

[Report of the Medical Officer of Health for Woolwich].

Contributors

Woolwich (London, England). Metropolitan Borough.

Publication/Creation

[1955?]

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/j2fbbkn6>

License and attribution

You have permission to make copies of this work under a Creative Commons, Attribution, Non-commercial license.

Non-commercial use includes private study, academic research, teaching, and other activities that are not primarily intended for, or directed towards, commercial advantage or private monetary compensation. See the Legal Code for further information.

Image source should be attributed as specified in the full catalogue record. If no source is given the image should be attributed to Wellcome Collection.



Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

AC 4372

1 Mr Gmarja Dwi 5B
2 Library W0054

TABLE OF CONTENTS

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF WOOLWICH



ANNUAL REPORT

on the Health of the
Metropolitan Borough of Woolwich
for the Year 1954

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
HEALTH COMMITTEE	2
PREFACE	3
STAFF	6
GENERAL STATISTICS	7
VITAL STATISTICS	7
SANITARY ADMINISTRATION	14
HOUSING	27
HEALTH EDUCATION	32
INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD	34
PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE (including Disinfection, Disinfestation and Personal Cleansing)	42
LABORATORY FACILITIES	49

HEALTH COMMITTEE

At 31st December, 1954.

THE WORSHIPFUL THE MAYOR (Councillor J. W. ANDREWS, J.P., L.C.C.)

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

Mrs. A. E. MAXWELL

Mrs. S. M. BRADLEY

Miss M. N. REES

Mrs. E. G. BUNCE

A. E. STARKEY

G. S. DEAN

Mrs. E. M. WOOD

W. R. KENNETT

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-fourth Annual Report on the health and sanitary conditions of the Borough of Woolwich. It is compiled in accordance with the outline of the Ministry of Health.

On the Registrar General's estimates there has been a reduction in the home population of 2,100 during the last two years.

With regard to vital statistics, the year 1954 was a year of new low records so far as the Borough of Woolwich was concerned. There were fewer births than in any year since 1945, and the birth rate of 13.5 was the lowest since 1933. The corrected birth rate was 13.3 compared with 15.2 for London and also for England and Wales.

Similarly, the year saw a reduction compared with the previous year's figure of 126 in the total Woolwich net deaths registered, and this was reflected in the death rate for the year (9.6) which is the lowest ever recorded in Woolwich. The previous lowest was 9.9 in 1923 and in the years 1926 and 1935 it was 10.2.

The adjusted death rate for Woolwich was 9.5, compared with 10.9 for London, and 11.4 for England and Wales.

Slightly less than half of the total deaths occurred in hospital. Once again diseases of the heart and other circulatory diseases accounted for a large proportion of the total deaths. Most of the remaining deaths were from cancer, and other principal causes of death were pneumonia, bronchitis and diseases of the nervous system.

There was again a reduction in the number of deaths from tuberculosis, this being a continuation of the post-war trend in this disease. Whereas at the end of the last war nearly 100 Woolwich deaths each year were classified as deaths from tuberculosis, last year there were only 21 fatal cases. This gave a percentage of tuberculosis deaths against all deaths in the Borough of 1.4, compared with six per cent. in 1944.

It is pleasing to report the remarkable decrease in the number of infant deaths; only 37 being reported in the Borough last year compared with 48 the previous year, and as many as 102 in 1938. In that year the infant death rate per 1,000 net births was 50; in 1953 it had dropped to 22.9 and in 1954 it has fallen to the remarkable figure of 18.1. Of the 37 deaths occurring during the year, 23 of the children died under the age of one week. Many were cases where owing to congenital defects the child could not have been expected to live.

The Borough had a quiet year so far as infectious diseases were concerned, and there is little which calls for comment. Notifications of scarlet fever were again reduced. There were several more cases of puerperal pyrexia notified, mainly because of the revised definition of the disease, and the increase in the number of maternity beds available in hospitals in the Borough.

I am pleased to report that after the relatively high number of notifications of poliomyelitis received during the years since the end of the last war, for the second year in succession the Borough has experienced little trouble in this respect.

No confirmed cases of diphtheria were reported, and very few cases of food poisoning. Measles was not present in epidemic form. During the mid-summer a mild attack of sonne dysentery developed locally, several of the patients received hospital treatment, and with the co-operation of medical practitioners those patients remaining at home were kept under observation.

The large amount of work undertaken by the Sanitary Inspectors during the year for the remedying of defects and the abatement of nuisances can be realised by a perusal of those parts of the Report dealing with the sanitary inspection of the area, infectious diseases, the inspection and supervision of food supplies, and housing.

The amount of food passing through a Borough the size of Woolwich in the course of the year is not always appreciated. Apart from the large number of restaurants, cafes and canteens in Woolwich, the large quantity of food-stuffs distributed at the Woolwich Market must also be kept under observation, and in addition the equivalent of three of the Council's Sanitary Inspectors are required to spend the whole of their time inspecting meat after its slaughter at the local Abattoir. Itinerant food vendors and ice-cream premises are also regularly inspected, and 800 food samples are purchased each year for analysis by the Public Analyst. Altogether over 4,600 inspections were made of food shops and food premises in the Borough.

Since the outbreak of the last war the Ministry of Food has been responsible, with minor exceptions, for the slaughtering of cattle, sheep and pigs for human consumption. During 1954, however, instead of the system of controlled distribution of meat operated by the Ministry, free marketing of cattle was re-introduced, the purchase of stock again being in private hands when control by the Ministry of Food ended in July. However, a large amount of slaughtering continued at the local Abattoir, which had been leased to the Government during the last 15 years and has now reverted to private control.

By the end of the year 1954, the Council had begun formal procedure for the clearance of the great majority of the properties included in the agreed slum clearance programme for the period 1951-1956. Included among the properties which were represented to the Council during the year as unfit for human habitation were 138 properties in the Greenlaw Place area.

With regard to future slum clearance proposals, a re-survey of the Borough has been carried out by the Council's Housing Inspectors with a view to the formulation of proposals, in conjunction with the London County Council, for the second five-year slum clearance programme. A provisional list of properties to be cleared by the Council for inclusion in this programme has been compiled.

The Borough Council and the County Council are required by the Housing Repairs and Rents Act, 1954, within a year of the passing of the Act, i.e., by August, 1955, to submit a joint programme for dealing with all unfit property in the Borough.

This Act has re-defined the standards of fitness from a public health point of view. The Act envisages the greater use of the Housing Act procedure for rendering fit those unfit houses which in the local authorities' opinion can be made fit at reasonable expense. Unfortunately, owing to the rise in building costs and virtually no increase in rents, the Section 9 procedure has been of very limited application since the war. Rent increases provided for by the Act of 1954 are small compared with the increase in building costs. There is at the present time in the Borough a not inconsiderable group of houses which are not so bad as to be representable on the standards adopted; on the other hand, the total defects are such that these houses cannot be fully repaired at reasonable expense, and therefore it would seem that Section 9 procedure will still be of limited application.

The plans for the establishment of a joint crematorium at the Eltham Cemetery were approved in principle by the Ministry during the year. The establishment of a crematorium was contemplated before the last war. Owing to restrictions on new building, Government sanction to proceed with the scheme on a Joint Board basis was not received until recently. The crematorium, which will be administered by a joint Committee of the local authorities in the neighbourhood, will provide a service for which there has long been a need in this area, the nearest crematorium being at Honor Oak.

In 1954 the Council, without resort to legislation, inaugurated its first smokeless area, and chose for this experiment the St. Mary's Redevelopment Area. The Council decided to make it a Condition of Tenancy in all new lettings in this area that no smoke shall be emitted from these dwellings, and a clause is being included in the Conditions of Tenancy prohibiting the use of solid fuel, other than an approved smokeless fuel, unless the tenant can show that supplies of such fuel are not reasonably obtainable or can show other reasonable grounds for not using smokeless fuel.

While this smokeless area relates at the present time to only a small part of the Borough, it is hoped to extend the area as soon as possible, and also that as many private householders as possible will burn only an approved smokeless fuel.

The Council's action in giving the lead in the prevention of smoke has been welcomed by many, including a number of private property owners, who have promised to co-operate wherever possible.

Some of the practical difficulties which were foreseen by the Council before they inaugurated this smokeless area related to the availability of smokeless fuel, the difficulty of ignition when using coke, and the extra storage space required for smokeless fuel compared with that required for coal. The Council were assured that sufficient supplies of coke would be available. The difficulty regarding storage space is being overcome by the more frequent deliveries of coke by means of a weekly or fortnightly trolley service, and the ignition problem is being met in Council accommodation by the fixing of gas ignition at the hearth.

Coinciding with the Council's decision to establish the first smokeless area, the Health Department at the end of 1954 undertook a smoke prevention campaign. It was early realised by the Council that the co-operation of the public was essential to the success of any such scheme; without this support little could be achieved. The propagation of information regarding the prevention of domestic smoke was concentrated upon, as it is felt that it is here that smoke abatement propaganda can do most good. In this respect the Council was helped considerably in that their action coincided with the publication of the Government Committee of Inquiry into Air Pollution (the Beaver Report) and the introduction into Parliament of a Private Members' Bill to deal with the subject. Nevertheless, the example set by Woolwich as being the first Metropolitan Borough to set up a smokeless area attracted a good deal of interest, which was not confined to Woolwich alone. The problem is to persuade more and more people to instal modern domestic grates which burn approved smokeless fuel economically and cheerfully without polluting the atmosphere.

Of other activities being undertaken by the Council, not the least important is the welfare of the elderly. This work assumes greater importance each year as the number of elderly persons in the community increases. Details of the many ways in which the voluntary and statutory bodies in the Borough are working for the welfare of the old person are contained in the body of the Report.

In conclusion, it is my pleasing duty to thank Members of the Health Committee and the Council generally for the support and kindly consideration they have given and shown throughout the year. I also wish to place on record the efficient manner in which the staff of the Department have carried out their duties at all times during the year.

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, A.C.C.S.

Clerical Assistants—

R. E. SWEETT

R. H. THOMAS, D.F.C.

Mrs. E. C. COOPER (resigned 24th January, 1954)

Mrs. M. H. DOWDING

Mrs. W. E. ELLISON (commenced duty 8th February, 1954)

G. C. RYAN

J. E. KAY

D. M. GIBBS

Mrs. M. N. MCEWAN

K. E. DOUBLEDAY

Miss E. E. PHILLIPS (resigned 2nd May, 1954)

Miss F. E. GEE (commenced duty 17th May, 1954)

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—

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 Certified 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 (Housing and Restaurants, etc., Inspector).
- K. S. COOPER, Cert. San. Insp. Exam. Joint Board; Cert. Meat and Other Foods (District Inspector).
- J. A. ORRELL, Cert. San. Insp. Exam. Joint Board; Cert. Meat and Other Foods; Cert. Smoke Insp., R.S.I. (Food Inspector)—(Resigned 2nd August, 1954).
- 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).
- H. L. DAVIES, Cert. San. Insp. Exam. Joint Board (Food Inspector).
- J. HILLS, Cert. San. Insp. Exam. Joint Board; Cert. Meat and Other Foods (District Inspector).
- F. W. HARMSWORTH, Cert. San. Insp. Exam. Joint Board (Resigned 31st October, 1954) (District Inspector).
- J. HACKER, Cert. San. Insp. Exam. Joint Board; Cert. Meat and Other Foods (Food Inspector).
- J. H. LOTT, Cert. San. Insp. Exam. Joint Board; Cert. Meat and Other Foods (Commenced duty 17th May, 1954) (District Inspector).

Public Analyst (Part-time)—

H. AMPHLETT WILLIAMS, PH.D. (LON.), A.C.G.F.C., F.R.I.C.

GENERAL STATISTICS

Area of Borough	...	...	...	...	...	8,282 statute acres
Number of Dwellings	...	...	...	...	...	41,647
Number of persons per acre	...	...	...	...	...	18.0
Rateable Value	...	...	...	...	...	£1,265,848
Sum represented by a Penny Rate	...	...	...	...	...	£5,178

VITAL STATISTICS

Extracts from the vital statistics for the year, with comparative figures for 1953, are shown below:—

Table No. 1

	1954	1953
Population (Home, <i>i.e.</i> , including members of H.M. Forces stationed in the district) ...	149,700	151,100
Live Births—Legitimate ...	1,944	1,990
Live Births—Illegitimate ...	91	100
Total Live Births ...	2,035	2,090
Birth Rate ...	13.5	13.8
Stillbirths ...	47	51
Stillbirths—Rate per 1,000 total births ...	23.1	24.4
Total Deaths ...	1,443	1,569
Death Rate per 1,000 population ...	9.6	10.4
Maternal Deaths ...	1	nil
Death Rate from Puerperal Causes per 1,000 total births ...	.49	nil
Deaths of Infants under one year ...	37	48
Death Rate of Infants under one year ...	18.1	22.9
Deaths from Tuberculosis (all forms) ...	21	29
Deaths from Cancer (all ages) ...	288	303
Deaths from acute poliomyelitis ...	nil	3

Births.

The number of live births registered in Woolwich during 1954, was 2,298. After correction for inward and outward transfers, the net number of Woolwich live births was 2,035, being 55 less than in the previous year. Of the total births, 1,028 were boys and 1,007 girls. It is known that 1,680 births took place in public institutions in the Borough, of which 1,062 concerned Woolwich mothers. The birth rate was 13.5, 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 13.3 compared with the provisional birth rate for England and Wales and also for London of 15.2. There were 47 stillbirths during the year under review.

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

In 1954 the natural increase in population was 592. In 1953 it was 521 and in 1952 it was 532.

Deaths.

The number of deaths registered in Woolwich was 1,180, and after correction for inward and outward transfers the net number was 1,443, giving a death rate of 9.6 for the Borough, compared with 10.4 the previous year.

The adjusted death rate for Woolwich was 9.5, compared with the provisional figure of 10.9 for London and of 11.4 for England and Wales.

Deaths of Woolwich residents in hospitals in the Borough totalled 350, whilst 318 died in other hospitals outside the Borough.

Maternal Deaths.

There was one maternal death during the year, and none during the previous year.

Inquests.

Sixty-four inquests were held on Woolwich residents during the year, and 348 post-mortems on Woolwich residents were carried out on behalf of the Coroner.

Infant Mortality.

There was a further reduction in the infant death rate for the year, the rate being 18.1 compared with 22.9 in 1953.

Motor Vehicle Accidents.

There were ten deaths of Woolwich residents due to motor vehicle accidents during the year. One of the victims was a child under five, and two accidents concerned persons over 75 years of age, one of whom was struck by a car whilst crossing the street.

Other Accidents.

Accidents other than motor vehicle accidents were responsible for the deaths of 31 Woolwich residents. Of these, at least 20 were due to falls in the home or to other home accidents, including, for example, burns caused when a woman's clothing was ignited by a gas fire, electrocution, and a fall from the balcony of a flat. Three deaths related to persons who met with accidents at work. One of these concerned a fall from a factory roof and another accident occurred when the falling grab of a mobile crane struck a workman. The majority of falls in the home related to elderly persons.

Marriages.

There were 1,065 marriages in the Borough during 1954, of which 635 took place in Churches; the remaining 430 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 103 occasions.

Deaths from Cancer.

Of the total number of deaths, 293 were from Cancer (including five from Sarcoma), being a similar number to the previous year. Of these, 145 occurred in men and 148 in women. More than half the Cancer deaths (193) took place in hospitals.

The following tables give details of the number of Woolwich deaths from cancer of the lung and bronchus during 1954.

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
1954	...	...	145	148	293	193

Cancer Deaths—Woolwich, 1954. By Age.

<i>Age.</i>				<i>Males.</i>	<i>Females.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
Under 25 years	...	...	...	—	—	—
26 — 30 years	...	...	...	—	1	1
31 — 35 years	...	...	...	—	5	5
36 — 40 years	...	...	...	1	2	3
41 — 45 years	...	...	...	5	4	9
46 — 50 years	...	...	...	10	11	21
51 — 55 years	...	...	...	10	12	22
56 — 60 years	...	...	...	11	13	24
61 — 65 years	...	...	...	30	15	45
66 — 70 years	...	...	...	19	23	42
71 — 75 years	...	...	...	21	22	43
76 — 80 years	...	...	...	20	23	43
Over 80 years	...	...	...	16	14	30
Total	...	...	...	143	145	288

Table No. 3. Woolwich Deaths from Cancer of the Lung and Bronchus, 1945-1954.

<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
1954.	Lung	11	6	17	9
	Bronchus	31	8	39	31

Table No. 4. Cancer Deaths (excluding Sarcoma)—Woolwich, 1954.
Seat of Primary Disease.

<i>Year.</i>		<i>Male.</i>	<i>Female.</i>	<i>Total.</i>	<i>Deaths in Hospitals.</i>
	Stomach	21	23	44	33
	Bronchus	31	8	39	31
	Lung	11	6	17	9
	Breast	2	20	22	12
	Colon	6	14	20	13
	Prostate	10	—	10	5
	Rectum	15	6	21	16
	Pancreas	7	3	10	6
	Ovary	—	13	13	6
	Bladder	6	2	8	5
	Liver	6	4	10	3
	Caecum	—	7	7	4
	Cervix	—	7	7	6
	Oesophagus	6	1	7	5
	Glands of Neck	—	1	1	1
	Jaw	1	1	2	2
	Brain	1	1	2	2
	Kidney	2	—	2	2
	Larynx	2	2	4	4
	Throat	1	1	2	2
	Pharynx	—	1	1	1
	Uterus	—	10	10	7
	Thyroid	—	1	1	2
	Others and Unspecified	15	13	28	14
	Total	143	145	288	191

Table 5. Deaths under 1 year, 1954

The following table gives details of the infant deaths during 1954 :—

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	4	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—	4
Congenital Malformation	1	—	2	3	6	1	2	—	—	9
Broncho Pneumonia	1	1	—	—	2	1	1	1	—	5
Atelectasis	6	—	—	—	6	—	—	—	—	6
Suffocation	4	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—	4
Whooping Cough	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Cerebral Haemorrhage	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
Other causes	6	—	—	—	6	1	—	—	—	7
					29					37

The chief Vital Statistics for the Borough since 1924 are given in the following table :—

Table 7

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)
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
1954 <i>c</i>	149,700	2,035	13.5	37	18.1	1,443	9.6

a—Total population.

b—Civil population.

c—Home population.

Table 6. Nett Deaths during the Calendar Year, 1954

	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	1,443	37	13	13	9	68	353	377	573
Tuberculosis, Respiratory	17	—	—	—	—	5	8	2	2
Tuberculosis, Other	4	—	—	—	1	1	2	—	—
Syphilitic Disease	5	—	—	—	—	—	3	2	—
Diphtheria	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Whooping Cough	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Meningococcal Infections	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
Acute Poliomyelitis	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Measles	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other Infective and Parasitic Diseases	2	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
Malignant Neoplasm, Stomach	44	—	—	—	—	3	14	14	13
Malignant Neoplasm, Lung, Bronchus	56	—	—	—	—	4	32	13	7
Malignant Neoplasm, Breast	22	—	—	—	—	6	10	1	5
Malignant Neoplasm, Uterus	10	—	—	—	—	1	3	3	3
Other Malignant and Lymphatic Neoplasms	161	—	2	—	—	6	51	46	56
Leukaemia, Aleukaemia	12	—	1	1	—	3	2	3	2
Diabetes	4	—	—	—	—	1	2	—	1
Vascular Lesions of Nervous System	180	—	—	1	—	2	40	49	88
Coronary Disease Angina	219	—	—	—	—	5	65	78	71
Hypertension with heart disease	43	—	—	—	—	1	4	21	17
Other Heart Disease	173	—	—	1	1	2	24	35	110
Other Circulatory Disease	70	—	—	—	—	1	16	19	34
Influenza	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Pneumonia	77	3	1	1	—	3	7	22	40
Bronchitis	82	2	—	—	—	2	12	28	38
Other Diseases of Respiratory System	11	—	—	—	—	—	5	1	5
Ulcer of Stomach and Duodenum	19	—	—	—	—	1	6	3	9
Gastritis, Enteritis and Diarrhoea	10	—	—	—	—	3	—	3	4
Nephritis and Nephrosis	20	—	2	2	1	2	4	8	1
Hyperplasia of Prostate	8	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	7
Pregnancy, Childbirth, Abortion	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
Congenital Malformations	16	9	4	—	—	1	1	—	1
Other Defined and Ill-defined Diseases	110	20	1	3	1	6	20	18	41
Motor Vehicle Accidents	10	—	1	1	3	1	2	—	2
All other accidents	31	1	—	2	1	3	7	3	14
Suicide	21	—	—	—	—	4	12	3	2
Homicide and Operations of War	2	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—

SANITARY ADMINISTRATION

Sanitary Inspection of the Area.

During 1954 the Sanitary Inspectors carried out 37,724 inspections, including re-inspections, being over 7,000 more inspections than during the previous year. The nature of these inspections is shown in Table No. 7. As a result of these inspections 1,461 intimation notices and 594 statutory notices were served.

Complaints.

There was a considerable increase in the number of complaints received during the year—3,048 compared with 2,026 in 1953.

Any necessary action was taken where complaints were made or nuisances discovered.

Table No. 7. Inspections.

Complaints investigated ...	1,955	Water sampling and testing ...	171
Complaints reinspected ...	5,420	Rodent Control ...	2,924
Outworkers' premises ...	346	Smoke Observations ...	43
Houses re overcrowding ...	130	Theatres and cinemas ...	10
New houses re water supply ...	443	Men's lavatories ...	132
Houses re infectious disease ...	1,134	Women's lavatories ...	60
Houses re smallpox contacts ...	9	Rag and bone dealers ...	3
Houses re vermin ...	369	Houses re choked drains ...	200
Woolwich Borough Council housing applicants re vermin ...	1,069	Houses, visits with owners, builders, etc. ...	487
Houses re scabies ...	41	Houses re slum clearance and redevelopment ...	1,658
Houses re Housing Act ...	306	Drainage inspections ...	948
House-to-house inspections ...	2,647	Houses re verminous persons ...	98
Houses re Rent Restrictions Acts ...	80	Rag Flock premises ...	8
Aged and Infirm persons ...	2,716	Pet Animals premises ...	60
Common Lodging Houses ...	18	Houses re requests for permitted numbers ...	319
Tents and Vans ...	238	Offensive trades ...	Daily
Factories mechanically powered ...	406	Visits re insect and other pests ...	126
Factories non-mechanically powered ...	30	Houses re disinfection or destruction of articles ...	42
Work places ...	58	Marshes, ditches, pools, water-courses, static water tanks, etc. ...	70
Shops re Shops Act inspections ...	738	Stables ...	36
Food premises ...	4,628	Miscellaneous visits ...	2,102
Itinerant vendors ...	21	Non-effectual visits ...	4,799
Complaints re food ...	31	Exhumations ...	31
Shops re Pharmacy and Poisons ...	28	Atmospheric Pollution ...	532
National Assistance Act re burial of deceased persons ...	4		

Table No. 8. Nuisances Abated.

Dirty conditions remedied ...	374	Areas and yards paved or repaired ...	32
Roofs repaired ...	534	Sinks repaired or renewed ...	71
Gutters, rainwater pipes, etc., repaired or renewed ...	318	Drains cleansed ...	252
Damp walls and other damp conditions remedied ...	1,744	Drains repaired or reconstructed ...	208
Fireplaces, hearths, etc., repaired or renewed ...	157	Combined drains repaired or reconstructed ...	6
Floors, skirting and other wood-work ...	197	Water closets cleansed and repaired ...	305
Windows repaired or renewed ...	468	Water closet pans and traps fixed ...	119
Ceilings repaired or renewed ...	214	Water closet seats renewed ...	140
Walls repaired or renewed ...	1,043	Water supply defects remedied ...	236
Other dilapidations remedied ...	69	Dustbins provided ...	126
Lighting and ventilation defects remedied ...	436	Foul accumulations remedied ...	26
		Sites cleared of refuse ...	6

Sanitary Notices—Legal Proceedings.

During 1954 it was found necessary to institute legal proceedings in only three 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 Byelaws. In every case the necessary work commenced before the date of the Police Court hearing and the cases were adjourned sine die.

Water Supply.

The Borough is provided with a domestic water supply entirely by the Metropolitan Water Board, and samples of the water are regularly subjected to chemical and bacteriological examination by the Board at its laboratories. The condition of the water supply during the year was satisfactory both in quality and quantity. No complaint was received as to the quality of the water.

Local industries are also supplied by the Metropolitan Water Board, and in addition supplies are taken from eight of the eleven wells in the Borough. The water from these wells is used for trade purposes and fire fighting.

Drainage.

A total of 460 drainage defects were discovered during the year, and the Sanitary Inspectors supervised the necessary works of repair and reconstruction.

Officers of the Department carried out 58 smoke tests on suspected defective private and combined drains, and 30 of these produced positive results; 23 proved to be sound, and a further five, which also produced positive results, were in respect of old disused drains which when exposed were permanently sealed off.

Three private drains were cleared during the year, for which a total charge of £2 17s. 7d. was made. A total of 149 combined drains were inspected and of these six were found to be defective. In these six cases, after the service of the necessary notices under Section 40 of the Public Health (London) Act, 1936, the work of repair and reconstruction was carried out by the Borough Engineer's Department, the cost being apportioned among the responsible owners.

Common Lodging Houses.

During the year on the application of the keeper of the common lodging house at 102 Woolwich High Street, the Council renewed the licence for a period of 12 months. The licence in respect of the only other common lodging house in the Borough, that at 60 Beresford Street, was renewed for a period of six months only, expiring on the 31st December, 1954. This was because it was in the Rope Yard Rails slum clearance area which was, at the time of licensing, awaiting the Minister's decision.

Dustbins.

The London County Council (General Powers) Act, 1954, which received the Royal Assent in July, 1954, altered the law in London relating to the provision of dustbins. Section 11 of that Act gives a Metropolitan Borough Council power as it thinks necessary to provide, maintain, cleanse and renew dustbins at any premises in its area, and, if it thinks fit, to make an annual charge for this purpose. This Act clears up a doubt which has existed until now as to whether a Metropolitan Borough Council had the right itself to provide dustbins with the option to make a charge. A Borough Council if it wishes can now provide a dustbin service for the whole of the Borough or for part of the Borough only. Section 12 of the Act provides that where it appears to a Metropolitan Borough Council that any house in its district is without a suitable number of dustbins the Council may serve a notice on the owner of the house requiring him to provide a dustbin of such material, size and construction as may be specified in the notice. The owner may appeal to a Court of Summary Jurisdiction on the grounds that the notice or any requirement thereof is not justified, that the notice might have been served upon some other person, that it would have been equitable for it to have been so served, or that any obligation to comply with the requirements of the notice

ought to fall on the occupier of the house. On the hearing of the appeal the Court may make such order as it thinks fit. In exercising this discretion the Court shall have regard to the degree of benefit to be derived by the persons concerned, and to all the other circumstances of the case, including (as between the owner and the occupier) the terms and conditions of the tenancy whether contractual or statutory.

Prior to this amendment to the law, the Borough Council had in a number of individual cases given detailed consideration as to whether the tenant or the owner should be required to provide the new dustbin.

Pet Shops.

Eight applications for the renewal of licences to keep pet shops within the Borough have been approved. These premises are visited periodically by the Sanitary Inspectors to ensure that the requirements of the Pet Animals Act and the conditions subject to which licences are issued are being complied with. Sixty such inspections were carried out during the year.

Rag Flock.

The Sanitary Inspectors regularly inspect premises where rag flock and other filling materials are manufactured and stored, and samples of these filling materials are obtained for analysis. There are three registered premises in the Borough where filling materials to which the Act applies are being used, and the Council has issued one licence for the manufacture of rag flock.

During the year the following samples were obtained for analysis:—rag flock (3); millpuff (3); coir fibre (3); woollen mixture felt (2); cotton felt (1); and Algerian fibre (1). Coir fibre is obtained from the husks of coconuts and millpuff is manufactured from unused raw cotton. Algerian fibre is produced from a small palm leaf.

A new standard for the cleanliness of filling materials was issued during the year by the British Standards Institution which differs in some ways from the standard on which the principal Rag Flock Regulations made in 1951 were based. A review of the 1951 Regulations is to be made by the Minister of Housing and Local Government in the light of the new standard, with a view to amending the present law as may seem desirable in the light of experience gained during the past three years.

Rag and Bone Dealers.

The Public Health (London) Act, 1936, as amended by the London County Council (General Powers) Act, 1952, places restrictions, in the interests of public health, on sales by dealers in rags, old clothing and similar articles. During the year the Council instituted legal proceedings in respect of two offences against the Byelaws made by the London County Council relating to the business of a rag and bone dealer. A fine of 10s. and 10s. 6d. costs was imposed in the case of one dealer, who was seen by a police constable outside a Plumstead school handing books from a motor truck which was loaded with bundles of old clothes and boxes containing pens, pencils, books and rings. In the other case, a police constable saw a man slowly pushing a hand-barrow on which there was a quantity of rags and other clothes, and a number of rag dolls. A fine of 10s. and 20s. costs was imposed in this case.

Shops Act, 1950.

The provisions of the Shops Act, 1950, relating to suitability of ventilation, lighting, washing facilities, and sanitary accommodation and maintenance of suitable temperature in shops is the responsibility of the local sanitary authority. Altogether 738 visits of inspection were made by the Sanitary Inspectors for this purpose during the year.

Pharmacy and Poisons Act, 1933.

The registration and supervision of sellers of Part II poisons (i.e., other than registered pharmacists) is carried out by the Council under the above Act. The number of persons entered on the Council's list at the end of the year was 151.

Rodent Control.

There were 802 complaints of rats and 351 of mice received during 1954, and in addition to the investigation of these complaints the systematic inspection under the "block control" system was continued.

A total of 18,198 premises were inspected during the year and of these 15,646 were under the "block control" system. The number of properties found to be infested by rats or mice was 1,974; this included 190 business and industrial premises.

Where the cause of the infestation appears to be due to defective drains or other defects in the building the owner is requested to effect the necessary repairs. In this connection the Department carried out 40 smoke tests on suspected defective drains at rat infested premises, and these tests produced evidence of 24 defective drains.

A total of 31 "block control" schemes was carried out during the year. As in previous years the Council continued its practice of arranging 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.

With the co-operation of the Borough Engineer's Department, two sewer treatments and one test baiting were undertaken during 1954, and in this way the number of rats in the sewers has been kept under control. The number of "takes" recorded at the December treatment showed a fall of nine per cent. on the previous treatment. This was exceptional and difficult to explain. There was heavy rainfall at the beginning of the treatment which may have restricted the movement of the rats along the sewers. This treatment took place in a slum clearance area where the sewers have always been heavily infested. Large numbers of the houses were vacant and the rats have disappeared without any evidence of having moved to another area. The poison used in both treatments was zinc phosphide.

Hairdressers and Barbers Premises.

It is provided by Section 18 of the London County Council (General Powers) Act, 1954, that as from a day which may be appointed no person shall carry on the business of Hairdresser or Barber at any premises in a Metropolitan Borough unless he and the premises are registered by the Borough Council.

These provisions do not apply to premises where a person attends to a customer in his own home, or on a person's own private premises (other than a shop or saloon to which the public resort), so long as the hairdressing is not carried out substantially as a full-time occupation and the person does not employ any other person to assist him in the business.

The Borough Council may make Byelaws for the purpose of securing the cleanliness of premises registered under this Section, and of the instruments, tools, materials and equipment used therein, and the cleanliness of persons employed in such premises with regard to both themselves and their clothing. Penalties are provided for contraventions of such Byelaws.

Uniform Byelaws for use by Metropolitan Boroughs wishing to take advantage of these new powers are being drafted.

Mosquitoes and Other Pests.

In 1954 a number of complaints were received from all parts of the Borough of infestations of cockroaches, moths, pharaoh's ants, crickets, silver fish, etc. Advice was given in each case and where necessary treatment was carried out. There were six infestations of cockroaches dealt with by the Department during

the year, for which charges were made, and treatment was carried out at one of the local hospitals in respect of an infestation of pharaoh's ants in the kitchen.

Two cases of woodworm were treated by the use of Hydrogen Cyanide in the Department's special pantehnicon.

Charges totalling £32 5s. 10d. were made upon the responsible persons for the treatments referred to above.

There were several complaints during 1954 of wasps nests in houses or gardens, and in five cases the Department undertook to destroy the nests. Charges totalling £9 13s. 0d. were made upon the occupiers of the premises concerned.

Factories Act, 1937

Table 9. Details of Inspections carried out during 1954 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	31	30	42	—
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	338	406		
(iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out-workers' premises)	11	20		
Total	380	456	42	—

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 ..	11	11	—	8	—
Overcrowding	—	—	—	—	—
Inadequate Ventilation ..	1	1	—	1	—
Ineffective Drainage of Floors	—	—	—	—	—
Sanitary Conveniences:—					
(a) Insufficient ..	1	1	—	1	—
(b) Unsuitable or Defective	33	33	—	20	—
(c) Not Separate for Sexes	2	2	—	2	—
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Outworkers)	2	—	2	—	—
Total	50	48	2	32	—

Outworkers.

The last return of outworkers made by employers of labour in the Borough and by other local authorities shows that this type of work continues to be popular with women unable for one reason or another to go out to work.

There were 252 outworkers in the lists returned in August, compared with 257 in 1953. The nature of their work is as follows:—

Wearing Apparel	...	...	...	...	130
Lampshades	...	...	...	...	87
Stuffed Toys	...	...	...	...	15
Household Linen	...	...	...	...	14
Feather Sorting	...	...	...	...	2
Plastic Moulding	...	...	...	...	2
Making of Artificial Flowers	...	...	...	...	1
Box Making	...	...	...	...	1

Over 60 per cent. of these outworkers are employed by local firms, and the remainder by firms throughout the country from such distant places as Yeovil and Bradford.

Local industries also employ 132 outworkers who live outside the Borough.

The woman sanitary inspector visits the homes of outworkers periodically to ensure that the working conditions are satisfactory, 346 such inspections being carried out during 1954.

Old People's Welfare.

Much more time is now being spent with the old people in the Borough by the Council's Welfare visitor. Altogether 2,716 visits were made to the homes of the elderly, compared with 2,520 the previous year. Problems dealt with by the Council's visitor, who is a qualified nurse and also a sanitary inspector, included the voluntary removal of persons in need of hospital or institutional care, the provision of help from neighbours and friends, or the services of a home help, and many matters which, although fairly easily resolved, were, nevertheless, of great importance to the old person at the time.

Although in a number of cases it was necessary to arrange the removal of elderly persons to hospital, in no case was it found necessary to secure their compulsory removal under the procedure laid down by the National Assistance Act, 1948. Assistance in one form or another was provided wherever possible to help the old person to lead a happier and more comfortable life.

The assistance and co-operation of the General Medical Practitioners, District Nurses, Home Helps, Hospital Authorities and numerous voluntary persons working in the Borough for the welfare of old people, is of very great value in this work.

During the last two years the Borough Council have had special liaison with the Old People's Welfare Committee of the Woolwich Council of Social Service in order to secure better co-ordination between the two bodies regarding the problems of old people in the Borough. Representatives of the Old People's Welfare Committee attend meetings of the Council's Health Committee when old people's welfare matters are being discussed, and in addition the Council appoints four representatives to attend meetings of the Old People's Welfare Committee.

Holidays for Old People. The holiday scheme for old people of the Borough operated during the Spring and Autumn of 1954; all the detailed arrangements being made by the General Secretary of the Woolwich Council of Social Service. During this period 110 elderly persons were able to have a holiday. The number of old people who went away during the month of May was 89, and a further 21 had a holiday in September. Seventy-six of the old people stayed at a private Guest House at Westgate, 32 at a private Guest House at Westbrook and the remaining two at a private Guest House at Bexhill. The parties were transported to and from the holiday resorts by coaches. Several fresh applications were received during the year for holidays. A number of names originally on the application list were withdrawn for one reason or another and, in fact, everyone who was on the reserve list actually went away.

The Council of Social Service are reviewing the procedure for administering the holiday scheme in the light of experience gained in the past two years. In view of the large number of applications received holidays of only a week's duration were arranged during the year. It was also decided not to consider applications received from people who had had a holiday under the scheme the previous Autumn. The Old People's Welfare Committee assesses each application on its merits and a sliding scale of payment has been introduced and, except where it is not reasonably possible to do so, each old person pays between 15s. and 30s. towards the cost of a week's holiday. Several of the old people have paid by means of weekly instalments but others have preferred to pay in a lump sum. A medical certificate is produced by each applicant a week before going away.

Lunch Clubs. The Eltham and Plumstead Lunch Clubs functioned throughout the year. Meals for the Plumstead Lunch Club were supplied from the Borough Council's Restaurant at the Plumstead Baths, and until the end of the year the Eltham Lunch Club was supplied by the County Council's Eltham High Street Restaurant.

The Borough Council continue to make a substantial grant to the Woolwich Council of Social Service for the cost of the Woolwich and Eltham Lunch Clubs.

Mobile Meals Service. A detailed report submitted by the Old People's Welfare Committee as to the possibility of introducing a mobile meals service for old people in the Borough was considered by the Council during the year. Enquiries as to the essential need for such a service were made by officers of the Council of Social Service from clubs, churches and other organisations. It was found, however, that while there may be a demand for such a service, the cases where no other arrangements were possible were few and did not justify further action being taken.

Home Visitation. During 1954 the system of friendly visits to elderly persons throughout the Borough has continued. Some 30 visitors from the Woolwich Council of Social Service maintained contact with elderly persons; between 50 and 60 visits being made each week. Visitors undertake shopping, the changing of library books, the carrying of coals, the writing of letters, and minor household repairs, and are particularly concerned to see to the safety of old people on the roads and in their own homes.

During the year the Borough Council again made a grant of £250 towards the cost of the visiting services being undertaken by the Old People's Welfare Committee, including the payment of a part-time organiser for that purpose.

On behalf of the Old People's Welfare Committee an experiment was undertaken during the year by members of the local Civil Defence Association, who, in

the course of canvassing for Civil Defence recruits in a particular area in the Borough, have made enquiries about old people in the neighbourhood. Another experiment has been carried out through the goodwill of the Children's Club at an Eltham cinema. By this means a number of children have been able to make contact with old people in the area and so perform services for them. One of the most important aspects of the scheme is that, in addition to providing companionship for the old people, the visitors are able to report any special hardship that may become apparent in the course of these visits.

During the year the Old People's Welfare Committee considered the best way of caring for the needs of the more frail old people in their own homes, and decided that the most useful service at the present time would be the extension of the visiting service. Every effort is now being made to establish even closer contact with the old people in the Borough who are not already being cared for through one of the voluntary organisations or through the churches, who carry out such valuable work in this respect.

Reading Rooms. Requests have been received by the Council from voluntary organisations in the Eltham area asking whether the Council could make available rest and reading rooms where the aged could spend their time, particularly during winter months. Unfortunately no assistance could be given so far as Council accommodation is concerned. Temporary arrangements were made during the winter months of last year to accommodate members of the Pleasaunce Old People's Club who had been required to vacate the bowls pavilion until it was re-built, and a room at the Progress Hall, Eltham, was hired on four occasions each week during the first three months of the year.

Proposed Old People's Club at Eltham. During the year the Council considered proposals from the Victorians, a voluntary body working for the welfare of old people in the Borough, for the establishment of an Old People's Club which would provide for the well-being of old people in the Borough, including recreation, handicraft work and other activities. The suggested building was the Sherard Road Health Centre. The Borough Council, appreciating the demand among old people for such amenities, felt that the proposals of the Victorians should be actively supported, particularly as it is intended to provide meals for old people in the Club. The scheme would involve the conversion of the Sherard Road building into an Old People's Club, and the Victorians have been informed that the Borough Council is prepared to support their scheme for the establishment of such a Club, subject to the County Council undertaking to transfer the land and premises to the Borough Council upon terms to be agreed. The Council also decided that in addition to acquiring the land and premises, the Council would also be prepared to grant a sum not exceeding £300 per annum to this organisation for the purposes of the maintenance of this Club when established. Negotiations are proceeding with the County Council for the acquisition of the premises when they are released from their present use.

Atmospheric Pollution : First Smokeless Area.

After consideration of current reports and research on atmospheric pollution, and particularly the Statement of Evidence of the Metropolitan Boroughs' Standing Joint Committee to the Government Committee of Inquiry, the Council decided that it should make a start without delay on establishing a smokeless area, and in November resolved that its St. Mary's Redevelopment Area, comprising 75 acres and ultimately some 2,000 dwellings to be developed during the next 20 years, offered an opportunity to inaugurate the first smokeless area in the Borough. The Council also supported generally the views of the Metropolitan Boroughs' Standing Joint Committee for facilitating the rapid increase in the consumption of smokeless fuel.

It will be a Condition of Tenancy for new dwellings or business accommodation in the area that no smoke shall be emitted from the premises, and the use of solid fuel in the premises other than an approved smokeless fuel will be prohibited unless the tenant can show that supplies of smokeless fuel are not reasonably obtainable or can show other reasonable grounds for not using smokeless fuel. At the time of the Council's decision a number of new dwellings in this area had been completed, and a further 97 were to become available for letting during the following few months. All these dwellings are being fitted with grates capable of burning any smokeless fuel, and gas ignition is also being provided.

With regard to the Council's Bostall Estate, all the 128 dwellings in the course of erection at the present time are being fitted with gas ignition, and on completion of this work the special tenancy clause will also be applied to these dwellings.

The Council are convinced that with suitably designed and installed apparatus properly managed, and with regular supplies of the right fuel, smokeless heating is liked by the tenants and is no more expensive than burning bituminous coal.

Before deciding to set up a smokeless area the Council invited local fuel retailers to a meeting, at which the Council's proposals were explained to them and at which representatives of producers of the various types of smokeless fuel were present. A full exchange of views took place and the practical effects of the Council's action was discussed. The support and co-operation of local fuel merchants was promised.

The possibility of making other areas in the Borough smokeless will be considered by the Council in the light of experience gained from the St. Mary's Area.

Information on the Council's publicity campaign devoted to the prevention of smoke, particularly from domestic premises, is referred to in the section of the Report dealing with Health Education.

Recording and Measurement of Atmospheric Pollution, 1954.

During the year monthly readings of the amount of sulphur and deposited matter (grit) collected at the five stations set up by the Council for measuring and recording air pollution were obtained. The Public Analyst has assisted in this work and the results are being made available to the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research.

The results of the monthly readings during 1954 were as follows :—

Table 10. Measurement and Recording of Atmospheric Pollution—January-December, 1954

Station	Weight of Sulphur Trioxide Collected mg./100 sq. cm./day											
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
No. 1. Woolwich Dockyard	3.75	2.81	2.56	2.73	2.30	1.42	1.49	1.64	1.57	1.67	2.73	3.30
No. 2. Municipal Offices	5.25	4.18	3.46	3.45	2.95	1.67	1.87	1.88	1.86	2.34	3.89	4.74
No. 3. Abbey Wood Omnibus Garage ..	4.09	2.52	2.39	2.30	2.11	1.16	1.45	1.55	1.25	1.75	2.77	3.93
No. 4. Shooters Hill Golf Club	4.32	3.28	2.63	2.85	2.88	1.11	1.13	1.37	1.17	1.85	3.24	3.31
No. 5. Eltham High Street Area ..	2.39	2.00	1.57	1.67	1.21	0.65	0.55	0.66	0.58	0.81	1.57	1.74
OTHER STATIONS IN COUNTY OF LONDON												
Highest	9.01	8.40	7.90	5.94	4.21	3.92	7.81	4.25	9.03	10.67	9.94	7.37
Lowest	1.23	1.39	1.34	0.99	0.57	0.46	0.32	0.40	0.32	0.52	0.68	1.07

Station	Total Solid Matter Collected. Monthly deposit in tons per sq. mile											
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
No. 1. Woolwich Dockyard	41.18	38.55	49.12	31.52	50.49	30.69	29.15	34.25	24.74	22.64	37.65	32.11
No. 2. Municipal Offices	26.07	29.58	25.13	18.99	29.35	17.73	13.07	15.85	13.47	10.74	20.00	15.40
No. 3. Abbey Wood Omnibus Garage ..	24.47	27.08	17.78	15.80	25.60	16.57	9.76	14.67	8.87	8.80	16.50	13.54
No. 4. Shooters Hill Golf Club	14.40	18.34	13.59	13.30	20.04	15.14	8.67	10.90	6.27	6.26	12.17	8.40
No. 5. Eltham High Street Area ..	11.92	15.13	20.36	11.07	17.02	13.92	7.02	7.23	6.14	4.93	10.64	5.81
OTHER STATIONS IN COUNTY OF LONDON												
Highest	3096.58	205.43	187.75	54.60	115.02	34.15	163.39	1182.35	85.21	109.51	98.95	126.71
Lowest	10.64	12.25	13.59	3.99	11.47	9.26	4.46	7.23	5.80	4.93	10.47	5.81

During the year the Council approved the setting up in the Borough of a further three measuring stations designed to provide for the measurement of fluctuations in pollution occurring from day to day, particularly with changes in meteorological conditions, and the amount of smoke in the atmosphere. The stations are to be located respectively at the Town Hall, Shrewsbury House and Eltham Baths.

This scheme for the installation of additional instruments for measuring smoke is complementary to the earlier scheme. In this way the Fuel Research Station hope that the Metropolitan area will be fairly well covered by continuous surveys relating to three of the most significant air pollutants.

It is also considered that the setting up of these stations will assist research, not only by showing the atmospheric condition in London, but also its relation to smoke in the research now going on with regard to cancer of the bronchus. In this way information of real value to medical authorities and others can be obtained.

Air Pollution : Industrial Premises.

Smoke observations carried out on behalf of the Council, particularly in relation to several local factories, were continued through the year. This year there were fewer complaints of industrial smoke nuisances.

Below is given brief details of the complaints.

Complaints of clouds of smoke emitted from a large riverside factory which were stated to be a nuisance to residents on the northern bank of the river were received during the year. As a result of representations to the factory management an improvement in the method of burning the material being disposed of at this factory has been effected.

Several smoke observations were made during the year at an Abbey Wood factory which had been the cause of complaints of smoke nuisance from local residents in previous years. After one observation when a nuisance was observed, the Council's Smoke Inspector served a notice to remedy the nuisance. Smoke was being emitted from a steel stack about 45 feet high which was attached to a shell type furnace in which hessian covered scrap cable was being burnt. A Baghouse plant which is designed to remove the greater proportion of solids from the smoke produced in the refining of non-ferrous metals, has now been erected and is working satisfactorily.

In previous years complaints have been received of black smoke and grit being emitted from a factory in the area of the docks. The firm's action during the year in installing modern low ram stokers has effected a distinct improvement.

A further contribution to cleaner air locally was made during the year when two large local public undertakings converted their furnaces to oil firing. Teething troubles were experienced by the stokers until they became accustomed to the working of the new plant.

Fewer complaints were received during the year from other factories which in previous years had been the cause of complaints of smoke, dust and grit nuisances.

Mortuary Facilities.

On the instructions 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.

During the year 261 Woolwich cases went to Deptford, and 131 Eltham cases to Lewisham.

The public mortuary in Sunbury Street continues to be available for the reception of other bodies.

Burial of the Dead.

Eight burials were arranged under Section 50 of the National Assistance Act, 1948, these being carried out by the Council's contractor.

The total expenses incurred in respect of cases dealt with by the Council during the year was £71 14s. 9d. of which £26 6s. 9d. was recovered from the Estates of the deceased persons.

The cost of a funeral varies slightly, the average cost for an adult being about £11.

Joint Crematorium : Eltham Cemetery.

During the year considerable progress was made towards the establishment of a joint crematorium at Eltham Cemetery. A crematorium had been proposed before the last war, and during 1953 negotiations took place between the Borough Council and the Minister of Housing and Local Government for consent to proceed with a joint scheme. In October, 1953, the Minister agreed to the scheme, which includes the Boroughs of Woolwich, Greenwich, Bexley, Dartford and Erith, and the Urban District Councils of Chislehurst and Sidcup and Crayford.

The scheme provides that the whole of the appropriate functions and duties of the respective authorities be delegated to a Joint Committee, to be called the Woolwich, Greenwich and North-West Kent Joint Crematorium Committee. The Committee has been formed and comprises representatives of the participating authorities. The land and buildings will remain vested in the Borough Council, and the Council would also raise the necessary loan and finance the scheme on behalf of the Joint Committee.

In consultation with the other authorities a revision of the original design of the Crematorium has been carried out by the Borough Engineer. The Crematorium has been planned in an "L" shape with the main access running East to West. A sunken garden is incorporated in the angle between the two arms.

The Joint Committee will be wholly responsible for the management and maintenance of the Crematorium. Building is to commence as soon as possible.

Street Cleansing.

Each main thoroughfare is cleansed daily, secondary roads twice weekly and district roads once weekly.

There are 86 street 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.

Over 9,000 street gullies are cleansed periodically by mechanical gully cleansing machines.

House and Trade Refuse.

During the year under review, 46,784 tons of refuse were collected by the Council's vehicles and 56,192 tons disposed of at the Council's Refuse Destructor. The difference between the two weights is largely the quantity of refuse delivered to the Refuse Destructor from the Royal Arsenal and Army Barracks. Material salvaged during the year amounted to 1,788 tons at a value of £6,735. In addition, 1,602 tons of kitchen waste was collected within the Borough.

During the year, the Council decided to cease the collection and processing of kitchen waste which had been carried on since 1941. This decision was largely due to the falling off in demand for the processed meal, following an increased availability of the traditional feeding stuffs. Since 1941, over 100,000 tons of kitchen waste have been processed by the Council.

Public Conveniences.

Sixteen 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 four years, provided free washing facilities at main public conveniences. This service continues to be used and appreciated by the public, although some people still prefer the paid washing facilities which include the supply of a linen towel. The average number of paper towels per convenience used weekly is approximately 300.

Public Baths and Washhouses.

The Council has four bathing establishments in the Borough. A full description of this service, which includes swimming baths, slipper baths, Turkish baths, public laundry, and the use of the premises for social and sporting activities during the winter months, was included in my Annual Report for the year 1952.

At the end of the year the Council considered the desirability of modernising the public washhouse at the Plumstead Baths, one of the hand washing bays being worn out and in need of replacement. In order to improve this service the Council has decided to instal two mechanical washing machines, together with four new hydro extractors. The mechanical washing machines will be self-operated and will be available for booking by the public at charges to be fixed by the Council. Alterations have also been carried out to the electrical apparatus which drives the mangles.

Recently, an indoor cricket school has been established at the Eltham Baths, and has proved to be very successful. The Council provided the money for equipping the school, and the organisation of the attendance of Cricket Clubs at the school is carried out by the Association of Kent Cricket Clubs (Metropolitan Area).

The Baths Administrative Officer has informed me that during the twelve months ended 31st March, 1954, there was an increase of 46,579 compared with the previous year in the total number of attendances. Attendances during that period were as follows :—

Swimming	...	...	...	...	...	408,774
Slipper Baths	...	...	...	...	...	150,274
Turkish Baths	...	...	...	...	...	11,607
Public Laundry	...	...	...	...	...	11,503
Free baths to old age pensioners and unemployed	...	...	...	...	...	4,478

Tents, Vans and Sheds : Byelaws.

The administration of Byelaws made by the Borough Council in respect of tents, vans and sheds is the responsibility of the Department, and a total of 238 inspections of these types of dwellings was carried out.

During the year two informal notices were served for the remedying of some 9 defects to caravans. It was not necessary to resort to any formal notices.

Boating and Paddling Pools.

With the co-operation of the Borough Engineer the regular chlorination of the pools was continued throughout the year.

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.

Frequent tests made by the Department showed that the water was maintained at a reasonable standard of purity.

Swimming Bath Water.

During 1954, 71 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.

<i>Baths.</i>	<i>Number of Samples taken.</i>	<i>Number of Bacillus Coli.</i>	<i>Average pH value.</i>	<i>Average Free Chlorine.</i>	<i>Average Tempera- ture.</i>
Woolwich ...	24	0	7.68	1.76	75°
Plumstead ...	24	0	7.6	1.79	75.4°
Eltham ...	23	0	7.77	1.75	75°

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, 42 of which also serve main meals. 271 inspections were made during the year, and as a result 160 defects were found requiring the service of 19 informal notices and 2 formal notices. All these defects were subsequently remedied.

Excellent co-operation continues to exist between the brewery companies and the officers of this Department, which has resulted in a general improvement in the standard of hygiene and in the condition of the premises and equipment.

HOUSING

Housing.

At the end of 1954 there were estimated to be 41,647 dwellings in the Borough. The number inspected for housing defects under the Public Health or Housing Acts was 7,365 (compared with 8,579 in 1953), and 1,522 houses were found to be not in all respects reasonably fit for habitation.

Some 1,038 houses were rendered fit by informal action by the Sanitary Inspectors. This informal action included the service of intimation notices.

In 594 cases it was necessary to serve statutory notices in order to have the necessary works carried out.

Over four times as many house-to-house inspections were carried out under the Housing (Consolidated) Regulations, 1925, the total for 1954 being 2,647 compared with 618 in 1953.

Overcrowding.

During the year 28 families were found to be living in overcrowded conditions, and reports were made to the London County Council on behalf of these persons. In nine cases the County Council provided other accommodation. A further 102 families were visited after complaints of overcrowding 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 319 occasions, compared with 652 in 1953.

Individual Unfit Houses.

Seventeen houses (compared with 23 in 1953) 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, closing orders were made by the Council in respect of 16 of these houses and one demolition order was made. Details of the houses dealt with are as follows :—

33, Chapel Hill	...	Closing Order—whole house—20th February, 1954.
1, North Kent Place	...	Closing Order—whole house—10th March, 1954.
46, Glyndon Road	...	Closing Order—whole house—10th March, 1954.
30, Walpole Place	...	Closing Order—whole house—8th April, 1954.
35, Samuel Street	...	Closing Order—whole house—8th April, 1954.
3, Saunders Road	...	Closing Order—whole house—8th April, 1954.
220, Woolwich Church Street	...	Closing Order—whole house—8th April, 1954.
29, Ann Street	...	Closing Order—whole house—29th June, 1954.
254, Woolwich Church Street	...	Closing Order—whole house—29th July, 1954.
2, Harrington Buildings, Chapel Hill	...	Closing Order—whole house—30th July, 1954.
3, Harrington Buildings	...	Closing Order—whole house—30th July, 1954.
4, Harrington Buildings	...	Closing Order—whole house—30th July, 1954.
5, Harrington Buildings	...	Closing Order—whole house—30th July, 1954.
6, Harrington Buildings	...	Closing Order—whole house—30th July, 1954.
2, Garibaldi Street	...	Closing Order—whole house—22nd October, 1954.
256, Plumstead High St.	...	Closing Order—whole house—22nd October, 1954.
Myrtle Cottage, Philipot Path	...	Demolition Order—21st October, 1954.

A further eight individual unfit houses have been represented to the Council at the end of the year for action under the Housing Acts. During the year the Council revoked an undertaking given by the owner of 34, Elmley Street, Plumstead, not to use these premises for human habitation. The Council also determined a closing order made during 1953 in respect of 83, Sand Street, Woolwich, the necessary works having been completed to make the premises again fit.

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

39, Woolwich Common	Basement front and back rooms—Closing Order dated 10th March, 1954.
33, Nightingale Place ...	Basement front and back rooms and basement back addition room—Closing Order dated 29th June, 1954.
150, John Wilson Street	Basement rooms—Closing Order dated 29th June, 1954.
West Wing, 2, Bexley Rd.	Ground floor front, first floor front, middle and back rooms—Closing Order dated 29th July, 1954.

Clearance Areas.

During the year the Council's programme of slum clearance was advanced in accordance with the five-year programme decided in conjunction with the London County Council.

The steps taken during the year and the position at the end of the year in each area are as follows :—

Ropeyard Rails (No. 1) Area:—

This area consists of 12 dwelling houses, and was represented by me for clearance in 1952. After the holding of a Public Inquiry, the Minister of Housing and Local Government in September, 1954, confirmed the Council's Clearance Order with slight modification due to the exclusion at the request of the Council of Nos.: 6-9 (con.), Warren Lane from the Order; these properties having been purchased by the Council by agreement prior to the Public Inquiry. None of the premises had been vacated at the end of the year.

Ropeyard Rails (No. 2) Area:—

This area consists of only two dwelling houses. Confirmation of the Council's Clearance Order was received in September, 1954.

Ropeyard Rails (No. 3) Area:—

This area comprises five dwelling houses, and was confirmed by the Minister during the year.

Ropeyard Rails (No. 4) Area:—

There are four dwelling houses in this area. At the end of the year two of the houses were unoccupied.

Ropeyard Rails (No. 5) Area:—

This area, consisting of three dwelling houses, was represented by me during 1954 for clearance. The Council's Clearance Order was confirmed by the Minister in September, 1954.

Ropeyard Rails (No. 6) Area:—

This area comprises three dwelling houses, the common lodging house at 60, Beresford Street with accommodation for 50 men, and an old people's home at 62b, Beresford Street, occupied by 18 women. The Minister confirmed the Council's Clearance Order in September, 1954, and at the end of the year negotiations were proceeding to secure the vacation and demolition of these premises.

Vicarage Road (Plumstead):—

This area comprises eight dwelling houses, and was represented by me during 1953 for clearance. The Minister confirmed the Council's Clearance Order, without modification, on the 5th May, 1954. At the end of the year only one house was occupied.

Thrift Cottages (Frances Street) Area:—

This area comprises five dwelling houses, 1-5 (con.), Thrift Cottages which were represented by me on the 6th April, 1954, for clearance. At its meeting on the 6th June, 1954, the Council made a Clearance Order which was subsequently submitted to the Minister. The number of occupants to be displaced was two.

Eustace Place (No. 1) Area:—

On the 6th April, 1954, I represented that this area should be dealt with for clearance. The area comprises the following dwelling houses:—

25-38 (con.), Eustace Place, and
17 and 18, Borgard Road.

The number of occupants was 40.

Eustace Place (No. 2) Area:—

On the 6th April, 1954, I represented that this area should be dealt with by the Council for clearance. It consists of 10 houses, Nos. 3-12 (con.), Limbrey's Buildings. The number of occupants was 19.

Greenlaw Place (No. 1) Area:—

On the 3rd October, 1954, I represented to the Council that this area should be dealt with for clearance. The area comprises the following dwelling houses:—

274-278 (even), Woolwich Church Street.
2, Sunbury Street.
9-17 (odd), Kingsman Street.

The number of occupants was 35. The Council decided at its meeting on the 3rd November to deal with the area as a clearance area.

Greenlaw Place (No. 2) Area:—

On the 3rd October, 1954, I represented to the Council that this area should be dealt with for clearance. The area comprises the following dwelling houses:—

25-47 (odd), Kingsman Street.

The number of occupants was 36. The Council decided at its meeting on the 3rd November to deal with the area as a clearance area.

Greenlaw Place (No. 3) Area:—

On the 3rd October, 1954, I represented that this area, consisting of 97 dwelling houses should be dealt with as a clearance area. The area comprises the following dwelling houses:—

290 and 292, Woolwich Church Street.
2-10 (even), Church Hill.
14-18 (even), Church Hill.
36 and 38, Church Hill.
4-24 (even) and 8a, Sunbury Street.
1-29 (odd), Sunbury Street.
29-40 (con.), Greenlaw Place.
1, 3, 5, 6 and 9-16 (con.), Greenlaw Place.
1-9 and 11-18b (con.), Greenlaw Street.
19-32 (con.), Greenlaw Street.
21, Kingsman Street.

The displacement of 287 persons is involved.

Greenlaw Place (No. 4) Area:—

On the 3rd October, 1954, I represented to the Council that this area should be dealt with for clearance. The area comprises the following dwelling houses:—

24 and 26, Church Hill.

The number of occupants was nine. The Council decided at its meeting on the 3rd November to deal with the area as a clearance area.

Revision of Council's Underground Room Regulations.

At the request of the Minister of Housing and Local Government the Council, during 1954, reviewed the operation of regulations made by them in 1939 for securing the proper ventilation and lighting of underground rooms to which the Housing Act, 1936, applies, and for their protection against dampness and effluvia.

The regulations apply to rooms used for human habitation where the surface of the floor is more than 3 feet below the surface of the street adjoining.

Revised model regulations prepared by the Ministry have been considered by the Council. There is a new requirement regarding floors that the site concrete shall resist the passage of moisture and that there should be a space of at least 3 inches between the underside of the lowest timber of the floor and the site concrete ; this space to be thoroughly ventilated.

The provisions regarding ventilation are modified so that the ventilation of a room without a fireplace must be by an opening or air-shaft of at least 30 square inches to the open air. Regarding windows, there is a reduction in the required window area from one-eighth to one-tenth of the floor area.

The Council have subsequently amended their existing regulations and so have brought them into line with the Ministry's new model.

Certificates of Disrepair.

During the year the Housing Repairs and Rents Act, 1954, came into operation. This Act enables a landlord whose property is in good condition and who has spent on maintenance the amount of money laid down to claim a repairs increase on the rent. If the tenant, after receiving a notice of increase, is of the opinion that the house is not in good condition he may at any time apply to the local authority for a Certificate of Disrepair. The Certificate granted to a tenant must specify all the defects existing at the premises, and if and when the landlord remedies these defects he may then apply to the local authority for the revocation of the Certificate, and if the Certificate is revoked the repairs increase will then become payable. The Act came into operation on the 31st August, and at the end of the year a total of 26 applications from tenants for the issue of Certificates of Disrepair following the service of notices by the landlord had been dealt with. Five of these applications were refused, the conditions at the premises not being sufficiently serious as to warrant the issue of such a Certificate. A Certificate issued to a tenant is retrospective in its effect from the date on which the tenant applies for the Certificate.

During the year the Council also issued three Certificates of Disrepair to tenants under the Rent and Mortgage Interest (Restrictions) Acts, the houses in question not being in a reasonable state of repair. These Certificates entitle the tenants to withhold part of the rent increase permitted by the Acts. One application was received from a landlord for the revocation of a Certificate of Disrepair, and the Health Committee, on being satisfied that the premises had been put into a reasonable state of repair, decided to revoke the Certificate.

Housing Progress.

The number of dwellings built in the Borough of Woolwich during 1954 is summarised as follows:—

By the Borough Council	...	...	...	...	...	164
By the London County Council	...	...	...	...	...	81
By Private Enterprise	...	...	...	...	...	130
						<hr/> 375 <hr/>

Included in the dwellings completed by the Borough Council is a group of 17 dwellings at Heavitree Road, Plumstead, S.E.18, erected specifically for elderly persons, this being the first scheme of this character in Woolwich.

In addition to the dwellings completed, at the end of the year the Borough Council had schemes in hand for the erection of a further 243 dwellings.

During the year further progress was made in the St. Mary's Comprehensive Development Area, and in the clearing of the wooden hutments at Abbey Wood which were erected during the 1914/1918 war.

In the St. Mary's Area, some 162 families had been rehoused and by the end of the year 24 flats had been erected on the west side of Rectory Place, six houses and 18 flats in St. Mary's Street, and a further scheme of 49 dwellings was in progress on the east side of Rectory Place where some 24 had been occupied.

In the Abbey Wood area there were originally 101 occupied hutments, of which 63 had been cleared by the 31st December, 1954, the tenants being rehoused in new dwellings erected on the Bostall Estate in Bevan Road and Bostall Lane.

At the 31st December, 1954, there were 8,826 tenancies in property owned or controlled by the Council, of which 821 were in requisitioned property.

There were 4,291 applications on the Housing Register compared with 4,642 at the end of December, 1953.

I am indebted to the Director of Housing for the above information with reference to the Borough Council's housing progress during 1954.

HEALTH EDUCATION

Film Programmes and Informal Talks.

The Department's Health Education unit was again very busy during 1954, and the total number of visits to local organisations was slightly higher than the previous year. Altogether 102 film programmes and 14 talks were presented.

Attendances are markedly increasing, probably due to the fact that old people's organisations are being visited more frequently than in previous years and these meetings invariably attract large audiences.

The subjects dealt with during these sessions covered various aspects of the work of the Borough Council, and of course, particularly in relation to Public Health. During the year two subjects, "Home Safety" and "Atmospheric Pollution" were given special emphasis, and three film strips dealing with "Home Safety" were purchased for showing locally. In many instances the talks and films stimulated discussion.

A sound film produced by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents was shown on a number of occasions, and after the showing of the film audiences were invited to ask questions and enter into discussion. Women's audiences were particularly interested in the subject of "Home Safety."

A large number of photographs of local health services have been collected and a series of slides prepared by the Department for use in illustrating lectures and talks given to local organisations on the work of the Borough Council.

Smoke Abatement.

In connection with the Council's decision during 1954 to set up a "Smokeless Area" in the St. Mary's area of the Borough (details of which are given elsewhere in the Report), the Health Education unit was used to help make people more smoke

abatement conscious. A copy of the film "Guilty Chimneys" produced on behalf of the Gas Council has been purchased and shown extensively. A number of lively meetings were held dealing with smoke abatement, and 5,000 leaflets designed by the staff of the Department were distributed.

During the months of November and December preparations were made for a campaign devoted to persuading householders and factory owners to instal efficient approved grates and furnaces and to use only smokeless fuel, this campaign to be held during the months of February and early March, 1955, in conjunction with the Solid Smokeless Fuels Federation. Public meetings and discussions on air pollution were arranged to coincide with the visit to Woolwich of the Mobile Exhibition of the Solid Smokeless Fuels Federation.

Home Safety.

During the year arrangements were made with a firm of publishers for the production of 3,000 copies of a Home Safety booklet, to be presented by the Health Committee of the Council and distributed locally.

The booklet contained a Foreword by His Worship the Mayor and an Introduction by myself drawing attention to the tragic loss of life, injury and suffering caused by accidents in the home.

The booklet contained articles on common accidents to children; the safe use of electricity; danger from unguarded fires; the safe use of gas and paraffin appliances; fire prevention in the home; industrial safety; notes on first aid; and care in the kitchen and bathroom.

In order that as many residents as possible might have the opportunity of seeing this booklet, copies were distributed via doctors', dentists' and hospital waiting rooms, local welfare centres, old people's welfare organisations and political organisations, and through the Council's public libraries and health and housing departments.

The booklet was well illustrated and was issued free of charge and without cost to the Council, the revenue being obtained by the publishers from advertisements obtained from local tradesmen.

As in past years, the Council made a financial contribution towards the work of the Home Safety section of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents.

A campaign drawing attention to the harm caused by accidents among children due to medicinal poisoning was also undertaken during the year. Several hundred copies of a placard pointing out this danger were distributed to local medical practitioners and to hospitals for display in waiting rooms, and to chemists for display on their shop premises. Over 3,000 leaflets dealing with this subject were also distributed.

Leaflets and Literature.

As in past years, 500 copies of the booklet "Better Health" were made available each month to members of the public, and were distributed through the Council's libraries and other public offices, and at Health Education sessions.

The two large poster sites in Woolwich were used for the display of posters obtained from the Central Council for Health Education, and were also utilised for the display of Civil Defence posters.

By arrangement with a local cinema, 5,000 handbills advertising a film being shown currently in the Borough were distributed at a Woolwich cinema; the title of the film gave an opportunity to draw attention to the importance of diphtheria immunisation.

As in past years, the Council made a contribution towards the work of the Central Council for Health Education.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

Premises where Food is Prepared or Offered for Sale.

A total of 4,680 inspections of food premises was carried out during the year.

Details of the registered food premises at the end of 1954, together with the number of inspections carried out during the year, are as follows:—

Table 11

Description	Number in Borough on 31st December	Number of Inspections
Dairies	1	16
Distributors of Milk	172	392
Ice-Cream Premises	312	1,443
Premises where Meat is Potted, Pickled, Pressed and Preserved	116	353
Premises where Sausages are Manufactured	104	268
Premises where Fish is Cured or Prepared for Frying ..	42	156
Wholesale Dealer in Margarine	1	4
Restaurants, Cafes and Snack Bars	218	821
Industrial Canteens	45	271
School Meals Service Canteens	54	
Markets	1	Daily
Bakehouses	29	50
Itinerant Vendors	—	21
Non-registered Premises	—	456
Greengrocery and Fruit Shops	—	158
Public Houses	148	271

Milk Supply.

Within the Borough there was at the end of the year one dairy and 145 registered distributors of milk. The Council also approved registration of a further 27 distributors of milk who sell in this Borough from premises outside. 234 dealers' licences and 78 supplementary licences were issued under the provisions of the Milk (Special Designations) Regulations, 1949, which authorised the use of the special designations "Pasteurised," "Tuberculin Tested" and "Sterilised."

Samples of milk were submitted to the Public Analyst for chemical analysis during the year. The percentage content of fat was:—

	<i>No. of Samples.</i>
4.5 per cent and over	2
4 per cent and under 4.5 per cent	2
3.5 per cent and under 4 per cent	103
3 per cent and under 3.5 per cent	113
Below 3 per cent	7

During 1954, 252 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 254 samples of "Pasteurised" or "Tuberculin Tested Pasteurised" milk were submitted for the Phosphatase test to determine the adequacy of pasteurisation. One of the samples failed to satisfy the test, but subsequent samples which were obtained from the same supply were found to be satisfactory.

Twenty-three 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 with one exception. Subsequent samples which were obtained from the same supply as that which had failed the test were found to be satisfactory.

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 92 samples of milk were obtained in the early hours of the morning during deliveries to schools, hospitals and institutions in the Borough. Thirty-three of the samples were submitted for the Phosphatase test, 33 for the Methylene Blue test and 26 for chemical examination.

Routine visits to milk distributors were carried out during the year. Thirty-six defects at 8 milk premises were found and remedied, 8 informal notices being served upon the responsible persons to remedy defects.

Milk Standards.

Difficulty was again experienced by the Council with regard to the present standard of milk, in that for some years there has been a seasonal fall in the solids-other-than-fat content of milk, and a number of samples obtained by the Council's Sampling Officers for analysis have failed to reach the minimum standard.

The existing regulations provide that where a sample contains less than 8.5 per cent of milk solids other than milk fat it shall be presumed until the contrary is proved that the milk is not genuine by reason of the abstraction of milk solids other than milk fat or the addition thereto of water. In each case the Public Analyst had reported that the deficiency in milk solids other than milk fat corresponded to the presence of one per cent of added water. It was his view that the samples were of genuine milk from the cow and that the deficiency in each case was due to the normal seasonal poor quality of milk.

A number of firms had pointed out that during the Spring of each year milk is often below the standard due to feeding and for other reasons beyond their control, and that even after bulk supplies had been mixed, the standard was not always brought up to the minimum standard required.

The Health Committee considered that the present standard could not be regarded as high and ought to be reasonably attainable by farmers at all seasons of the year, and that consequently farmers should be given more encouragement by the Government to breed for quality production rather than for quantity, and that legislation should be introduced which would make it an offence, after farmers had had sufficient notice to enable them to improve their herds, for any milk to be sold below the legal minimum standard whether it is genuine cows' milk or not.

The Metropolitan Boroughs' Standing Joint Committee were requested to consider this matter and to urge that legislation should be introduced upon the lines indicated.

Ice Cream.

There were 312 ice cream premises registered in the Borough at the end of the year, of which six were used for manufacture and six for the storage 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 33 defects were found and remedied. Seven informal notices were served. Three 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. It was found necessary to refuse one application for registration of premises for the sale of ice cream, owing to the unsatisfactory condition of the premises.

During the year 33 samples of ice cream were submitted to the Laboratory for grading by the Methylene Blue test, and the results were as follows:—

Grade I	...	...	...	28
Grade II	...	...	...	5
Grade III	...	...	...	Nil
Grade IV	...	...	...	Nil

Food and Drugs (Amendment) Act, 1954.

During the year legislation with the object of revising the existing statutory provisions contained in the Food and Drugs Act, 1938, for the protection of the public against the sale of food containing injurious ingredients, and against the mis-description of food on labels and advertisements, was passed. This Act is also intended to give further powers to local authorities to secure that food is not contaminated in the course of its preparation, distribution, and sale.

The Act empowers the Ministers of Food and Health to make regulations for controlling the composition of food, the use of substances in the preparation of food, and the sale and importation of food.

The Minister may make regulations to provide for the issue by local authorities of licences in respect of the use of vehicles, stalls or places other than premises for the preparation, exposure or offer for sale of food for human consumption, and for prohibiting the use of this type of vehicle or stall except in accordance with a licence issued under the regulations.

Itinerant Vendors.

Surveillance of street traders in the Borough continued throughout the year. A good standard of cleanliness was maintained in respect of these vehicles. In one instance it became necessary to serve a notice in respect of a vehicle which was not displaying the name and address of the trader.

Meat Inspection.

The inspection of meat at the Plumstead Abattoir is carried out daily by three of the Council's Sanitary Inspectors specially qualified in this work. The following tables give details of the number of animals slaughtered and inspected at the Abattoir during the year 1954.

Table 12. Carcasses Inspected and Condemned, 1954

	Cattle, excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs
Number Killed	14,517	948	568	32,397	59,892
Number Inspected	14,517	948	568	32,397	59,892
<i>All diseases except Tuberculosis:—</i>					
Whole carcasses condemned	6	3	1	22	58
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	3,701	195	—	2,844	10,535
Percentage of number inspected affected with disease other than Tuberculosis	25.5	20.9	.17	8.8	17.7
<i>Tuberculosis only:—</i>					
Whole carcasses condemned	19	7	1	—	43
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	650	181	—	—	625
Percentage of number inspected affected with Tuberculosis	4.6	19.8	.18	—	1.1

Table 13. Animals Slaughtered at Garland Road Abattoir, 1954

	Cattle, excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep	Pigs
January	322	155	100	1,373	5,486
February	214	67	101	169	5,998
March	488	127	130	1,515	9,200
April	783	98	120	898	7,049
May	988	69	63	1,213	8,411
June	516	119	24	1,331	6,789
July	1,320	2	30	3,067	1,196
August	1,699	—	—	4,295	1,592
September	2,034	4	—	4,899	2,035
October	1,934	143	—	5,173	3,559
November	2,020	164	—	4,947	3,965
December	2,199	—	—	3,517	4,612
Total	14,517	948	568	32,397	59,892

Total Animals Slaughtered:—108,322

The increase in animals, and particularly cattle, slaughtered after the 29th June, 1954, the date on which the Abattoir was handed back to the Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society, Ltd., will be noted.

On the resumption of private slaughtering on the 2nd July, the Minister of Food wrote expressing the Ministry's appreciation of the services rendered with regard to meat inspection at the Abattoir by the Council during and since the war, often under difficult circumstances.

The Ministry's Chief Technical Advisor on meat inspection and his area Technical Assistant remain available to give advice and guidance on meat inspection problems, and the Minister hopes that the fullest possible use will be made of the services of these officers.

Following de-control, meat and offal rejected as unfit for human consumption is now no longer disposed of by the Ministry of Food, and the Minister has asked that local authorities and their officers should co-operate to secure the economic and safe disposal of all meat and offal unfit for human consumption. In Woolwich this is being done.

Now the Co-operative Wholesale Society Ltd., instead of the Ministry of Food supply nearly all the animals slaughtered. The Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society Ltd., maintain the Abattoir and contract to slaughter all animals sent there. After slaughter the carcasses are sold to various Co-operative Societies, particularly in the Kent area.

Parasites.

Cysticercus Bovis produces measly ox. If the flesh of an ox which is affected with *Cysticercus Bovis* is eaten by man in a raw or partly cooked state, the *Cysticercus* reaches his intestines and may develop into the adult tapeworm. The head of the tapeworm attaches itself to the intestinal wall of the host, here the body grows in segments to some 20 feet long. The segments produce ova which are voided with the excreta of the host. These ova becoming attached to grass are swallowed by the ox in whose intestines the embryo is liberated. This embryo makes its way to the muscular tissues of the animal where it becomes encysted.

It is to prevent carcasses affected with *Cysticercus Bovis* reaching the public that the Meat Inspector devotes a proportion of his time.

All ox carcasses killed at the Abattoir are inspected for *Cysticercus Bovis* by making incisions in the muscles of the cheek (both inside and outside) and in the heart.

During 1954 62 carcasses were found to be affected with these cysts, 54 being found during the last six months. The majority were cattle imported from Ireland. The offal of these carcasses is destroyed and the meat placed in cold storage for three weeks before being used for human consumption. After such treatment all the cysts are destroyed, and the meat becomes edible.

Distoma Hepaticum (liver fluke).

There has been a tremendous increase in the number of ox carcasses affected with liver fluke. Although the carcass itself is usually fit for human consumption the liver has to be destroyed. In 1954 some 27,570 lbs. of liver was condemned because of liver fluke, and this represented a loss of approximately £5,000. Again Irish cattle has been responsible for the increase of fluky liver. It seems a great pity that some treatment of pastures affected cannot be carried out to prevent such a valuable food as liver being destroyed.

Licensing of Slaughtermen.

Slaughterhouses are licensed annually by the Borough Council. 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 16 slaughtermen's licences; all the applications related to persons employed at the Plumstead Abattoir.

Legislation which came into force during the year, namely the Slaughter of Animals (Amendment) Act, 1954, provided that in future licences issued to slaughtermen must specify the kinds of animals which may be slaughtered by the holders of the licences and the types of instruments which may be used in slaughtering.

Regulations may be made requiring the holder of a licence to slaughter only under the supervision of a fully qualified slaughterman, and prescribing the qualifications for the holding of licences. Provision is made for the refusal, suspension or revocation of the licence if the holder fails to observe the conditions attached to it, or is convicted of an offence under an enactment relating to the prevention of cruelty to animals. The Act extends to all animals the previous requirement that certain animals only should be instantaneously slaughtered or should be instantaneously rendered insensible to pain by stunning. There are increased penalties for certain offences.

Catering Establishments.

The improvement of conditions in restaurants, cafes and canteens in the Borough was continued, and more work was done under the supervision of the Sanitary Inspectors to improve standards prevailing, particularly the kitchen accommodation.

A total of 821 inspections of restaurants and cafes, and 271 of factory and school canteens were made.

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, however, necessary in 18 instances to serve informal notices requiring work to be carried out, and in one instance it was necessary to serve a formal notice under the Food and Drugs Act, 1938. Some 105 defects were remedied during the year. In no case was it found necessary to institute legal proceedings.

Unsound Food.

The Council's Food Inspectors are required to examine food suspected of being unsound. 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, 43,309 articles of food weighing approximately 103 tons were voluntarily surrendered as unfit for human consumption. The majority of these articles, weighing approximately 85 tons, were from the large Abattoir in the Borough. The food is utilised for animal feeding and for fertilizers.

Complaints of Unsound Food.

Altogether 50 complaints were received during the year of unsound food. The majority of these referred to alleged unsound bread and of milk containing glass or dirt. Ten complaints were received concerning unsound bread of which three related to foreign matter in bread, and the others included the following objects in bread—a pencil, a fly, a bus ticket, an insect and other foreign matter. In two instances the foreign substance was found to be oil and oiled dough, and the bakers of this bread were in each case warned. The alleged bus ticket was found to be a flour bag label and the bakers were similarly warned regarding this matter.

A number of complaints were received during the year relating to foreign matter in milk. Altogether nine such cases were investigated, four of which concerned alleged glass in milk and three of dirt in milk. The other two related to a piece of soap in milk, and other foreign matter which was found to be dust. The Council decided to institute legal proceedings in respect of one of the complaints of glass in milk, and the suppliers were fined £10 and £2 2s. 0d. costs. Of the remaining complaints of unsound food it was necessary to institute legal proceedings following a complaint of tea which contained foreign matter (cigarette ends) and the suppliers were fined £8 and £2 2s. 0d. costs.

With regard to a complaint alleging a piece of tooth in a mince pie, the object was found on examination to be a nut. The suppliers of biscuits which contained metal were warned regarding any future offences, as were the suppliers of cream found to contain a piece of string. A complaint of a nail in cheese of Empire origin was also investigated and the Ministry of Food, the importers of the cheese, were asked to investigate this complaint.

On investigation of a number of other complaints of adulterated food, the articles of food complained of were found to be genuine, for example, alleged unsound carrots, corned beef, and alleged unfit confectionery.

In those cases where the cause of complaint was justified the food preparing premises were investigated by the Council's Food Inspectors and the food handlers concerned were advised.

Food Sampling, 1954.

During the year ended 31st December, 1954, 823 samples (i.e. 578 informal and 245 formal samples) were submitted for analysis to the Public Analyst. Of these, 20 formal and 12 informal samples were reported to be adulterated or otherwise not complying with the statutory requirements, giving a percentage of 3·8 compared with 3·2 in 1953, and 6·6 in 1952. No private samples were examined during the year.

The following table gives details of the adulterated samples:—

Table 14

Sample	Article	Formal or Informal	Result of Analysis	Result of legal proceedings or other action
742	Sugar Confectionery Milk Gums.	Informal	Contained insufficient milk to justify the description "Milk Gums."	Formal sample obtained. Manufacturer's observations requested.
761	Milk Gums ..	Formal	Contained insufficient milk to justify the description "Milk Gums."	
765	Meringue Mixture..	Informal	An imitation Meringue Mixture. In the public analyst's opinion the term "meringue mixture" was a false description.	No further action.
656	Milk	Formal	Ingredients corresponded to 1 per cent. of added water.	Suppliers warned.
726	Milk	Formal	Ingredients corresponded to 1 per cent. of added water.	Suppliers warned.
728	Milk	Formal	Ingredients corresponded to 1 per cent. of added water.	Suppliers warned.
744	Sterilised Milk ..	Formal	Ingredients corresponded to 1 per cent. of added water.	Suppliers warned.
695	Pork Sausages ..	Formal	11 per cent. deficient in meat.	Manufacturers warned.
31	Spanish Oranges ..	Informal	Contained Thiourea (a prohibited preservative).	Consignment investigated.
131	Plum Jam	Informal	Deficient in required fruit content.	Formal sample obtained.
156	Plum Jam	Formal	Deficient in required fruit content.	Manufacturers warned.
161	Lemon Powder ..	Informal	Contained no powdered lemon.	Formal sample obtained. Manufacturer undertook to amend the label.
187	Pure Lemon Powder	Formal	Contained no powdered lemon.	
30	Milk	Formal	Ingredients corresponded to 1 per cent. of added water.	Communicated with suppliers.
43	Milk	Formal	Ingredients corresponded to 1 per cent. of added water.	
52	Milk	Formal	Ingredients corresponded to 1 per cent. of added water.	

Table 14 (continued)

Sample	Article	Formal or Informal	Result of Analysis	Result of legal proceedings or other action
116	Milk	Formal	16 per cent. of milk-fat abstracted.	Communicated with supplier after appeal to the cow samples. Supplier asked to take steps to improve the quality of his herd.
133	Milk	Formal	8 per cent. of milk-fat abstracted.	
148	Milk	Formal	9 per cent. of milk-fat abstracted.	
149	Milk	Formal	5 per cent. of milk-fat abstracted.	
150	Milk	Formal	13 per cent. of milk-fat abstracted.	
151	Milk	Formal	3 per cent. of milk-fat abstracted.	
106	Shredded Beef Suet	Informal	1.5 per cent. deficient in beef-fat content.	Formal sample obtained.
142	Shredded Beef Suet	Formal	.5 per cent. deficient in beef-fat content.	Manufacturers cautioned.
328	Plum Jam	Informal	Deficient in required fruit content.	Manufacturers observations obtained.
277	Wine Jelly Tablet ..	Informal	Proportion of wine in the jelly insignificant.	Communicated with manufacturers.
351	Wincarnis Wine Jelly	Formal	Proportion of wine in the jelly insignificant.	
345	Meringue Mixture..	Informal	The term "Meringue Mixture" was, in the Public Analyst's opinion, a false description.	No further action.
261	Milk	Informal	Deficient in fat.	Communicated with suppliers.
514	Non-brewed Condi-ment.	Informal	Consisted of Brewed vinegar	Communicated with manufacturers.
515	Non-brewed Condi-ment.	Informal	.5 per cent. deficient in Acetic Acid.	
544	Non-brewed Condi-ment.	Formal	.5 per cent. deficient in Acetic Acid.	

The foods examined during 1954 were :—

Milk	227	Gravy	5
Confectionery	71	Fruit Curd	5
Canned Vegetables	24	Honey	5
Jam	22	Dessert Powder	4
Meat Products	22	Cream	4
Vinegar	18	Butter	4
Sauces	18	Breadcrumbs	4
Dried Fruit	16	Baking Powder	4
Canned Fruit	14	Margarine	4
Soups	13	Canned Welsh Rarebit	4
Flour	11	Dried Herbs	4
Sugar	11	Proprietary Medicines	4
Fish	11	Lemonade Powder	3
Coffee	10	Canned Milk Pudding	3
Cheese Spread	10	Cooking Oil	3
Cooking Fat	10	Aspirin Tablets	3
Fish Paste	9	Pearl Barley	3
Jelly Tablets	9	Custard Powder	3
Cake Mixture	8	Fish Cakes	3
Pickles	8	Cornflour	3
Tea	8	Marmalade	3
Condensed Milk	8	Uncooked Pastry	3
Soft Drinks	8	Desiccated Coconut	3
Rice	7	Medicinal Paraffin	2
Sausages	7	Canned Peas	2
Bread	7	Cake Decorations	2
Pepper	7	Chocolate Powder	2
Biscuits	6	Meringue Mixture	2
Fruit	6	Calves Feet Jelly	2
Spices	6	Dripping	2
Semolina	6	Flavouring Essence	2
Shredded Suet	6	Lentils	2
Stuffing Mixture	5	Curry Powder	2
Proprietary Foods	5	Treacle	2
Tapioca	5	Grated Horseradish	2
Meat Paste	5	Angelica	2
Lard	5	Ground Almonds	2
		Others	62

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.

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 15. Notification of Infectious Diseases (excluding Tuberculosis), 1954

Diseases	Number of Cases (after correction of diagnosis)												
	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	Total	Total No. admitted to Hosp.
Diphtheria	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever	—	6	28	93	15	2	2	1	—	—	7	154	30
Paratyphoid Fever	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Meningococcal Infection	1	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	3
Acute Poliomyelitis (Paralytic)	—	1	1	1	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	5	5
Acute Poliomyelitis (non-Paralytic)	—	—	—	4	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	5	5
Erysipelas	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	2	5	7	—	16	5
Dysentery	1	17	8	9	2	5	8	4	1	—	9	64	26
Zymotic Enteritis	20	20	1	1	—	1	1	—	1	—	—	45	43
Scabies	1	1	2	1	2	2	—	—	—	2	6	17	—
Acute Pneumonia	2	3	1	10	2	9	6	8	12	26	4	83	12
Food Poisoning	—	2	1	—	—	—	2	—	1	—	1	7	—
Puerperal Pyrexia	—	—	—	—	—	18	22	11	—	—	2	53	53
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Whooping Cough	16	58	60	86	1	—	3	1	1	—	8	234	16
Measles	3	26	12	12	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	54	24
Typhoid Fever	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Malaria	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	1	—	—	—	3	3
Acute Encephalitis	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1

Food Poisoning.

During 1954, there were only seven confirmed cases of food poisoning. These included two small outbreaks, each outbreak being confined to an individual family and involving only five persons in all. In one of these outbreaks, pork which had been roasted and allowed to stand, was the food suspected as being the cause of the trouble. In the other outbreak, after bacteriological examinations carried out in respect of three members of the family salmonella typhimurium organisms were isolated. Investigation failed to disclose the food which had caused the food poisoning. Of the individual cases notified, salmonella typhimurium organisms were found in the case of two of the patients.

Malaria.

There were three notified cases of malaria reported during the year, two of which related to servicemen stationed in the Borough. All three patients received hospital treatment.

Diphtheria.

Although general practitioners notified eight cases of suspected diphtheria, there were again no confirmed cases. All eight patients were isolated in hospital. The revised diagnoses were tonsillitis 4, glandular fever 2, virus pneumonia 1, and acute laryngitis 1.

Dysentery.

During the months of May and June, 1954, there was a mild outbreak of sonne dysentery in the Borough. A total of 88 cases were notified, of which 64 were confirmed. Twenty-six of the patients were removed to hospital. A number of specimens were obtained by the Sanitary Inspectors for bacteriological examination, the organism shigella sonne being isolated in the majority of these cases. Follow-up visits were made, where positive reports had been received. In the typical case the patient experienced stomach pains and a rising temperature accompanied by diarrhoea.

Measles and Whooping Cough.

These two diseases are both notifiable. The incidence of measles in the Borough during 1954 was very slight indeed, only 54 cases being notified. However, it was necessary for 24 of these patients to be removed to hospital. All except one of the patients were under 10 years of age.

A number of notifications of whooping cough were received (234), of which 13 received hospital treatment owing to complications.

Scarlet Fever.

The number of notified cases of scarlet fever (154) was a considerable decrease on the total of 215 notified during the previous year. Only 30 patients were in need of hospital isolation. Disinfection by the Department was carried out after the removal of the patient to hospital or after recovery in those cases where the patient was satisfactorily isolated at home.

Puerperal Pyrexia.

All the 53 cases of puerperal pyrexia received during the year were notified from the three large maternity units in the Borough.

Acute Poliomyelitis.

A total of 21 cases of poliomyelitis was notified in the Borough. However, only 10 cases were subsequently confirmed, five being paralytic and five non-paralytic. The revised diagnosis in the case of those patients found not to have the disease was mainly tonsillitis. Seven of the patients were under the age of 10 years.

Tuberculosis.

The number of primary notifications of tuberculosis (200) was an increase of 44 on the previous year's total. However, despite this, the number of active cases on the register at the end of the year was only five more than at the end of the previous year.

There were only 21 deaths in the Borough attributed to tuberculosis against 29 the previous year.

The local tuberculosis death rate continued to decrease, as did the percentage of tuberculosis deaths against all other deaths registered in the Borough.

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

Table 16

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	—	—	2	2	7	13	12	16	21	12	16	12	1	114
Females	—	1	1	3	4	6	12	18	14	3	7	2	2	73
NON-PULMONARY																
Males	—	—	1	—	—	1	1	2	—	—	1	—	—	6
Females	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	1	2	2	—	—	7
Total	..		—	1	4	6	11	20	25	37	34	17	26	14	3	200

The following is an extract from the Tuberculosis Register for 1954 :—

	PULMONARY			NON-PULMONARY		
	M.	F.	Total	M.	F.	Total
Cases notified for the first time ..	114	73	187	6	7	13
Other additions to Register during the year, including transfers of patients from other areas	35	37	72	2	2	4
Cases on Register at 31st December, 1954	928	750	1,678	121	112	233

Table 17. 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
1954	145,000	200	21	·14	1,443	1·4

Duties concerned with the prevention of the spread of infection are carried out by the Public Health Department, and for this purpose Medical Practitioners notify all new cases coming to their knowledge. Duties regarding investigation and treatment are carried out by the local Chest Clinics, which are situated at Maxey Road, Plumstead, and at Carnegie Gardens, Eltham; being administered by the Regional Hospital Board.

Prevention of Tuberculosis.

During the year local authorities were informed by the Minister of Health that the rapid decline in the death rate from tuberculosis in recent years has not been accompanied by a corresponding decline in notifications, and that this indicates a need for intensifying further preventive measures.

It is stressed that completeness of notification of all detected cases is an essential to success in prevention of the disease.

The Ministry's memorandum states that the prevention of active cases requires both the reduction of risk from infection and the enhancement, if possible, of resistance of the individual. Therefore, preventive measures to be taken are concerned firstly with the individual case discovered, secondly with the contacts of that person, and thirdly with such general preventive measures as are provided by B.C.G. vaccination or by radiographic or skin test surveys for the ascertainment of infected persons.

The tracing of contacts of patients has long been an important function of the staff of the Chest Clinics. The memorandum stresses that not only should all contacts be traced more actively than they are in many areas at the present time, but that they should be examined and kept under supervision for the requisite period.

Whilst it was not, of course, always possible to isolate an infected person ideally until he ceased to be infective, nevertheless any patient retained at home should be isolated at least to the extent of sleeping alone, and this might require action to secure better housing of the family, or in suitable cases of isolation of the patient in a chalet in his own garden.

Regarding home conditions, the Ministry's memorandum states that it is essential that the Medical Officer of Health and his staff should have detailed knowledge of the home conditions of all persons in the area suffering from tuberculosis, for without such information the Medical Officer of Health cannot properly advise his Council on housing requirements.

Whilst a satisfactory scheme for the prevention of tuberculosis depends on a number of social workers, the primary responsibility, states the memorandum, rests upon the Medical Officer of Health working with the Chest Physician, the industrial Medical Officer, and working particularly with the family Doctor. Therefore, it is essential that there should be regular consultation and close contact between them all, and with other local authorities' staffs to co-operate to the full.

In Woolwich, before the operation of the National Health Service Act, 1948, the local Chest Physician was on the staff of the Borough Council. However, since the service was transferred to the Regional Hospital Board the essential close co-operation with the Chest Physician and officers of the Health Department has been maintained.

Mass X-Ray Visits.

During 1954 19,887 persons residing or working in the Borough of Woolwich were X-rayed by the Mass X-Ray Unit. In addition to short street surveys at Abbey Wood, Plumstead, Eltham and New Eltham during the year, the Unit visited the Old Town Hall, Woolwich, between the 12th October and the 15th November, and owing to the heavy demand for this service it was also stationed in shop premises at the corner of Thomas Street, Woolwich, during the month of December.

At the survey at the Old Town Hall 3,553 men and 3,840 women were X-rayed, of which 187 men and 173 women were recalled for further examination. At the December survey a total of 7,045 persons were X-rayed, of these 4,832 were men and 996 women employed in local factories.

When the mobile unit visited Plumstead on a street-to-street survey during a week in July, 564 men and 1,083 women were examined, and of these 45 men and 83 women were recalled for the taking of larger films.

At the street survey in the Eltham area between the 7th and 24th September, 1,071 men and 1,581 women were examined, of which 86 men and 79 women were recalled for further examination.

The mobile unit also visited the New Eltham area during a week in July, when 1,150 persons were examined and only 23 were recalled for further examination, 14 of them requiring no further action.

As in past years, the Health Department assisted by arranging bookings in connection with the visit to the Old Town Hall, and also by the showing of a sound film dealing with mass X-ray at the Health Education sessions arranged by the Department during the period of the visit of the unit to the Borough.

Disinfection and Disinfestation.

During 1954 the Department carried out disinfection of 421 rooms after cases of infectious diseases, and of these 129 rooms had been occupied by tuberculous persons. Altogether 369 inspections regarding verminous conditions were made and 456 rooms were disinfested for vermin. Thirty-six van-loads of furniture were fumigated during the year.

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 88 such cases dealt with during the year and a total of 478 articles were removed and destroyed. Of these articles 75 were mattresses, 33 bedsteads, 64 sets of bedding, 3 three-piece suites and 303 other sundry items.

There were only four requests during the year 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. Charges totalling £2 10s. 0d. were made for this work.

A number of countries impose a condition that a Certificate of Disinfection must accompany any parcel of clothing entering the country. During the year several residents having relatives in Eastern Europe requested disinfection of clothing, which is generally new, and seven certificates were issued in respect of such clothing, which had been disinfected by the Department. Charges totalling £2 were made for this work.

A local firm of clothing exporters applied for the disinfection by the Department of large quantities of clothing before export to Africa. One consignment of clothing was disinfected during the year and a charge of £2 was made.

Personal Cleansing.

The personal cleansing stations are situated adjacent to the Turkish Baths, Plumstead High Street, and at Eltham Hill Health Centre, Sherard Road.

The number of persons cleansed in 1954 was 902, and the number treated for scabies was 71. The total number of attendances at the cleansing stations was 1,008.

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	7	25	228	552	6	84	902
Number of Treatments . .	7	25	234	569	6	90	931

Treatment of Scabies

	PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN		SCHOOL CHILDREN		ADULTS		Totals
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Men	Women	
Number of Cases	7	3	14	24	2	11	71
Number of Treatments . .	7	3	20	29	3	15	77

Authentication of 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 authenticated by the Medical Officer of Health as being the signature of a Doctor practising within the area.

During the year 324 certificates were authenticated by me. Of these 293 were in relation to smallpox, 24 to cholera and 7 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 1954 :—

Food (including animal specimens from Abattoirs, whole bovine blood and blood plasma)	79
Ice Cream (methylene blue test)	39
Milk (methylene blue and phosphatase, also turbidity)	276
Faeces	3
Water—from swimming baths, children's paddling pools and boating lakes, and from domestic tanks	92
Total	489

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 12 sputum specimens for examination and the hospital carried out 162 other sputum examinations during the year. Sixty-two nasal and throat swabs were referred to the hospital by general practitioners for examination. This laboratory also carried out the examination of 484 faecal specimens.

