers periodically to ensure that the working conditions are satisfactory.

### **Rag Flock.**

In order to ensure the use of clean filling materials in upholstery, etc., premises where rag flock and other filling materials are manufactured and stored are regularly inspected, and samples of rag flock and filling materials are obtained for analysis.

One application for the renewal of a licence to manufacture rag flock was approved by the Council during the year. There are three registered premises within the Borough, where filling materials to which the Act applies are being used.

Satisfactory reports were received from the Public Analyst on a sample of woollen mixed felt and a sample of unused felt sent to him for analysis.

The Analyst reported, however, that a formal sample of unused cotton felt failed to satisfy the requirements laid down for this material in the Rag Flock and Other Filling Materials Act in respect of the trash content (i.e., the cotton seed, chaff and other impurities remaining in the felt after processing). The average trash content of the sample was 9.3 per cent., whereas the permitted maximum content is 7 per cent. The manufacturers of this material were warned.

### **Rag and Bone Bye-laws.**

During the year the Council, on a report from the Metropolitan Police, instituted legal proceedings in respect of an offence against the London County Council Bye-laws relating to the business of a rag and bone dealer. A man was seen in Rushgrove Street, Woolwich, to exchange goldfish with small children for bundles of old rags. A fine of 10s. 0d. was imposed.

### **Provision of Dustbins.**

Since decisions in the Courts in 1947 and 1948 on the liability to provide a dustbin, difficulties have arisen because these decisions did not establish any guiding principle which would assist local authorities to exercise what has been held to be a judicial discretion whether statutory notices under the Public Health (London) Act, 1936 should be served on the owner or the occupier of the premises.

In view of the present unsatisfactory position the Council decided to support a suggestion that the Metropolitan Boroughs' Standing Joint Committee should seek a further amendment of Section 105 of the Public Health (London) Act, 1936, definitely to place the liability to provide, maintain and replace a dustbin on the owner of the premises.

During 1953 in 16 cases where a notice requiring the provision of a dustbin had been served on the owner, objections were received from the owners to their providing the dustbin. Each of these cases was carefully considered by the Health Committee, and in 14 cases it was decided that the owner ought properly to be required to provide the new dustbin. Notices were accordingly served under the Public Health (London) Act, 1936, on these persons.

It was necessary in four instances to institute legal proceedings against the owners to enforce the requirements of the notices, and fines totalling £4 were imposed.

There were ten instances following the service of a notice under the Bye-laws requiring the provision of a dustbin where the owner, although not objecting, nevertheless did not provide the dustbin, and the Health Committee authorised the sending of a cautionary letter to the owners concerned. Dustbins were subsequently made available by the owners at each of the premises.

### **Offensive Trades.**

There are two offensive trades being carried on in the Borough: that of slaughterer of poultry at the Woolwich and Plumstead Synagogue, and the trade of tripe boiler at the Garland Road Abattoir. During the year an application was received for the extension of the existing Establishment Order in respect of the business of slaughterer of poultry, and the Council decided to renew this Order.

The Council also approved an application for the annual renewal of the licence relating to the tripe boiler premises.

### **Pet Shops.**

There are eight pet shops in the Borough, and these are licensed annually by the Council under the provisions of the Pet Animals Act, 1951, and are visited periodically by the Sanitary Inspectors to ensure that the requirements of the Act and the conditions under which the licences are issued are being complied with. Thirty-one such inspections were carried out during the year.



### **Mosquitoes and Other Pests.**

During 1953, a number of complaints was received from all parts of the Borough of infestations of cockroaches, crickets, beetles, silver fish, etc. Advice was given in each case and, where necessary, treatment was carried out. Two difficult infestations were dealt with during the year, one being an infestation of cockroaches in a large hospital in the Borough and the other of Pharoah's ants in one of the Council's establishments. Several treatments were necessary in respect of these infestations before the insects were destroyed. Charges totalling £34 15s. 7d. were made upon the responsible persons for the treatments carried out.

There were very few complaints during 1953 of wasps nesting in houses or gardens. Only one nest had to be destroyed, and a charge of 15s. 0d. was made upon the occupier of the premises concerned.

### **Floods in Abbey Wood Area, February, 1953.**

The severe flooding which occurred during the week-end of 31st January, 1953, throughout the east coast, affected the Abbey Wood district, following a break in the river bank east of Crossness. The flooding seriously affected a house in Sewell Road, and three houses in Harrow Manorway and the works of four factories in Harrow Manorway. Twenty-six houses or caravans in that area were also flooded, together with cellars of two shop premises and the ground floors of five houses in Abbey Terrace. There was also flooding to the back additions of 25 houses in Abbey Grove. The flood water largely submerged the Council's allotment site north of the railway.

Arrangements were made for the families affected by the flooding to be given temporary accommodation. Apart from one family, the occupants of the houses affected in Abbey Terrace and Abbey Grove did not move from their houses, but moved temporarily to the top floor. For some days the position was difficult as there was no sanitary accommodation or cooking facilities available for these families. The Woolwich Council of Social Service provided meals to those people who desired them. Chloride of lime was supplied to counteract contamination caused by the flood water. When the flood water receded, soap and disinfectant were supplied for use in the work of making the houses fit for occupation again.

The Council made arrangements with the Air Ministry for heaters to be supplied to enable people to dry out their homes, and four Air Force vans were sent from Northampton and Norfolk for this work. Prior to their arrival many of the residents had used coal for drying out purposes, the Mayor having arranged for all the families affected to receive coal free of charge for a period of four weeks. The London Fire Brigade also co-operated and pumped out water from basements and beneath floorboards as required by the Council. In order to prevent further water entering the affected houses sandbags were supplied by the Borough Engineer's Department, and members of the Council's staff assisted many of the residents. Throughout the whole period the local Civil Defence Organisation gave most valuable assistance.

### **Public Houses.**

The supervision of the hygienic conditions in public houses is an important duty of the Department. There are 148 licensed premises in the Borough, 45 of which also serve main meals. 319 inspections were made during the year, and as a result 80 defects were found requiring the service of 20 informal notices and four formal notices. All these defects were subsequently remedied.

During the year many improvements were carried out by the brewery companies concerned, including the installation of additional sanitary accommodation in 11 instances, improvements in cellar drainage at four of the licensed premises, the installation of hot water supply to the bar wells in three instances, and general redecoration and cleansing at a further 17 licensed premises.

### **Boating and Paddling Pools.**

Following chlorination experiments during 1952 to evolve a satisfactory method of improving the purity of the water in boating and paddling pools in the Borough, a regular chlorination was continued with the co-operation of the Borough Engineer.



The pool attendants add chloride of lime to the pools each evening in quantities prescribed, to give an estimated free chlorine content of 0.15 p.p.m. Sufficient washing soda is also added to maintain a pH reaction of 8.0.

In addition, the pools are scrubbed out weekly with chloride of lime paste. The results of these measures has been a consistent improvement in the purity and appearance of the water.

### **Old People's Welfare.**

The local Old People's Welfare Committee, which covers the whole range of welfare work for old people, is a standing committee of the Woolwich Council of Social Service, and on it are represented the various statutory and voluntary bodies concerned with the welfare of old people. Amongst the bodies represented on the Committee are the Women's Voluntary Service, the British Red Cross Society, Toc H, the Rotary Club, the Soroptimists Club, the National Federation of Old Age Pensions Association, local Church organisations, the Borough Council, the London County Council, the National Assistance Board and the local hospitals.

The work of the Health Department connected with old people's welfare has continued to expand during 1953, an increasing proportion of time being spent by the officers of the Department concerned in dealing with the problems of old people. In no case was it necessary to remove an elderly person compulsorily under the powers contained in the National Assistance Act, 1948. However, a number of old people were removed to hospitals and institutions on a voluntary basis, and those old people who were found to be in need of help were provided with assistance in one form or another, and so were able to continue to live at home under improved conditions.

### **Meals Service.**

There are two lunch clubs for old people, the Plumstead and Eltham Lunch Clubs, serving a total of approximately 500 meals per week. At the Plumstead Lunch Club meals are supplied by the Borough Council restaurant at the Plumstead Baths and taken in containers to the lunch club where voluntary workers serve the food and wait on the old people. At Eltham, the meals are transported by the Borough Council from the County Council restaurant in Eltham High Street to the lunch club. The Borough Council makes a financial grant to this service, and financial assistance is also given by the County Council towards the total cost of the meal.

### **Holidays.**

A large number of applications have been received from old people living in the Borough for inclusion in the holidays scheme. For some years there has been a holiday scheme in the Borough operated on a small scale by the Woolwich Council of Social Service. During 1953, additional money was made available for the purpose of providing holidays for old people, and 43 old persons were able to enjoy a holiday at seaside resorts. The Borough Council's Health Committee have general oversight over the holiday scheme, but the detailed arrangements are left entirely to the Old People's Welfare Committee, who are responsible for deciding which of the applicants are most deserving of a holiday. It was decided at the outset that where the Old People's Welfare Committee were satisfied that no contribution, however small, should be made by the applicant, the full cost ought to be met from the holiday fund as the Health Committee considered that no one should miss a holiday because of lack of means, although where they could contribute they would be expected to do so. During 1953, all the old people went for a fortnight, except three persons who requested a week's holiday only. Each old person contributed 10s. 0d. to 15s. 0d. for each week's stay towards the charges, and in some cases the cost of the fares also. Letters of appreciation have been received from several people who went away. It is anticipated that during 1954 several more old people will be able to have a holiday under these arrangements.

### **Visiting Service.**

There exists in the Borough a scheme for the visiting of old people by voluntary workers. In order to supplement this work, the Old People's Welfare Committee



has a visiting scheme with a panel of 30 or so visitors, and an average of 60 visits per week are made to old people living alone and also to others staying at Plumstead Lodge. Small services such as shopping, reading, writing letters, the drawing of pensions and the repair of wireless sets, etc. are performed by the visitor. The names of those old people who would like a visitor are forwarded to the Woolwich Council of Social Service from several sources.

### Recording and Measurement of Atmospheric Pollution.

During 1953, the setting up of five stations for the measurement and recording of atmospheric pollution was carried out in the Borough. Each station consists of a deposit gauge which collects grit, ash, etc., and a lead peroxide instrument which measures the activity of sulphurous gases.

Monthly readings are taken and the results made available to the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. The five stations in the Borough are located on suitable sites in Warspite Road (Dockyard area), the Municipal Offices, Abbey Wood omnibus garage, Shooters Hill Golf Club, and the fifth station in the Eltham High Street area. In order to arrive at reliable figures, it is necessary to take readings over long periods, and therefore too much stress should not be placed on monthly fluctuations. Four of the five stations were working by the end of August, 1953.

The results of the monthly readings to the end of the year are as follows:—

Table No. 14.

### Measurement and Recording of Atmospheric Pollution—August-December, 1953.

Station.	Weight of SO <sub>2</sub> Collected mg/100 sq. cm./day.					Total Solid Matter Collected. Monthly deposit in tons per sq. mile.				
	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
No. 1 Woolwich Dockyard	1.76	1.93	2.77	2.42	3.53	38.38	36.28	52.60	21.04	50.59
No. 2 Municipal Offices ..	1.74	2.09	3.14	3.55	4.07	18.08	17.00	27.03	11.28	27.93
No. 3 Abbey Wood Omni- bus Garage ..	—	—	—	—	3.35	—	—	—	—	31.46
No. 4 Shooters Hill Golf Club ..	1.35	1.64	2.60	2.91	3.62	12.58	24.28	18.58	8.14	20.01
No. 5 Eltham High Street Area ..	0.51	0.59	1.28	1.27	2.04	7.73	10.20	13.68	5.41	17.77
OTHER STATIONS IN COUNTY OF LONDON										
Highest ..	4.31	5.16	5.22	8.64	7.95	73.03	169.66	647.63	569.81	100.71
Lowest ..	0.36	0.42	0.70	1.24	1.75	7.65	9.94	13.68	5.17	13.57

### Atmospheric Pollution.

A total of 292 observations were made on factory premises during the year to detect smoke nuisances and nuisances from grit, dust, etc., being emitted from premises within the Borough.

Following observations at a factory on the riverside which was found to be emitting smoke, including grit particles, a formal notice was served on the management. Alterations to the plant, which was thought to be the cause of this nuisance, were effected, and there was a material improvement immediately.



Complaints of dirt and grit emitted from an Eltham laundry were investigated by one of the Council's smoke inspectors and a number of observations were made at these premises, which are situated in a residential area. A notice requiring the abatement of the nuisance was served. Owing to changes in the demand for steam at the laundry, imperfect stoking had resulted. Advice was given and some improvement was brought about before the end of the year.

Frequent observations were necessary during the year at factory premises in the Abbey Wood area, complaints having been received from time to time of smoke and fumes being emitted from this factory, particularly in the evening. Complaints of smell and fumes from rubber being burnt at this factory were also investigated. The firm installed additional apparatus in order to reduce this nuisance, and, in consultation with the Health Department, arrangements are being made for the improvement of the existing plant at this factory.

A number of complaints of smoke and grit from one of the largest of the riverside factories in the area were also received. The replacement of old boilers by boilers of modern design is being carried out at the factory and trouble has been experienced when the new boilers have been put into operation due to the emission of smoke and grit over short periods, particularly during fire cleaning and ash removal. In endeavouring to bring about improvements, the firm have made several modifications to the boiler, and it is thought they have now reached a satisfactory method of overcoming their difficulties which have caused considerable technical trouble in production at the factory. The firm were also asked to raise the height of a steel stack at the works, the top level of which was about 12 feet below the level of the top storey of some of the factory buildings.

#### **National Smoke Abatement Society.**

During 1953 the Council decided to become a full member of the National Smoke Abatement Society. A South-East Divisional Council of the Society has now been formed to study the problems relating to atmospheric pollution in the area, and the Borough Council has appointed members to this body.

The attention of the Council has been drawn to the following resolutions passed at the last annual Conference of the Society :—

“ That the Conference views with alarm the menace of fumes caused by the extension of the use of Diesel oil engines and faulty maintenance of these, and that all local authorities and the police be requested to enforce, and, if necessary, increase their powers to ensure minimizing or suppression of these fumes in the interests of public health.”

The Executive Council of the Society has also drawn the attention of local authorities to a resolution requiring that sufficient space should be provided for the storage of fuel at dwelling houses to enable an adequate quantity of the lighter solid smokeless fuels to be stored and kept separate from bituminous coal. The Society has also urged local authorities to improve their arrangements to ensure that tenants of municipal houses with the modern appliances are advised and persistently encouraged to burn solid smokeless fuels.

The latter recommendation is included along with numerous other recommendations relating to smokeless fuel and smokeless zones in a memorandum prepared by the Metropolitan Boroughs' Standing Joint Committee for submission to the Government Committee of Inquiry on Air Pollution.

The Borough Council are reviewing the whole question of air pollution, to see how progress can best be made.

#### **Nuisance from Cement Dust.**

During the last two weeks in March, at a period of drought, parts of the Borough were covered by a fine grey coloured dust, which covered the roof tops and foliage. The main source of the dust was from the cement works at Swanscombe and Northfleet, and north of the river at Purfleet. Unfortunately, at that time some of the dust arresting plant at the factories was out of order. The Abbey Wood area, which is nearest the cement works, was the part of the Borough most affected, and parts of Eltham were affected to a lesser extent.



Representations were made on behalf of the Council to the local Members of Parliament, and to the local authorities concerned. The general question of this nuisance was raised in the House of Commons.

A Committee, comprised of interested local authorities, on which representatives of the management of the cement factories and officers of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government also sit, is actively engaged in considering means of eliminating this nuisance.

### **Burial of the Dead.**

During the year arrangements for the burial or cremation of the bodies of persons dying or found dead in the area have been carried out by the Council on twelve occasions, as no other suitable arrangements were being made.

Expenses incurred in this work may be recovered from the estate of the deceased person or from "a liable relative." The responsibility for the burial of the majority of persons dying in local hospitals in such circumstances now rests with the local Hospital Management Committee.

The total expenses in respect of cases dealt with by the Council during 1953 were £91 4s. 9d., of which £24 was recovered.

### **Mortuary Facilities.**

The public mortuary at Sunbury Street is an old building, and, although adequate for the accommodation of a few bodies in an emergency, is not suitable for larger numbers without improvement. On the instruction of the Coroner all post-mortem cases are sent to the public mortuary at Lewisham in the case of Eltham persons, and to Deptford in the case of Woolwich, Plumstead and Abbey Wood persons. Approximately 200 Woolwich cases go to Deptford and rather more than 100 to Lewisham.

### **Eltham Cemetery—Proposed Joint Crematorium.**

Strong representations were made by the Council during the year to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government urging that consideration should be given to the Council's application for consent to the building of the proposed joint crematorium, and that priority should be given to this area. During the year a conference was held at the Ministry when it was pointed out that the Council were extremely anxious to secure crematorium facilities locally, the nearest crematorium on the east being at Charing in Kent, and on the west at Honor Oak, this crematorium at the present time working to capacity. It is understood that every consideration is now being given to the Council's application.

### **Street Cleansing.**

Each main thoroughfare is cleansed daily, secondary roads twice weekly and district roads once weekly. There are 86 road sweepers employed on the work and, in addition, a mechanical sweeper and sprinkler is used to sweep the roads in the shopping areas adjacent to Powis Street, Plumstead High Street and Eltham High Street.

Altogether, 9,200 street gulleys are cleansed periodically by mechanical gulley cleansing machines.

### **House and Trade Refuse.**

During the year under review 46,087 tons of refuse were collected by the Council's vehicles and 55,630 tons disposed of at the Council's Refuse Destructor. The difference between the two weights is largely the quantity of refuse delivered to the Destructor from the Royal Arsenal and from the Army Barracks. Material salvaged weighed 1,427 tons and was sold for £6,441. In addition, 2,592 tons of kitchen waste were collected within the Borough and, with the kitchen waste collected by neighbouring authorities, was processed into pig food at the Council's plant at White Hart Road.

A system of house-to-house collection of kitchen waste has been instituted in an area approximately equal to one third of the Borough. Aluminium containers are issued to householders and result in the removal of communal bins from the streets in the district in which the new system has been introduced, and in the obtaining of an improved quality of kitchen waste.



### Public Conveniences.

Fourteen conveniences for men and a similar number for women are maintained throughout the area, hours of opening and closing varying with local requirements. In the town centre, for example, the conveniences are open from 5.30 a.m. Normally, however, this service is available between the hours of 6.30 a.m. and 11 p.m. These conveniences were inspected regularly throughout the year. In all the conveniences water closets are now free.

### Free Washing Facilities—Public Conveniences.

The Council has for the past three years provided free washing facilities at main public conveniences. This service continues to be used and appreciated by the public, although some people prefer the paid washing facilities with the provision of linen towels.

The average weekly issues of free paper towels at the conveniences are as follows :—

	<i>Men.</i>	<i>Women.</i>
Beresford Square .. .. .	400	300
Nile Street .. .. .	250	200
Eltham Church Convenience .. .. .	200	100
North Woolwich .. .. .	150	200
The Slade .. .. .	100	20
New Eltham .. .. .	—	50

The information regarding Street Cleansing, Refuse Disposal and Public Conveniences has been kindly supplied by the Borough Engineer.

### Swimming Bath Water.

During 1953 fifty samples of swimming bath water were taken from the Council's public baths at Woolwich, Plumstead and Eltham. These samples were submitted to the Park Hospital, Hither Green, for bacteriological examination. All the samples proved satisfactory. The department carried out simultaneously its own tests for free chlorine and hydrogen-ion concentration (pH value).

I set out below details of the samples of water taken.

Baths.	Number of Samples taken.	Number of Bacillus Coli.	Average pH value.	Average Free Chlorine.	Average Temperature.
Woolwich .. .. .	18	0	7.36	1.51	75.5°
Plumstead .. .. .	14	0	7.25	1.49	76°
Eltham .. .. .	18	0	7.2	0.93	75.5°

## HOUSING

At the end of 1953 there were estimated to be 40,227 houses in the Borough. The number inspected for housing defects under the Public Health or Housing Acts was 8,579, compared with 9,046 in 1952. The number found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for habitation was 1,397. Some 923 houses were rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Sanitary Inspectors, including the service of intimation notices. House-to-house inspections were carried out under the Housing (Consolidated) Regulations, 618 houses being inspected under these Regulations, being almost double the number inspected in the previous year.

### Overcrowding.

During the year a total of 40 families were found to be living in overcrowded conditions, and overcrowding reports were made to the London County Council on behalf of these persons. In thirteen cases the County Council provided other accommodation. A further 195 families were visited after complaints of over-

crowding, or at the request of the London County Council or the Borough Council Housing Departments. Reports were sent to both Housing Departments setting out details of the applicants' present accommodation.

Upon application being made by either landlord or occupier the Council are under an obligation to give in writing a statement of the permitted number of persons in respect of any dwelling house, and measurements of dwellings for this purpose were taken on 652 occasions, compared with 475 in 1952.

### Individual Unfit Houses.

During 1953 new legislation—the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1953—was passed, permitting a local authority, if they consider it inexpedient to make a demolition order in respect of an individual unfit house, to make a closing order, having regard to the effect the demolition might have on adjoining property. A Closing Order may prohibit the use of the house for any purpose other than a purpose approved by the local authority.

Before the coming into force of this legislation, it was possible to make a Closing Order in respect of part of a house only, as distinct from a whole house. In those cases where the Council considered it inexpedient that a terrace house should be demolished, in view of the effect it might have on adjoining property, it was a practice of the Council to accept an undertaking from the owner that the premises would not be used for human habitation.

Twenty-three houses (compared with 11 in 1952) were represented during the year as being unfit for human habitation, and incapable of being made fit at reasonable expense. Formal notices were served on the owners under the provisions of the Housing Acts. After consideration of each case, demolition orders were made by the Council in respect of ten of these houses. Four undertakings not to use the premises for human habitation were accepted before the coming into operation of the new Closing Order procedure, and Closing Orders under the provisions of Section 10 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1953, were made in respect of five premises. Details of the houses dealt with are as follows :—

166, Plumstead Common Road	Undertaking ..	25th March, 1953
20, Church Hill .. ..	Demolition Order	27th April, 1953
22, Church Hill .. ..	Demolition Order	27th April, 1953
79, Woolwich High Street ..	Demolition Order	28th May, 1953
1, Elizabeth Terrace .. ..	Undertaking	29th May, 1953
7, Limbrey's Buildings.. ..	Demolition Order	26th June, 1953
20, Chapel Hill .. ..	Demolition Order	26th June, 1953
19, Abbey Terrace .. ..	Undertaking	10th July, 1953
79, Villas Road .. ..	Demolition Order	22nd July, 1953
81, Villas Road .. ..	Demolition Order	22nd July, 1953
34, Elmley Street .. ..	Undertaking	27th July, 1953
2, Kingsman Street .. ..	Closing Order— whole house.	21st October, 1953
83, Sand Street .. ..	Closing Order— whole house.	22nd October, 1953
2, Fennell Street .. ..	Closing Order— whole house.	22nd October, 1953
15, Walpole Place .. ..	Closing Order— whole house.	22nd October, 1953
8, Samuel Street .. ..	Demolition Order	24th November, 1953
10, Samuel Street .. ..	Demolition Order	24th November, 1953
9, Purrett Road .. ..	Demolition Order	23rd December, 1953
97, Raglan Road .. ..	Closing Order— whole house.	23rd December, 1953

In March, 1951, following my official representation that the premises were unfit, the owner of 33, Woodhill, Woolwich, gave an undertaking that the house would not be used for human habitation. During 1953, on the owner's application, the Council rescinded this undertaking on being satisfied that the premises had been rendered fit again.



A similar application was also received for the revocation of the undertaking given in 1948 by the owner of 14, Parry Place, Woolwich, that the premises would not be used for human habitation. However, as the condition of the premises at the time of the application for revocation of the undertaking was substantially the same as when the undertaking was accepted in 1948, the Council decided not to revoke the undertaking.

During the year the Council made Closing Orders in respect of unfit rooms at a further ten premises. The following are the details of the parts of houses closed by the Council during the year :—

3, Creton Street	..	..	Ground floor front and first floor front rooms Closing Order dated 21st January, 1953.
54, Llanover Road	..	..	Basement front room—Closing Order dated 23rd February, 1953.
42, Rockmount Road	..	..	Front south and front north rooms—Closing Order dated 23rd February, 1953.
92, Eltham Road	..	..	Basement front east and west rooms and basement back east and west rooms— Closing Order dated 28th May, 1953.
15, Nightingale Place	..	..	Basement front and back rooms—Closing Order dated 23rd July, 1953.
30, Pattison Road	..	..	Basement front room. Closing Order dated 23rd July, 1953.
272, Woolwich Church Street			First floor front room—Closing Order dated 21st October, 1953.
106, Eltham Road	..	..	The four basement rooms—Closing Order dated 20th October, 1953.
137, Herbert Road	..	..	Basement front and back rooms and base- ment scullery—Closing Order dated 21st October, 1953.
24, Frances Street	..	..	Basement front and back rooms—Closing Order dated 23rd December, 1953.

Formal action under the Housing Acts was also being taken at the end of the year in respect of a further three individual unfit houses.

### Housing Repairs and Rents Bill.

This Bill, which was presented to Parliament in November, 1953, will give substantial new powers and duties to local authorities with regard to slum clearance and the maintenance of unfit properties. Most of these powers will be of an inspectorial or supervisory nature, which will give considerably increased duties to the Sanitary Inspectors.

### Areas for Clearance.

*Vicarage Road Clearance Area.* On the 13th May, 1953, I represented to the Council that the eight dwelling houses, Nos. 19-33 (odd) Vicarage Road, Plumstead, were unfit for human habitation by reason of disrepair, sanitary defects and bad arrangement, and that they were dangerous or injurious to health. The Health Committee considered that the most satisfactory method of dealing with the conditions in this area was the demolition of these dwelling houses, and the area has now been dealt with by the Council as a Clearance area.

### Housing Progress.

The number of new dwellings built in the Borough during 1953 is summarised as follows :—

By Woolwich Borough Council	..	..	..	..	216
By private enterprise	..	..	..	..	33

In addition, 21 dwellings were erected by the London County Council at Campbell House, Shooters Hill, 153 on their Milne Estate, Woolwich, and 78 on their Avery Hill Estate, Eltham.

Apart from the erection of houses and flats by the County Council, at the end of the year schemes were in hand for the erection of a further 212 dwellings by the Borough Council.

Number of applications on Register at 1st January, 1953..	5,115	
Number of applications received during year .. ..	1,292	
	<hr/>	6,407
Number of applicants rehoused during year :—		
(1) By Borough Council .. .. .	249	
(2) By nomination to L.C.C. .. .. .	70	
(3) Direct by L.C.C. .. .. .	67	
	<hr/>	386
		<hr/>
		6,021
Number of applications cancelled or withdrawn (applicants moved, found own accommodation, etc.) .. ..		1,379
		<hr/>
Number of applicants on " live " Register at 31st December, 1953 .. .. .		4,642
		<hr/>

Properties under the Council's control :—

	1952.	1953.
At 31st December, tenancies totalled :—		
In pre-war houses .. .. .	4,317	4,317
In rebuilt houses .. .. .	147	147
In new post-war houses .. .. .	1,834	2,050
In temporary dwellings .. .. .	986	986
In requisitioned properties .. .. .	1,014	954
In miscellaneous properties .. .. .	217	369
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	8,515	8,823
	<hr/>	<hr/>

The weekly rent roll at the end of 1953 was £10,893 10s. 5d., compared with £8,472 13s. 9d. at the end of 1952.

I am indebted to the Director of Housing for the above information with reference to the Borough Council's housing progress during 1953.

## HEALTH EDUCATION

The Department's Health Education Unit was again very popular with local organisations during 1953, and the demand for programmes was as heavy as in the previous year. With regard to the film programmes, a slight falling off in the number of visits to mixed adult audiences was balanced by an increase in the number of programmes given to women's meetings and youth organisations.

A total of 81 film shows and 15 informal talks was presented to audiences numbering 4,250 persons. In addition, the Council's film unit was in attendance on 26 occasions at meetings of local Civil Defence volunteers, and five film sessions were included in the Council's Post-Entry Training scheme for junior entrants into the Local Government Service.

Films dealing with health subjects which are being used in these programmes are mainly obtained on hire from the Central Film Library. Usually each programme includes a film of general interest, and a large proportion of the general interest films are loaned without cost to the Council by the Gas Council, the Metropolitan Water Board and from one of the large firms of milk distributors. I am indebted to these bodies for their valuable help in making these films available for use.



Subjects dealt with during the year were as follows :—

Health and Hygiene .. .. .	18 sessions
The Local Health Services .. .. .	16 „
Pest Control .. .. .	9 „
Home Safety .. .. .	7 „
Clean Food .. .. .	6 „
Infectious Diseases .. .. .	6 „
Tuberculosis .. .. .	5 „
Sewerage Disposal .. .. .	4 „
Child Welfare .. .. .	4 „
Rodent Control.. .. .	4 „
Road Safety .. .. .	1 „
Housing .. .. .	1 „

Informal talks given by members of the staff of the Department dealt with meat inspection, sewerage disposal, the varied work of the Health Department, clean food and infectious diseases. Attendances at the sessions averaged between 40 and 50 people and on two occasions over 200 persons were present.

At the time of the Coronation Celebrations a film was made by the staff of the Council as a permanent record of the Coronation Celebrations in Woolwich. The film has been shown on the Council's film projector on a number of occasions to local audiences, which have included old people, Civil Defence volunteers and several other organisations.

### **Home Safety.**

Seven programmes given by the Health Education Unit during the year were devoted to Home Accident Prevention, and at the end of each film session discussion took place on ways of avoiding home accidents. Leaflets on this subject were passed to the audiences, who were extremely interested in this subject.

During the year the Department purchased three film strips illustrating the most common types of home accidents and suggesting ways of accident prevention. A display on the Department's portable exhibition stand during the year was devoted to home accidents and road accidents, with the object of bringing the public's attention to the fact that home accidents are responsible for as many deaths as are road accidents.

The Council again made a subscription to the Home Safety Section of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents.

### **Photographs and Slides.**

A number of photographs illustrating the various public services in operation in the Borough have now been produced and made into slides, the showing of which will augment the films dealing with Health Education matters being shown to local organisations.

Film strips on Food Hygiene and the Care of the Elderly were also obtained during the year for showing on the Council's projector.

### **Booklets, Leaflets and Posters.**

500 copies of the booklet " Better Health " were distributed mainly from the Council's libraries and other public buildings.

Two large poster sites in the Borough were used for the display of posters obtained from the Central Council of Health Education.

During the month of November the Divisional Medical Officer of Health, London County Council, arranged a Diphtheria publicity campaign locally, and the Health Department assisted in the distribution of leaflets and the display of posters. Several hundred bookmarks dealing with this subject were also distributed from the Council's libraries.

## **INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD**

### **Premises where Food is Prepared or Offered for Sale.**

A total of 4,192 inspections of food premises was carried out during the year.

Details of the registered food premises at the end of 1953, together with the number of inspections carried out during the year, are as follows :—

Table No. 15.

Description.	Number in Borough on 31st December.	Number of Inspections.
Dairies .. .. .	4	28
Distributors of Milk .. .. .	100	308
Ice Cream Premises .. .. .	342	1,023
Premises where Meat is Potted, Pickled, Pressed and Preserved .. .. .	123	291
Premises where Sausages are Manufactured .. .. .	104	145
Premises where Fish is Cured or Prepared for Frying .. .. .	52	125
Restaurants, Cafes and Snack Bars.. .. .	272	1,044
Industrial Canteens and School Meals Service Canteens .. .. .	98	348
Markets .. .. .	2	Daily
Bakehouses .. .. .	29	64
Itinerant Vendors .. .. .	Unknown	39
Non-registered Premises .. .. .	Unknown	777

### Milk Supply.

Within the Borough there were at the end of the year four dairies and 100 registered distributors of milk. The Council has also approved the registration of a further 27 distributors of milk who sell in the Borough from premises outside. One hundred and seventy dealers' licences and 64 supplementary licences have been issued under the provisions of the Milk (Special Designations) Regulations, 1949, authorising the use of the special designations "Pasteurised," "Tuberculin Tested," and "Sterilised."

Two hundred and sixteen samples of milk were submitted to the Public Analyst for chemical analysis during the year. The percentage content of fat was :—

	Number of Samples.
4.5 per cent. and over .. .. .	2
4 per cent. and under 4.5 per cent. .. .. .	3
3.5 per cent. and under 4 per cent. .. .. .	98
3 per cent. and under 3.5 per cent. .. .. .	111
Below 3 per cent. .. .. .	2

During 1953, 270 samples of "pasteurised" or "tuberculin tested pasteurised" milk were subjected to the Methylene Blue test at the Park Hospital Laboratory, Hither Green, to assess the keeping quality of the milk. All the samples were reported to be satisfactory.

A further 270 samples of "pasteurised" or "tuberculin tested pasteurised" milk were submitted for the Phosphatase test to determine the adequacy of pasteurisation. Two of the samples failed to satisfy the test, but subsequent samples which were obtained from the same supply were found to be satisfactory.

Nineteen samples of "sterilised" or "tuberculin tested sterilised" milk were submitted to the Park Hospital for the Turbidity test and satisfactory reports were received in each case.

The tests referred to above are those prescribed in the Milk (Special Designations) Regulations, 1949.



Continuing the practice carried out for many years in this Borough, 58 samples of milk were obtained from milk roundsmen in the early hours of the morning during deliveries to schools, hospitals and institutions in the Borough. Twenty-two of the samples were submitted for the Phosphatase test, 22 for the Methylene Blue test and 14 for chemical examination.

Routine visits to milk distributors were carried out during the year. Defects at 14 milk premises were found and remedied and three informal notices were served upon the responsible persons to remedy defects.

### Food Bye-laws.

The County Council Bye-laws for the Protection of Food, made under Section 15 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938, came into operation in November, 1952.

Copies of the Bye-laws have been sent to food traders in the Borough, and the Sanitary Inspectors have in many cases explained the provisions of the Bye-laws to them.

### Catering Establishments.

The satisfactory work of the previous year towards securing the improvement of conditions prevailing in restaurants, cafes and canteens in the Borough was continued, and much valuable work has been done to improve the standard prevailing, particularly with regard to the kitchen accommodation. A total of 1,044 inspections of restaurants and cafes, and 348 inspections of factory and school canteens were made.

Essential work to food storage and food preparation rooms was carried out at 105 premises. Some 243 defects were remedied during the year. Additional washing-up sinks were installed in 34 establishments.

The occupiers of the majority of the catering establishments continued to be co-operative and showed willingness to improve the facilities and conditions of their premises. It was only necessary in 30 instances to serve notices requiring work to be carried out, and in only five cases was it necessary for the Sanitary Inspector to serve a formal notice under the Food and Drugs Act, 1938. In no case was it found necessary to institute legal proceedings.

Co-operation was maintained between the Health Department and the local office of the Ministry of Food. Details of all new applications for catering licences were forwarded by the Ministry of Food in order that the premises might be inspected by the officers of the Council to ensure that they comply with the Council's requirements before the Ministry of Food's licence was issued.

### Ice Cream.

There were 340 registered ice-cream premises in the Borough at the end of the year, of which eight were used for the manufacture of ice-cream. The majority of the dealers sell pre-packed ice cream only.

Routine visits are made to all the premises, and during the year some 23 defects were found and remedied. Three informal notices were served. No formal notices were found necessary.

The premises of each new applicant for registration are inspected in order to ensure that they are satisfactory and that the requirements of the Heat Treatment Regulations are fully understood.

During the year 34 samples of ice cream were submitted to the Laboratory for grading by the Methylene Blue test, and the results were as follows :—

Grade.				Grade.			
I	..	..	15	III	..	..	14
II	..	..	5	IV	..	..	nil

In addition, four samples were submitted to the Public Analyst for chemical analysis and to ascertain the fat content. All the samples were reported to contain between 10 per cent. and 15 per cent. of fat.

Where the results of the analysis were unsatisfactory or showed poor quality ice cream, investigation of the methods of handling or manufacture were closely examined, and the persons concerned advised.



### **Slaughter of Animals Act, 1933.**

Slaughterhouses are subject to annual licensing. There are only two licensed slaughterhouses in the Borough, one of which is not being used at the present time.

During the year the Council approved the renewal of 14 slaughtermen's licences and granted one new licence to a slaughterman. All the applications, with one exception, related to persons who were employed at the Plumstead Abattoir.

### **Basement Bakehouses.**

During 1953 a special survey on the occasion of the quinquennial examination as prescribed by the Factories Act, 1937 was carried out on basement bakehouses in the Borough.

On the occasion of the last review in 1948 there were seven basement bakehouses in the Borough and the Council renewed the Certificates of Suitability in respect of five of these premises, the other two not being used at that time.

Since the last review two basement bakehouses have ceased to be used for more than a year and, in accordance with the Factories Act, cannot again be used as bakehouses.

Certificates of Suitability in respect of the remaining basement bakehouses situated at 31, Vincent Road, 15, Woolwich New Road, and 38-40, Frances Street have been renewed for a further period of five years.

### **Woolwich Imported Food Order.**

In January, 1952, imported food was being landed from ships at a wharf in Warspite Road, Woolwich, where a customs' office has been established, and one of the Council's Food Inspectors has since that time attended as necessary to inspect the food being imported.

As specific Ministerial approval is required to undertake such duties, the Council decided at that time to apply to the Minister of Food for an Order permitting the Council to execute and enforce the powers given by the Imported Food Regulations.

The necessary Order has now been made, the date of operation being the 1st February, 1954.

Wharves associated with that part of the Royal Docks situated within the Borough of Woolwich are the responsibility of the Port of London Authority and are excluded from the provisions of the Order.

The Council has authorised myself and four of the Sanitary Inspectors to be authorised officers in accordance with the terms of the Order.

### **Unsound Food.**

The Council's food inspectors are required to examine food suspected of being unsound and if considered unfit for human consumption the food is surrendered and a certificate of condemnation issued.

A large number of such certificates were issued during the year. Whilst no food was seized and formally condemned during the year, some 43,978 articles of food, weighing approximately 116 tons, were voluntarily surrendered as unfit for human consumption. The majority of these articles, weighing approximately 88 tons, were from the large abattoir in the Borough. The food was utilised for animal feeding or for fertilisers. The total weight of the food voluntarily surrendered as unfit was approximately 30 tons more than that surrendered the previous year.

### **Meat Inspection.**

Slaughtering at the Plumstead Abattoir has continued on a larger scale than in previous years, the total kill during 1953 being 96,292 animals, compared with 90,002 the previous year.

Far more pigs are now arriving at the Abattoir for slaughter than ever before, and the total number of pigs inspected comprises two-thirds of the total number of animals killed.



The following table gives details of the number of animals slaughtered during the year :—

**Table No. 16. Carcases Inspected and Condemned, 1953.**

	Cattle, excluding Cows.	Cows.	Calves.	Sheep and Lambs.	Pigs.
Number killed .. .. .	9,927	1,812	1,833	17,552	65,168
Number Inspected .. .. .	9,927	1,812	1,833	17,552	65,168
<i>All diseases except Tuberculosis :—</i>					
Whole carcases condemned ..	6	6	1	18	152
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ..	2,054	480	9	1,506	14,138
Percentage of number inspected affected with disease other than Tuberculosis .. .. .	20·7	26·8	·54	8·7	21·9
<i>Tuberculosis only :—</i>					
Whole carcases condemned ..	29	22	2	—	43
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ..	707	368	2	—	836
Percentage of the number in- spected affected with Tub- erculosis .. .. .	7·4	21·4	·22	—	1·3

All the carcases were inspected immediately after slaughter, examinations being conducted in accordance with Ministry of Food Memorandum 3/Meat.

The number of animals passing through the Abattoir daily has placed a heavy strain on the Council's Food Inspectors as each animal must be inspected before and within a very short period after slaughter. The Food Inspectors are required to pass judgment upon the fitness of large quantities of meat, the value of which runs into thousands of pounds per annum.

#### **Food Complaints—Foreign Bodies in Food.**

Forty-eight complaints of alleged foreign bodies in food were received and investigated during the year. Eleven of these related to adulterated bread—alleged to contain dirt (2 cases); a cigarette end (2 cases); an insect; a piece of string; a metal rod; mould; and other foreign matter (3 cases).

With regard to the two cases of complaint of the remains of a cigarette end in bread, in one instance the workman employed by the bakers responsible was subsequently dismissed. In the other case the Council instituted legal proceedings against the firm, and a fine of 40s. 0d. with £5 5s. 0d. costs was imposed.

The bakers of a loaf of bread which was found to contain a metal rod were severely warned of the serious view taken of this matter by the Council.

On investigation of the complaint of "string" in bread it was found that the object thought to be string was dough.

With regard to one complaint of alleged dirt in bread, examination revealed that the bread was discoloured due to germination.

A number of complaints of foreign matter in confectionery were also received and related to hair in a doughnut; a nail in a piece of cake; foreign matter in a sponge cake; biscuits with an unusual taste; mould in pastries; maggots in biscuits, and a match-stick in a chocolate biscuit.

In each case thorough investigation of the method of preparation and manufacture employed by the confectioners was made.

Of the other complaints received during the year the more serious related to maggots in ham (5 cases); string in beef sausages; an insect in a packet of tea; unsound brawn; dirty butter (2 cases); metal in sausages; and four complaints of alleged unsound meat. A number of the samples were submitted for laboratory examination and in two of the cases it was thought that the foreign matter had been introduced after the food had been purchased from the vendor.

Any further stocks of unsatisfactory food were withdrawn from sale and inspections made of the premises where the food was prepared or manufactured if in this Borough.

### Food Sampling, 1953.

During the year ended 31st December, 1953, 770 samples (*i.e.*, 546 informal and 224 formal samples) were submitted for analysis to the Public Analyst. Of these 11 formal and 14 informal samples were reported to be adulterated or otherwise not complying with the statutory requirements, giving a percentage of 3.2 compared with 6.6 in 1952 and 4.0 in 1951. No private samples were examined during the year.

The following table gives details of the adulterated samples:—

Table No. 17.

Sample	Article.	Formal or Informal.	Result of Analysis.	Result of legal proceedings or other action.
732	Butter Mixture (Sugar confectionery).	Informal	1.4 per cent. deficient in butter fat.	Stock exhausted. No further action.
730	Apple Puree, Canned	Informal	Tin excessive .. ..	No further action.
772	Apple Puree, Canned	Informal	Tin excessive .. ..	No further action.
650	" Gravo Thik " (Gravy Preparation)	Informal	Sago flour not included in statement of ingredients on the label.	Suppliers cautioned and requested to revise their labels.
655	Milk .. ..	Formal	Contained 1 per cent. of added water.	Supplier cautioned.
800	Milk .. ..	Formal	Contained 1 per cent. of added water.	Suppliers asked for their observations.
628	Mixed Peel .. ..	Formal	Contained glucose. The peel was stated to contain sugar but not glucose.	Firm asked to revise their labels without delay.
759	Pork Sausages ..	Formal	8 per cent. deficient in meat	Suppliers cautioned.
716	Parsley and Thyme Stuffing.	Informal	Contained no thyme	} Formal sample obtained. Firm asked for explanation.
738	Parsley and Thyme Stuffing.	Formal	Contained no thyme	
739	Shredded Beef Suet	Informal	2.5 per cent. deficient in beef fat.	Formal sample obtained. Manufacturers cautioned.
771	Shredded Beef Suet	Formal	3 per cent. deficient in beef fat.	do.
778	Condensed Tomato, Canned (Tomato Puree).	Informal	Tin excessive	} Formal sample obtained. Remaining stocks of commodity withdrawn.
801	Condensed Tomato	Formal	Tin excessive	
115	Condensed Full Cream Milk, Sweetened	Informal	The type used on the label was too small.	Formal sample obtained.
139	do. ..	Formal	do., do.	Communicated with manufacturer.



Table No. 17 (continued).

Sample No.	Article.	Formal or Informal.	Result of Analysis.	Result of legal proceedings or other action.
31	Sweet Pickle ..	Informal	Contained dead mites approximately 700 per ounce.	Formal sample obtained.
51	do. ..	Formal	Contained dead mites approximately 950 per ounce.	Remaining stock surrendered.
185	Canned Peas ..	Informal	The can was "blown" and the peas had a sour taste.	Formal sample obtained—genuine.
235	Raspberry Coconut Jellies.	Informal	The jellies had an objectionable taste and smell due to rancidity in the coconut oil owing to a growth of fungus on the sweets. Samples unfit for human consumption.	Consignment condemned.
236	do., do.	Informal		
501	Devon Butters ..	Informal	Contained edible fat 0·6 per cent. Should contain at least 4 p.c. of butter fat.	Further samples obtained for analysis
542	do. ..	Formal	do., do.	
461	Shredded Suet ..	Informal	10 per cent. deficient in beef fat.	
499	Shredded Beef Suet	Formal	3·5 per cent. deficient in beef fat.	

The foods examined during 1953 were :—

Milk, 216 ; Confectionery, 126 ; Sauces and Pickles, 33 ; Meat Products, 30 ; Canned Fruit, 29 ; Condensed Milk, 16 ; Canned Fish, 16 ; Soft Drinks, 15 ; Tea, 15 ; Cream, 14 ; Ice Cream, 13 ; Canned Soups, 13 ; Canned Vegetables, 11 ; Suet, 11 ; Jams, 9 ; Canned Tomatoes, 9 ; Rice, 8 ; Flour, 8 ; Proprietary Foods, 7 ; Jelly Tablets, 7 ; Fruit Curd, 7 ; Gravy Preparations, 7 ; Proprietary Medicines, 6 ; Sugar, 5 ; Tapioco, 5 ; Almonds, 5 ; Cheese, 5 ; Oatmeal, 4 ; Wines, 4 ; Beverages, 4 ; Cornflour, 4 ; Custard Powder, 4 ; Coffee, 3 ; Fish Paste, 3 ; Curry Powder, 3 ; Dessert Powder, 3 ; Fish Cakes, 3 ; Mincemeat, 3 ; Vinegar, 3 ; Christmas Pudding, 3 ; Pepper, 3 ; Candied Peel, 3 ; Stuffing Mixture, 3 ; Pearl Barley, 2 ; Aspirin Tablets, 2 ; Treacle, 2 ; Glycerine, 2 ; Honey, 2 ; Canned Milk Puddings, 2 ; Spices, 2 ; Semolina, 2 ; Saccharine Tablets, 2 ; Marzipan, 2 ; Soup Preparations, 2 ; Others, 49.

## PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE

The following diseases are notifiable in the Borough : Anthrax, Cholera, Continued Fever, Diphtheria, Dysentery, Encephalitis Lethargica, Erysipelas, Enteric Fever, Food Poisoning, Glanders, Hydrophobia, Malaria, Measles, Membranous Croup, Meningococcal Infection (C.S.M.), Ophthalmia Neonatorum, Pneumonia Acute Primary, Pneumonia Acute Influenzal, Poliomyelitis (Acute), Polioencephalitis (Acute), Plague, Puerperal Pyrexia, Relapsing Fever, Scabies, Scarlet Fever (or Scarlatina), Smallpox, Tuberculosis (all forms), Typhoid Fever (including Paratyphoid), Typhus Fever, Whooping Cough and Zymotic Enteritis.

All infectious diseases notified to the Department are visited by the Sanitary Inspectors at the earliest opportunity and disinfection is carried out wherever applicable. Where the patient is nursed at home, Sanitary Inspectors visit to see that home isolation is carried out satisfactorily, and at the end of the infectious period the bedding, etc. belonging to the patient is removed for treatment at the Disinfecting Station and the rooms sealed and fumigated.

Table No. 18.

## Notification of Infectious Diseases (excluding Tuberculosis), 1953.

Diseases.	Number of Cases (after correction of diagnosis).													Total	Total No. admitted to Hosp.
	Age Groups.														
	Under 1 year.	1 and under 3 years.	3 and under 5 years.	5 and under 10 years.	10 and under 15 years.	15 and under 25 years.	25 and under 35 years.	35 and under 45 years.	45 and under 65 years.	65 and over.	Age Un-known.				
Diphtheria .. .. .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Scarlet Fever .. .. .	—	14	34	144	14	3	1	—	—	—	5	215	45		
Paratyphoid Fever .. .. .	—	—	1	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	3	3		
Meningococcal Infection .. .. .	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1		
Acute Poliomyelitis (Paralytic)	—	3	2	4	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	10	9		
Acute Poliomyelitis (Non-paralytic)	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	2		
Erysipelas .. .. .	—	—	1	—	—	—	4	3	5	2	—	15	4		
Dysentery .. .. .	—	9	4	11	2	1	2	1	—	—	1	31	8		
Zymotic Enteritis .. .. .	18	10	4	3	—	2	2	1	4	3	—	47	28		
Scabies .. .. .	—	—	—	1	1	1	2	1	1	—	1	8	—		
Acute Pneumonia .. .. .	9	14	8	19	—	5	10	15	45	30	2	157	31		
Food Poisoning .. .. .	—	—	2	4	1	3	2	4	3	3	—	22	4		
Puerperal Pyrexia .. .. .	—	—	—	—	—	30	36	8	—	—	3	77	76		
Ophthalmia Neonatorum .. .. .	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1		
Whooping Cough .. .. .	31	75	96	153	5	2	2	1	—	—	10	375	35		
Measles .. .. .	42	261	289	403	16	17	7	2	—	—	14	1,051	84		
Typhoid Fever .. .. .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—		
Malaria .. .. .	—	—	—	—	—	9	2	1	—	—	1	13	12		
Acute Encephalitis .. .. .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	1		



**Malaria.**

There were 13 notified cases of malaria occurring during the year, of which 12 were removed for hospital treatment. All the cases were contracted abroad. Eleven of the notifications related to members of the Forces stationed in the Borough.

**Dysentery.**

Of the 31 notified cases, four were subsequently withdrawn. Eight patients were removed to hospital. Four cases concerned members of the same family, and 21 cases related to school children. Visits were made by the Sanitary Inspectors to the homes of all notified cases, which were fully investigated, and specimens from all members of the household who were contacts were examined. Further treatment was arranged with the patient's doctor where necessary.

**Smallpox.**

There were no cases notified during the year, but a few contacts were reported in the Borough from abroad by the Airport Authorities, and these contacts were kept under observation for the required period.

**Acute Poliomyelitis.**

Thirty-one cases were originally notified, 14 of which were subsequently withdrawn, the revised diagnoses being mainly tonsillitis. There were three deaths from this disease during the year. The 13 confirmed cases, three of which were non-paralytic, were distributed evenly throughout the Borough. All except one of the confirmed cases related to children under the age of ten years.

**Typhoid Fever.**

For the second year in succession there were no cases of typhoid fever.

**Diphtheria.**

It is now four years since there was a known case of diphtheria occurring in the Borough. Nine notifications were received in 1953, but in each case the diagnosis was revised. Four of the cases were found to be tonsillitis and one glandular fever; one of the notified cases was subsequently reported as a fatal case of broncho-pneumonia. Immunisation in London is mainly carried out at the local welfare clinics, although a number of people are immunised by general practitioners.

**Measles.**

The number of notifications of measles was 1,051 compared with 1,417 during the previous year. Forty-two cases occurred in children under the age of one, 540 between the ages of 1 and 5 years, and 419 between the ages of 5 and 15 years. Eighty-four of the patients were removed to hospital. There were no fatal cases.

**Scarlet Fever.**

During the year, 215 cases were notified, compared with 259 during the previous year. It was necessary for only 45 patients to be admitted to hospital. Where the patient was isolated at home, frequent visits were made by the Sanitary Inspectors to ensure that proper precautions were maintained. There were no deaths from scarlet fever.

**Puerperal Pyrexia.**

During 1953, there were a large number of notifications of puerperal pyrexia, being a total of 77 compared with 48 in 1952. The revised definition contained in Regulations made in 1951, together with the fact that notifications are now sent to the Medical Officer of Health in the district in which the patient is confined, fully accounts for the increase in notifications. All except two of the notifications were from the three large maternity units in the Borough.

**Food Poisoning.**

During 1953, 22 confirmed cases of food poisoning occurred. These cases included five small outbreaks, each outbreak being confined to an individual family and involving a total of 13 persons.

One outbreak concerned a family of four. The mother and a school child became seriously ill after eating some pressed salt beef, which was the food suspected as causing the illness. The beef had been washed, boiled for four hours, then cooled, being pressed by means of a heavy weight placed on top of a plate over the meat.



The meat was eaten at the evening meal and two hours later the mother and child were ill and were removed to hospital for treatment. Another member of the family, who had partaken of the food, was slightly ill, and the remaining member suffered no ill effects.

Tinned oranges which had been purchased in Scotland over two months before consumption was the food suspected as causing another small outbreak. It was not possible to obtain for examination specimens of the food suspected.

Stuffing which contained duck egg and sausage meat was thought to have caused another small outbreak. The stuffing was consumed with chicken, the food was cooked and reheated the same day before being eaten that evening. Specimens of the food were obtained for bacteriological examination and the report disclosed the presence of salmonella organisms. Each member of the family experienced some discomfort, but none of them was seriously ill.

Two members of another family who had both eaten a duck egg were slightly ill.

Of the nine individual cases of food poisoning notified during 1953, one case of salmonella typhimurium was found, as a result of bacteriological examination. In the other case, that of a girl aged four, the laboratory examination also disclosed that the illness was due to salmonella typhimurium. Investigation failed to disclose what food might have caused the food poisoning.

#### **Public Health (Infectious Disease) Regulations, 1953.**

These Regulations supersede Regulations made in 1927, and although in their general substance the Regulations are similar to the old, in that they require notification of malaria, dysentery, acute primary pneumonia and acute influenzal pneumonia, and provide for preventive steps to be taken against the spread of certain diseases specified in the regulations, there are important differences with regard to the prevention of food poisoning.

Local authorities and their Medical Officers of Health were formerly limited to preventing persons actually suffering from a disease continuing to work in an occupation connected with the preparation and handling of food or drink. Their preventive powers have now been widened in order to prevent any person connected with the preparation or handling of food or drink, who is shown to be a carrier of the disease, from continuing in such occupation. Sufferers and carriers can now be prevented not only from continuing to work as food handlers, but also from entering such an occupation. Under the 1927 Regulations, the prescribed steps could only be taken after the Medical Officer of Health had reported the case concerned to the local authority. In the new Regulations, whilst the same general principle has been maintained (because action may involve the local authority in paying compensation under the Public Health Act, 1936) there is provision to enable a local authority to give its Medical Officer of Health an authorisation which will permit him to take the prescribed action in a particular case, where it was urgent to prevent spread of infection, without waiting to report it to the local authority, although he is required to report it at the earliest opportunity.

The Borough Council has authorised me (or a Medical Officer acting on my behalf) to take any such urgent action under these powers, subject to report to the Council of any case dealt with under this authorisation.

#### **Tuberculosis.**

The number of primary notifications of tuberculosis (156) was a decrease of 39 on the previous year's total.

However, the register of cases in the Borough shows that at the end of the year there were 1,598 cases of pulmonary tuberculosis and 228 cases of non-pulmonary tuberculosis, an increase of 58 in the number of cases on the register at the end of 1952. This was accounted for by the additions to the register due to transfers of patients from other areas.



The following table gives the age groups of new cases notified :

**Table No. 19.**

Age Periods.	FORMAL NOTIFICATIONS. Number of Primary Notifications of New Cases.														Total (all age)
	0-1	1-2	2-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-25	25-35	35-45	45-55	55-65	65-75	75& up.		
PULMONARY—															
Males .. ..	—	—	7	3	4	6	7	14	8	9	16	9	3	86	
Females .. ..	—	—	3	1	—	8	12	13	8	4	1	4	2	56	
NON-PULMONARY—															
Males .. ..	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	1	1	—	1	—	—	5	
Females .. ..	—	—	1	—	—	2	3	2	—	1	—	—	—	9	
Total .. ..	—	—	11	4	5	16	23	30	17	14	18	13	5	156	

The following is an extract from the Tuberculosis Register for 1953 :—

**Table No. 20.**

**Tuberculosis Register, 1953.**

	PULMONARY.			NON-PULMONARY.		
	M.	F.	Total.	M.	F.	Total.
Cases notified for the first time ..	86	56	142	5	9	14
Other additions to Register during the year, including transfers of patients from other areas .. ..	48	56	104	3	5	8
Cases on Register at 31st December, 1953 .. ..	874	724	1,598	120	108	228

**Table No. 21.**

**Table of Notifications and Deaths compared with Population.**

Year.	Estimated Civilian Population excluding Army.	Primary Notifications.	Deaths from Tuberculosis.	Deaths per 1,000 of population.	Total Deaths all causes.	Percentage of Tuberculosis Deaths against all Deaths.
1943	112,700	292	102	·90	1,558	6·5
1944	110,970	248	100	·90	1,611	6·2
1945	115,270	260	90	·70	1,478	6·0
1946	134,420	247	83	·61	1,531	5·4
1947	140,150	297	101	·72	1,626	6·2
1948	142,800	230	82	·57	1,573	5·2
1949	144,000	256	59	·41	1,572	3·7
1950	144,000	205	58	·40	1,670	3·4
1951	144,000	246	57	·39	1,838	3·1
1952	146,000	195	39	·26	1,667	2·3
1953	146,000	156	29	·20	1,569	1·8

The Public Health Department is responsible for the duties connected with the prevention of the spread of tuberculous infection, and to enable these duties to be performed Medical Practitioners notify all new cases coming to their knowledge.

The Department carries out the disinfection of the patient's rooms and possessions.

The two Chest Clinics in the Borough which are at Maxey Road, Plumstead, and Carnecke Gardens, Eltham, are administered by the Regional Hospital Board, who are responsible for the diagnosis and treatment of the disease.

During the last decade there has been a considerable reduction in the Tuberculosis mortality rate. The following table shows the incidence of Tuberculosis and the decline in the number of deaths from this disease during the last 12 years.

### **Tuberculosis Care Work.**

The Woolwich Tuberculosis Care Committee, on which are represented various official bodies, continue to carry out most useful work amongst patients and their families. Financial help is also being given by the National Assistance Board in certain cases.

### **Disinfection and Disinfestation.**

The work of reconstruction of the Disinfecting Station at White Hart Road, Plumstead, which was damaged during the war, was commenced in September, 1952, and continued during the whole of 1953, the cost of this work being recoverable from the War Damage Commission. In addition to the external repairs to the building being carried out, the plant and electrical wiring is also being overhauled. The Greenwich Borough Council kindly permitted the joint use of their Disinfecting Station until repairs are completed.

During 1953 the Department carried out disinfection of 576 rooms after cases of infectious diseases, and of these 160 rooms had been occupied by tuberculous persons. Altogether 579 inspections regarding verminous conditions were made and 547 rooms were disinfested for vermin. Forty-one van loads of furniture were fumigated during the year.

### **Disinfection and Disinfestation.**

During the year many requests were again received from residents in the Borough wishing to dispose of bedding and furniture, which was often in a dirty and sometimes verminous condition. Bedding and furniture was in the main that formerly used by persons removed to hospitals or institutions or deceased. The articles were removed to and destroyed at the Plumstead Destructor. There were 81 such cases dealt with during the year and a total of 471 articles were removed and destroyed. Of these there were 89 mattresses, 38 pillows, 21 bedsteads, 93 chairs and 230 other sundry items.

Thirty-two requests were received from residents in the Borough for the disinfection of rooms, bedding or furniture following the occurrence of a non-infectious disease, or the death of a member of the family and for other reasons. Charges totalling £17 5s. 6d. were made for this work.

### **Contacts and Carriers of Infectious Diseases—Sickness Benefit.**

Where a suspected carrier or contact of a case of infectious disease is excluded from work to prevent the risk of infection, National Health Service sickness benefit may be claimed on production of a certificate issued by the Medical Officer of Health. One such certificate was issued by me during the year and concerned a contact of a case of dysentery.

### **Personal Cleansing.**

The personal cleansing stations are situated adjacent to the Turkish Baths in Plumstead High Street and at the Eltham Hill Health Centre, Sherard Road. The number of persons cleansed during 1953 was 986, and the number treated for scabies was 205. Each case of scabies is visited by a Sanitary Inspector and, wherever possible, all the members of the families concerned attend for treatment. The total number of attendances at the two Cleansing Stations was 1,286.



Details of the number of cases and attendances at the two Cleansing Stations are given below.

#### Treatment of Verminous Persons.

	PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN.		SCHOOL CHILDREN.		ADULTS.		Totals.
	Boys.	Girls.	Boys.	Girls.	Men.	Women.	
Number of Cases .. ..	8	23	198	661	27	69	986
Number of Treatments ..	9	24	209	704	27	79	1,052

#### Treatment of Scabies.

	PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN.		SCHOOL CHILDREN.		ADULTS.		Totals.
	Boys.	Girls.	Boys.	Girls.	Men.	Women.	
Number of Cases .. ..	4	5	42	121	8	25	205
Number of Treatments ..	5	7	50	134	9	29	234

#### International Certificates of Vaccination and Inoculation.

Persons proceeding abroad are required to produce, in certain countries, evidence of recent successful vaccination or inoculation. The signatures on these certificates are not acceptable by the countries concerned unless certified by the Medical Officer of Health as being the signature of a doctor practising within the area. During the year, 274 certificates were authenticated by me. Of these, 218 were in relation to smallpox, 43 to cholera, and 13 to typhoid fever.

### LABORATORY FACILITIES

A large part of the Council's pathological and allied work in relation to the diagnosis, prevention and control of infectious diseases is undertaken at the Southern Group Laboratory at the Park Hospital, Lewisham. This service is provided by the Public Health Laboratory Service on behalf of the Medical Research Council.

Specimens sent to this laboratory include samples of milk and ice cream, samples of food in suspected food poisoning cases, specimens of meat from the abattoir and samples of swimming bath water. The following summary relates to the work carried out by the laboratory on behalf of the Council during 1953:—

Food (which includes animal specimens from abattoirs, whole bovine blood and blood plasma) .. .. .	73
Ice Cream (Methylene blue test) .. .. .	25
Milk (Methylene blue, phosphatase and turbidity tests) .. .. .	313
Milk bottles (colony count) .. .. .	3
Water, from swimming baths, children's paddling pools and boating lakes ..	70
Total .. .. .	484

The examination of specimens of human origin (mainly swab examinations) for the general practitioners in the Borough, and also specimens referred to the hospital from local clinics, is undertaken by the Woolwich Group Hospital Management Committee. The work was formerly carried out at the Memorial Hospital laboratory, but is now being undertaken at the Brook Hospital. General practitioners referred 27 sputum specimens for examination and the hospital carried out 126 other sputum examinations during the year. One hundred and twenty-two nasal and throat swabs were referred to the hospital by general practitioners for examination and 7 other specimens. This laboratory also carried out the examination of 108 faecal specimens.