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METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF WOOLWICH



# ANNUAL REPORT

on the Health of the  
Metropolitan Borough of Woolwich  
for the Year 1956

BY

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

Medical Officer of Health



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Health Committee	1
Preface	2
Staff	5
General Statistics	7
Vital Statistics	7
Sanitary Administration	15
Housing	30
Health Education	36
Inspection and Supervision of Food	38
Prevalence and Control of Infectious Disease (including Disinfection, Disinfestation and Personal Cleansing)	48
Laboratory Facilities	54

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### HEALTH COMMITTEE

at 31st December, 1956

THE WORSHIPFUL THE MAYOR (Alderman Mrs. E.M. Newman, O.B.E., J.P.)

Councillor Mrs. J.E. Carroll (Chairman)

Councillor Mrs. E.M. Wood (Vice-Chairman)

#### Aldermen -

Mrs. E.R.M. Middleton and W.L.G. Austin

#### Councillors -

A.J.J. Ashford

A.W. Bassett

T.G. Blann

Mrs. M.J.M. Bradley

Mrs. S.M. Bradley

Mrs. E. Brooks

Mrs. E.G. Bunce

G.S. Dean

L.A. Heath

Mrs. W.H.M. Hulbert

W.R. Kennett

H.F. Reilly

E. Williams

M. 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-Sixth Annual Report on the health of the Borough of Woolwich. The report is on the general lines indicated by the Minister.

The Registrar General's estimate of the mid-year population for the Borough is 147,500, being 1,000 less than the previous year's figure. The death rate was 10.4 and the birth rate 13.2, similar figures to the previous year. I am pleased to report that there were no maternal deaths in 1956 and that the infant death rate continues very favourable. The 37 infant deaths were due mainly to premature birth, atelectasis and bronchitis.

Malignant diseases were responsible for 313 deaths, of which 176 were in men and 137 in women. Further information will be found in Tables 2 - 4 and 6 in the body of the Report.

The incidence of infectious disease was low. Of the total of 1,338 notifications received, 524 were for dysentery, 234 for measles, 208 for whooping cough and 114 for scarlet fever. The outbreak of sonne dysentery required much time and attention in its control.

The large number of notifications of poliomyelitis of the previous year was, fortunately, not repeated in 1956, there being very few cases in the Borough. A start was made with inoculation against poliomyelitis during the year to a limited number of children. American evidence, and evidence so far available in this country both support the view that in the great majority of cases the vaccine gives a good measure of protection from the effects of paralytic poliomyelitis.

There were again no cases of diphtheria in the Borough, but the percentage of protected children still needs to be increased. The assumption of too many parents that diphtheria is a thing of the past is dangerous and false all the time that too many children remain unimmunised.

Public Health covers a wide field and apart from infectious disease, may be divided broadly into general public health inspection, housing and slum clearance, supervision of the food supplies, clean air administration, old people's welfare work and health education



and publicity. Whilst many of the services of the Council relating to public health were continued on much the same lines as in former years, new spheres of effort are constantly opening in this work and adding interest and variety to the Department's activities. Such recent new activities relate to the Clean Air legislation of 1956, the new food hygiene regulations and increased provision for old people in various ways. On the other hand, long established methods are constantly being revised in the light of new knowledge and of new aids.

The Council's decision in 1955 to accept responsibility for a very large share in the clearance and redevelopment of slum property in the Borough has meant a busy year for the Council's Housing Inspectors. During the year, apart from individual unfit houses, I represented a total of 255 properties for slum clearance, including the representations of the first part of the Glyndon Redevelopment Scheme comprising 100 properties in Ann Street. Further important progress in the housing sphere was made by the Council during the year despite the difficulties in finding sufficient land on which to build. This problem, although with the Council now for some years, became pressing with the final completion of the Coldharbour Estate. It is being partially solved by higher density development incorporating flats of the most modern design.

The Food Hygiene Regulations made under the new Food and Drugs Act were brought into force on the 1st January, 1956. All food shops in the Borough were given notice of the changes in the law which were designed to reduce the risk of infection and to bring about stricter hygienic practices. Improvements at a number of food shops were carried out during the year at the instigation of the Department, and the co-operation of the shop-keepers has been encouraging. After a year's operation of the Regulations, there are signs in the Borough that traders are raising their standards. However, whilst it is fitting that attention should be concentrated on the more important hygienic conditions and practices of food shops, restaurants, and canteens, the part played by the family, and especially the housewife, in preventing illness within the family, must not be forgotten. The dangers of the unwitting infection of food by the germs responsible for food poisoning, dysentery and other infections after it has reached the home are ever present. The proper protection of food and the regular washing of hands are still the best safeguards.

The long-awaited and important new Clean Air legislation, which will ultimately have far reaching effects on us all, became operative towards the end of the year, and the Borough Council quickly decided that it would make use of its powers for the setting up of smoke control areas. The Council had already had valuable experience in the past two years in connection with the St. Mary's "Smokeless Area"



in which there is a tenancy agreement that Council tenants shall burn only smokeless fuel. At the end of the year plans were in hand for the provisional declaration by the Council of three Smoke Control Areas, namely part of the Abbey Wood Area, part of the Middle Park Area of Eltham, and a portion of the St. Mary's Redevelopment Area in Woolwich.

The needs of the elderly in the Borough are very much the concern of the Borough Council at the present time. The Council is doing all it can by means of its own services and by financial assistance to voluntary bodies working for the welfare of the elderly to make the lives of these persons more comfortable and enjoyable. Although the services available through the various statutory and voluntary bodies in the Borough cannot be said to touch the lives of every individual aged person, this work is extending and becoming more varied. Experience of the housing of elderly persons, especially those being displaced from slum properties shows that there is need for an increase of one-bedroom accommodation in the Borough for persons who can and should be able to live a more or less normal life in the privacy of their own home for as long as possible. This is being met by the Council.

During the year there were no further developments concerning the proposals discussed and agreed by the County Council and Metropolitan Boroughs to transfer the personal health services back to the Metropolitan Boroughs, although discussions have continued between the various bodies and also with the Minister.

The year 1956 saw the retirement of Mr. C.J. Couch, who had been Chief Sanitary Inspector at Woolwich since 1938, having had 33 years' service with the Council as a Sanitary Inspector. Mr. Couch left with the good wishes of everyone. The Council appointed Mr. F.A. Andrew, who has served the Council as an Inspector for 28 years, and latterly was Senior Food Inspector, to succeed him. He has, therefore, a wide knowledge of the district and work, and I wish him well in his new post.

In conclusion I welcome this opportunity of acknowledging the help and co-operation I have received from the Members of the Council and from other Chief Officers. I should also like to thank the staff of my Department for their continued good work and valuable support 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.S.H.

Public Health Inspectors -

Chief Public Health Inspector -

C.J. COUCH, F.R.S.H.; Cert.San.Insp.Exam.Board; Cert. Royal San.Inst.; Cert. Meat and Other Foods; Cert. Smoke Ins., R.S.I.; Cert. Advanced Inspectors, R.S.I. (Retired 25.3.56.)

From 25.3.56. -

F.A. ANDREW, Cert. San. Insp.Exam. Board; Cert. Meat and Other Foods.

Public Health Inspectors -

F.A. ANDREW, Cert.San.Insp.Exam.Board; Cert. Meat and Other Foods. (Until 24.3.56. Senior Food Inspector)

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

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

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

W.E. McLELLAND, Cert.San.Insp.Exam.Joint Board; Cert. Meat and Other Foods; Cert. Smoke Insp. (Disinfestation, Disinfection 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 Visitor's 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 (Licensed and registered food 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.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) (Resigned 2.9.56.)

J. HILLS, Cert.San.Insp.Exam.Joint Board; Cert. Meat and Other Foods. (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. (District Inspector)

C.H. SARGENT, Cert.San.Insp.Exam.Joint Board; Cert. Meat and Other Foods. (District Inspector)

N.E. BROOM, Cert.San.Insp.Exam.Joint Board. (District Inspector)

Public Analyst (Part-time) -

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

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. (Resigned 8.2.1956)

MRS. M.H. DOWDING

MRS. W.E. ELLISON

G.C. RYAN

J.E. KAY



D.M. GIBBS  
 MRS. M.N. McEWAN (Resigned 12.2.1956)  
 MISS F.E. GEE  
 B. HILLIER (Resigned 15.1.1956)  
 T. COUGHLAN (Appointed 30.1.1956)  
 MISS A.V. SMITH (Appointed 19.3.1956)

### GENERAL STATISTICS

Area of Borough	8,282 statute acres
Number of Dwellings	42,517
Number of Persons per acre	17.8
Total Rateable Value (including Government property)	£2,629,128
Product of ld. Rate	£10,090

### VITAL STATISTICS

Extracts from the vital statistics for the year, with comparative figures for 1955, are shown below:-

<u>TABLE No. 1</u>	<u>1956</u>	<u>1955</u>
Population (Home, i.e. including members of H.M. Forces stationed in the district)	147,500	148,500
Live Births - Legitimate	1,863	1,900
Live Births - Illegitimate	90	71
Total Live Births	1,953	1,971
Birth Rate	13.2	13.2
Stillbirths	55	38
Stillbirths - Rate per 1,000 total births	28.1	19.2
Total Deaths	1,524	1,537
Death Rate per 1,000 population	10.4	10.3
Maternal Deaths	Nil	2
Death Rate from Puerperal Causes per 1,000 total births	-	1.0
Deaths of Infants under one year	37	39
Death Rate of Infants under one year	18.9	19.7
Deaths from Tuberculosis (all forms)	22	23
Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	309	311
Deaths from Acute Poliomyelitis	Nil	5

## BIRTHS

The number of live births registered in Woolwich during 1956 was 2,356. After correction for inward and outward transfers, the net number of Woolwich live births was 1,953, being 18 less than in the previous year. Of the total births, 990 were boys and 963 girls. It is known that 1,791 births took place in public institutions in the Borough, of which 933 concerned Woolwich mothers. The birth rate was 13.2, which, when adjusted to allow for the differing age and sex distributions of the population in various parts of the country, gives a birth rate of 13.06 compared with the provisional birth rate for England and Wales of 15.7 and for London of 18.2. There were 55 stillbirths during the year under review.

## NATURAL INCREASE IN POPULATION (i.e. Excess of Births over Deaths).

In 1956 the natural increase in population was 429. In 1955 it was 434, and in 1954 it was 592.

## DEATHS

The number of deaths registered in Woolwich was 1,293, and after correction for inward and outward transfers the net number was 1,524, giving a death rate of 10.4 for the Borough, compared with 10.3 the previous year.

The adjusted death rate for Woolwich was 11.1, compared with the provisional figure of 12.9 for London and of 11.7 for England and Wales.

Deaths of Woolwich residents in hospitals in the Borough totalled 643, whilst 468 died in other hospitals outside the Borough.

## MATERNAL DEATHS

There were no maternal deaths during the year. There were two during the previous year.

## INQUESTS

Fifty-two inquests were held on Woolwich residents during the year, and 442 post-mortems on Woolwich residents were carried out on behalf of the Coroner, being twice as many as during 1955.

## INFANT MORTALITY

The infant death rate for the year of 18.9 (19.7 in 1955) compares favourably with 23.8 for England and Wales.



## MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENTS

During the year there were ten fatal road accidents concerning Woolwich residents, compared with 16 the previous year. None related to children under 5 years and only one to persons over 65 years.

One fatality was a boy of nine who was run over by a van; a man of 47 was struck by a car whilst crossing the road, as was a woman of 76 years.

Accidents to motor cyclists resulted in three deaths of cyclists and also a woman pedestrian. A woman passenger in a car was fatally injured when the car collided with a van, and a youth received fatal injuries following a fall from his bicycle. A woman passenger was fatally injured following a fall from a bus.

## OTHER ACCIDENTS

Deaths due to other accidents totalled 26, including 12 persons over the age of 65 years, almost all of them being due to falls at home. A child of eight months received multiple injuries when he fell from a balcony at home, and a man was killed when he fell from an iron pipe whilst at work at a local factory. After a fall at home a middle aged housewife became unconscious from concussion, having struck her head on a hard object. A young housewife received shock and burns caused when the room in which she was caught fire, and an Eltham housewife received fatal burns when her clothing caught alight. Another domestic accident concerned a boy who was suffocated by a mackintosh. There were two deaths from drowning.

## MARRIAGES

There were 1,137 marriages in the Borough during 1956, of which 779 took place in Churches; the remaining 358 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 118 occasions.

## DEATHS FROM CANCER

Of the total number of deaths, 313 were from Cancer (including four from Sarcoma), being a similar number to the previous year. Of these, 176 occurred in men and 137 in women. More than half the Cancer deaths (183) took place in hospitals.

The following tables give details of Woolwich deaths from cancer

during 1956 compared with previous years.

TABLE No. 2. WOOLWICH DEATHS FROM CANCER

(including all other specified Malignant Tumours)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>Deaths</u>	<u>Deaths in</u> <u>Hospitals</u>
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
1955	186	130	316	219
1956	176	137	313	183

CANCER DEATHS - WOOLWICH, 1956. BY AGE

(excluding specified Malignant Tumours)

<u>Age</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Deaths in</u> <u>Hospital</u>
Under 25 years	2	1	3	-
26-30 years	-	1	1	-
31-35 years	1	2	3	2
36-40 years	3	4	7	3
41-45 years	3	4	7	2
46-50 years	6	6	12	7
51-55 years	17	9	26	13
56-60 years	23	14	37	25
61-65 years	25	16	41	26
66-70 years	29	17	46	24
71-75 years	30	18	48	33
76-80 years	24	28	52	29
Over 80 years	11	15	26	18
Total	174	135	309	182



TABLE No. 3. WOOLWICH DEATHS FROM CANCER OF THE LUNG AND  
BRONCHUS, 1946-1956

<u>Year</u>	<u>Lung</u>		<u>Bronchus</u>		<u>Total</u>	<u>Deaths in Hospitals</u>
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>		
1946	10	4	15	2	31	21
1947	12	7	18	1	38	21
1948	13	1	20	1	35	17
1949	15	2	24	5	46	28
1950	26	4	33	8	71	44
1951	17	5	40	8	70	38
1952	22	5	31	10	68	31
1953	16	2	40	9	67	38
1954	11	6	31	8	56	40
1955	17	4	43	4	68	56
1956	23	3	43	4	73	50

TABLE No. 4. CANCER DEATHS (EXCLUDING SARCOMA) - WOOLWICH  
1956 - SEAT OF PRIMARY DISEASE

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Deaths in Hospitals</u>
Stomach	18	14	32	19
Bronchus	43	4	47	34
Lung	23	3	26	16
Breast	-	31	31	16
Colon	8	11	19	8
Pancreas	3	3	6	2
Rectum	22	14	36	16
Uterus	-	14	14	9
Prostate	11	-	11	9
Ovary	-	14	14	10
Bladder	14	3	17	14
Liver	3	3	6	5
Caecum	-	3	3	-
Cervix	-	4	4	4
Oesophagus	8	3	11	7
Jaw	1	-	1	1
Brain	1	-	1	-
Larynx	1	1	2	1
Throat	-	1	1	-
Pharynx	3	1	4	1
Pelvis	-	1	1	1
Thyroid	-	1	1	-
Others and unspecified	15	6	21	9
Total	174	135	309	182



The following table gives details of the infant deaths in Woolwich during 1956:-

TABLE No. 5. DEATHS UNDER 1 YEAR, 1956

Causes of Death	Under 1 week	1-2 weeks	2-3 weeks	3-4 weeks	Total under 4 weeks	1-3 months	3-6 months	6-9 months	9-12 months	Total deaths under 1 year
Premature Birth	5	1	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	6
Congenital Malformation	2	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
Broncho Pneumonia	1	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	3
Atelectasis	5	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	5
Rhesus incompatibility	2	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
Spina bifida	2	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
Otitis Media	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Bronchitis	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	1	1	5
Other causes	5	-	-	-	5	1	1	3	1	11
					23					37

TABLE No. 6 NETT DEATHS DURING THE CALENDAR YEAR 1956.

CAUSES OF DEATH	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	1,524	37	4	7	7	62	374	417	616
Tuberculosis, respiratory	17	-	-	-	-	4	6	3	4
Tuberculosis, other	5	-	-	-	-	2	3	-	-
Syphilitic disease	7	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	2
Diphtheria	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Whooping Cough	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Meningococcal infections	3	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	-
Acute poliomyelitis	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Measles	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other infective and parasitic diseases	3	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-
Malignant neoplasm, stomach	32	-	-	-	-	1	10	9	12
Malignant neoplasm, lung, bronchus	73	-	-	-	-	1	36	30	6
Malignant neoplasm, breast	31	-	-	-	-	6	11	9	5
Malignant neoplasm, uterus	14	-	-	-	-	1	8	3	2
Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	163	-	-	2	1	9	51	46	54
Leukaemia, aleukaemia	4	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	1
Diabetes	12	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	7
Vascular lesions of nervous system	162	1	-	1	-	7	25	63	65
Coronary disease angina	220	-	-	-	-	3	66	55	96
Hypertension with heart disease	47	-	-	-	-	-	8	16	23
Other hearth disease	147	-	-	-	-	3	24	28	92
Other circulatory disease	70	-	-	-	-	-	21	16	33
Influenza	3	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2
Pneumonia	97	3	-	-	-	-	13	22	59
Bronchitis	142	5	-	-	-	1	25	52	59
Other diseases of respiratory system	17	1	-	-	-	2	6	3	5
Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	20	-	-	-	-	-	2	8	10
Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	4
Nephritis and Nephrosis	13	-	-	-	-	-	4	5	4
Hypherplasia of prostate	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	13
Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Congenital malformations	10	7	-	2	-	-	-	1	-
Other defined and ill-defined diseases	129	19	2	-	3	8	28	25	44
Motor vehicle accidents	10	-	-	1	2	3	3	-	1
All other accidents	26	1	1	1	-	4	7	1	11
Suicide	24	-	-	-	-	5	10	7	2
Homicide and operations of war	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-



The chief Vital Statistics for the Borough since 1936 are given in the following Table:-

TABLE No. 7

Year	Population estimated to middle of each Year	BIRTHS		Nett Deaths of the District.			
		Nett		Under 1 Year		At all ages	
		No.	Rate	No.	Rate per 1,000 nett Births	No.	Rate
1936a	146,500	2,017	13.8	121	59	1,649	11.2
1937a	149,400	2,125	14.2	86	40	1,660	11.1
1938a	150,900	2,057	13.6	102	50	1,576	10.4
1939a	150,800	2,133	14.1	103	49	1,592	11.1
1940b	124,340	1,846	14.8	66	36	1,854	14.9
1941b	103,630	1,459	14.0	65	42	1,627	15.7
1942b	110,140	2,036	18.5	71	34	1,410	12.8
1943b	112,700	2,174	19.3	77	35	1,558	13.8
1944b	110,970	2,037	18.3	83	40	1,611	14.5
1945b	115,270	2,021	17.5	83	41	1,478	12.8
1946b	134,420	2,903	21.6	91	31	1,531	11.4
1947b	140,150	3,193	22.8	87	27.2	1,626	11.6
1948b	142,800	2,527	17.7	74	29.2	1,573	11.0
1949b	144,000	2,504	17.4	72	28.7	1,572	10.9
1950c	149,000	2,172	14.6	53	24.4	1,668	11.2
1951c	149,800	2,273	15.1	63	27.7	1,838	12.3
1952c	151,800	2,199	14.4	47	21.4	1,667	10.9
1953c	151,100	2,090	13.8	48	22.9	1,569	10.4
1954c	149,700	2,035	13.5	37	18.1	1,443	9.6
1955c	148,500	1,971	13.2	39	19.7	1,537	10.3
1956c	147,500	1,953	13.2	37	18.9	1,524	10.4

a - Total population

b - Civil population

c - Home population



## SANITARY ADMINISTRATION

### SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA

During 1956 the Public Health Inspectors carried out 38,737 inspections, including re-inspections, being over 300 more than in the previous year, and nearly 1,000 more than in 1954. The nature of these inspections is shown in Table No. 8. As a result, 1,311 intimation notices and 559 statutory notices were served.

### COMPLAINTS

The number of complaints received during the year was 3,176, compared with 3,460 in 1955. Any necessary action was taken where complaints were made or nuisances discovered.

TABLE No. 8. INSPECTIONS

Complaints investigated	2,038	Water sampling and	
Complaints (reinspections)	7,032	testing	59
Outworkers' premises	534	Rodent control	2,980
Houses re. overcrowding	160	Smoke observations	71
New houses re. water supply	528	Atmospheric Pollution	349
Houses re. infectious		Men's lavatories	103
disease	2,909	Women's lavatories	66
Houses re. smallpox contacts	29	Houses re. choked drains	96
Houses re. vermin	75	Drainage inspections	1,344
Council housing applicants		Houses, visits with	
re. vermin	1,047	owners, builders, etc.	417
Housing Act inspections	533	Houses re. slum clearance	
Housing Act - Improvement		and redevelopment	706
Grants	268	Pet Animals premises	67
House-to-house inspections	2,114	Visits re. insect and	
Houses re. Certificates of		other pests	120
Disrepair	98	Houses re. disinfection	
Aged and Infirm persons	3,232	or destruction of art-	
Common Lodging Houses	6	icles	9
Tents and Vans	94	Marshes, ditches, pools,	
Factories mechanically		water courses, static	
powered	261	water tanks, etc.	127
Factories non-mechanically		Stables	27
powered	16	Exhumations	3
Workplaces	34	Factories re. trade	
Shops Act inspections	758	effluent sampling	1
Food Premises	3,051	Hairdressers and Barbers	388
Itinerant vendors	1	Miscellaneous visits	1,943
Complaints re. food	51	Non-effectual visits	4,579
Shops re. Pharmacy and			
Poisons	148		



TABLE No. 9. NUISANCES ABATED

Dirty conditions remedied	1,125	Windows repaired or renewed	815
Roofs repaired	545	Ceilings repaired or renewed	237
Gutters, rainwater pipes, etc. repaired or renewed	403	Walls repaired or renewed	912
Damp walls and other damp conditions remedied	1,438	Lighting and ventilation defects remedied	560
Fireplaces, hearths, flues, etc. repaired or renewed	170	Areas and yards paved or repaired	79
Floors, skirting and other woodwork	259	Sinks, S.W. pipes, etc., repaired or renewed	127
Combined drains repaired or reconstructed	3	Drains cleansed	211
Water closets cleansed and repaired	214	Drains repaired or reconstructed	127
Water closet pans and traps fixed	75	Dustbins provided	109
Water closet seats repaired or renewed	71	Other dilapidations remedied	223
Water supply defects remedied	247	Foul accumulations remedied	26
		Houses repaired following Informal action	909
		Houses repaired following Formal action	494

PUBLIC HEALTH NOTICES. LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

During 1956, it was not found necessary to institute legal proceedings in order to obtain compliance with notices served under the Public Health (London) Act, 1936, and other relevant Acts, Regulations and Byelaws.

WATER SUPPLY

Domestic water is supplied to the Borough 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 throughout the year was satisfactory both in quality and quantity. No complaints were received as to the quality of the water.

In addition to the water supplied by the Metropolitan Water Board, local industry obtains additional supplies from wells in the Borough. Of the eleven wells known to exist, seven are still in use. The water from these wells is used for fire-fighting as well as industrial purposes. The Council's baths at Woolwich and Plumstead each draw water from a well.



Samples of water from the wells in use have been submitted for bacteriological examination and the results showed the water to be satisfactory.

#### DRAINAGE

A total of 338 drainage defects were found during the year, and the necessary work of repair or reconstruction was supervised by the Public Health Inspectors.

Officers of the Department supervised 35 smoke tests on suspected defective private and combined drains. Twenty three of these tests produced positive results, the remainder were proved to be sound. A further six tests which also produced positive results were in respect of disused drains which were exposed and permanently sealed off.

Of the 34 combined drains inspected during the year, four were found to be defective. In the case of the defective combined drains, notices were served under Section 40 of the Public Health (London) Act, 1936, on the owners concerned and the work of repair and reconstruction was carried out by the Borough Engineer's Department. The cost of the work necessary was shared between the responsible owners.

#### SHOPS ACT, 1950

The provisions of the Shops Act, 1950, relating to suitability of ventilation, washing facilities and sanitary accommodation and maintenance of suitable temperature in shops is the responsibility of the local sanitary authority. Altogether 758 visits of inspection were made by the Public Health Inspectors for this purpose during the year.

#### REGISTRATION OF PREMISES SELLING PART II POISONS

Names are entered in the Council's list of persons entitled to sell Part II poisons (other than registered Pharmacists) in respect of 150 premises in the Borough.

#### LICENSING OF COMMON LODGING HOUSES

The one remaining licensed common lodging house in the Borough, at 102, Woolwich High Street, was relicensed for the ensuing year. The premises have accommodation for 22 men.



## REGISTRATION OF HAIRDRESSERS AND BARBERS PREMISES

As from the 1st March, 1956, all persons carrying on the business of a hairdresser or barber in the Borough must be registered and also have their premises registered. The Council have made Byelaws to secure the cleanliness of these shops and of the instruments and equipment used therein. The Council are not empowered to strike off any premises from the register, but legal proceedings may be instituted for a contravention of the Byelaws, and the Court may then cancel any registration if it thinks fit. Applications for registration were received during the year in respect of 43 Ladies' hairdressers premises, 45 Gentlemen's and 11 combined Ladies' and Gentlemen's premises.

Regular inspections are made by the Public Health Inspectors.

## PROVISION OF DUSTBINS

During the year, 73 notices were served on the owners of premises in the Borough under the provisions of Section 12 of the London County Council (General Powers) Act, 1954, requesting the supply of a dustbin. No appeals were made against the Council's notices.

## PET SHOPS

There are ten pet shops in the Borough, and these are licensed annually by the Council and are visited periodically by the Public Health Inspectors, to ensure that the requirements of the Pet Animals Act, 1951, and the conditions subject to which licences are issued, are being complied with. Sixty-seven inspections of pet shops were carried out during the year.

## RODENT CONTROL

There were 1,302 complaints of rats and 499 of mice received during 1956, and in addition to the investigation of these complaints the systematic inspection under the "block control" system was continued.

A total of 11,096 premises were inspected during the year and of these 7,487 were under the "block control" system. The number of properties found to be infested by rats or mice was 1,834, which included 159 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 30 smoke tests on suspected defective drains at rat infested premises, and these tests produced evidence of 20 defective drains.

A total of 28 "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 1956, 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 3 per cent. increase on the previous treatment in June. The weather during the December treatment of the sewers was ideal. The weather was mild and there was no heavy rainfall to wash baits away or to interfere with the free movement of rats in the sewers. Maximum "takes" of baits were expected, and this proved to be the case.

#### MOSQUITOES AND OTHER PESTS

During 1956 a number of complaints were received from various parts of the Borough of infestations of cockroaches, moths, crickets, and silver fish. Advice was given in each case, and, where necessary, treatment carried out. Five infestations of cockroaches were dealt with by the Department during the year, for which charges were made.

Two houses were treated for infestations of woodworm; one of which included disinfection of the furniture also.

Charges totalling £33.8.1d. were made upon the responsible persons for the treatments referred to above.

#### DOG NUISANCE

A few complaints of nuisance from dogs fouling pavements came to the notice of the Department during the year, but in no case was there sufficient evidence available for the Council to take action in the Courts to obtain a conviction.

Summonses under the Council's byelaw made in 1938 are few and far between, mainly because members of the public are reluctant to come forward with evidence of such offences. However, a large number of leaflets dealing with this matter were distributed through the Council's libraries.



# FACTORIES ACT, 1937

TABLE No. 10. DETAILS OF INSPECTIONS CARRIED OUT DURING 1956 ARE AS FOLLOWS:-

Premises	No. on Register	Inspections	Written Notices	Occupiers prosecuted
(i) Factories in which Sections 1,2,3,4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities... ..	26	16	6	-
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority... ..	334	261		
(iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out-workers' premises)	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	360	277	6	-

## CASES IN WHICH DEFECTS WERE FOUND AND REMEDIED:-

Particulars	No. of cases in which defects were found				No. of cases in which prosecutions were instituted.
	Found	Remedied	Referred to H.M. Inspector	Referred by H.M. Inspector	
Want of cleanliness	-	-	-	-	-
Overcrowding	-	-	-	-	-
Inadequate ventilation	-	-	-	-	-
Ineffective drainage of floors	-	-	-	-	-
Sanitary Conveniences:-					
(a) Insufficient	-	-	-	-	-
(b) Unsuitable or defective	6	6	-	2	-
(c) Not separate for sexes	-	-	-	-	-
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Outworkers)	-	-	-	-	-
	6	6	-	2	-



## OUTWORKERS

In the last return made by employers of labour, the total number of outworkers in the Borough was shown to be 262; compared with 504 in 1955.

The nature of the outwork is as follows:-

<u>Type of Work</u>	<u>Number of Workers</u>
Wearing Apparel	62
Lampshades	185
Stuffed Toys	6
Household linen	8
Christmas Stockings	1

Local firms employ 85 per cent of these outworkers, the remainder being employed by firms in various parts of the country.

Local industry also employs 107 outworkers who reside outside the Borough.

Periodical inspections of the outworkers' homes are made by the Council's woman Public Health Inspector; altogether 534 such visits were made in 1956 to ensure that the home working conditions were satisfactory.

## WELFARE OF THE ELDERLY

The problems and difficulties encountered by the elderly are fully appreciated by the Borough Council, who devote more and more attention to their welfare and well-being.

Where a person finds it difficult, owing to ill health, to continue with normal household work, every effort is made to see that nursing or domestic help is available to enable the person concerned to continue living at home, and a more or less normal life. All requests for help are promptly dealt with. During the year the Council's woman Health Inspector made 3,232 visits to the homes of the elderly in the Borough, the frequency of her visits varying with individual needs. In a few cases it was necessary to make special arrangements for their cleansing, which was carried out in their own homes. In those instances where it was found that hospital treatment was essential, arrangements for the patient's admission were made with the hospital admission officers.

A number of persons who came to the notice of the Department during the year were found to be living in very poor conditions, and



not able to look after themselves adequately. However, in all cases where removal to hospital or institution was essential in the person's own interest it was possible to persuade him to enter the Home or hospital without any need to apply to the Court for compulsory removal.

Issues of clothing were made to a number of elderly persons during the year with the assistance of the Women's Voluntary Service and other donors, and the National Assistance Board made grants wherever possible to help with the provision of bedding.

#### Lunch Clubs.

Over £1,000 per year is contributed by the Borough Council towards the cost of supplying meals at the Plumstead and Eltham Lunch Clubs, which operated fully throughout the year. The present amount of the County Council contribution towards the cost of these meals is 10d. per head, the recipient also paying 10d. per meal. Meals for the Plumstead Lunch Club are supplied daily from the Borough Council's Plumstead Baths, and for the Eltham Lunch Club meals are transported daily from the premises of a Plumstead caterer to the Lunch Club, which is situated in the Progress Hall, Eltham.

There is abundant evidence that those who are able to take advantage of these meals at the reduced price very much appreciate the service.

#### Holidays.

The Old People's Holiday Scheme, detailed arrangements for which are made by the Woolwich Council of Social Service, was again popular during 1956. The majority of the applications were dealt with by a personal interview. Seventy-seven persons had a week's holiday at Westgate, 37 going in May and 40 in September. In addition, seven infirm persons were helped with a holiday at special holiday Homes. There were 14 cancellations, leaving only four outstanding applications. Private arrangements for transport were made with a coach firm, who took the parties from the Woolwich and Eltham districts to the guest house and collected them the following week.

Mrs. Brookfield, the General Secretary of the Woolwich Council of Social Service, has reported that the arrangements worked very smoothly during 1956, and that those having a holiday have sent very appreciative letters of the care and attention they received at the guest house. The weather also was good for each of the weeks, both in May and September.

A grant of £250 per annum has been made for the last few years



from official funds to help in this work.

### Home Visitation

Regular friendly visits are made by the Visitors of the Council of Social Service and also Visitors from local Churches, to the homes of lonely persons in the district. During 1956 the Council of Social Service were able to extend their friendly visiting scheme following the appointment of a new assistant caseworker, who was able to undertake initial visits herself and to deal with other personal services for the elderly. Visitors make a special point of seeing how the needs of the person visited can best be met. Matters such as extra clothing, provision of books and other comforts are dealt with, and enquiries made of the need for spectacles, chiropody treatment, and on other health matters.

The Old People's Welfare Committee of the Woolwich Council of Social Service co-ordinates the activities of the various voluntary organisations in the Borough engaged in giving help and assistance to elderly persons, receiving a substantial grant from the Borough Council towards this work.

### STREET CLEANSING

There are 149 miles of roads to be cleansed of which 15 per cent. are swept at least once daily, 20 per cent. three to five times weekly, 55 per cent. twice weekly and 10 per cent. 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 9,300 street gulleys are cleansed periodically by mechanical gulley cleansing machines.

### HOUSE AND TRADE REFUSE

During the year under review, 45,988 tons of refuse were collected by the Council's vehicles and 54,360 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. Some 1,400 tons of scrap metal, 450 tons of waste paper and 125 tons of textiles and other material were salvaged during the year, producing an income of over £9,500.



## PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

Two additional conveniences were opened during the year making a total of 18 conveniences for men and a similar number for women within the Borough. Hours of opening and closing vary with local requirements - in the town centre the conveniences are open from 5.30 a.m. Generally, however, this service is available between the hours of 6.30 a.m. to 11 p.m. In all the conveniences the waterclosets are available without charge.

## FREE WASHING FACILITIES - PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

For the past five years the Council has provided free washing facilities at the main public conveniences and this service continues to be used to an increasing extent and is much appreciated by the public. The number of paper towels used during the year was approximately 100,000. However, some members of the public still prefer the paid washing facilities which includes the supply of a linen towel.

## THEATRES AND CINEMAS

The routine inspection of the sanitary accommodation at all the cinemas in the Borough was continued during the year. The standard of cleanliness remained good, and it was not found necessary to serve any notices requiring defects or public health nuisances to be remedied.

## RAG FLOCK

There are three premises in the Borough, registered under the Rag Flock and Other Filling Materials Act and one factory licensed under the Act for the manufacture of rag flock.

During the year nine samples of filling materials were obtained for analysis. Three of the samples were of rag flock, two were of woollen mixture felt and one each of cotton felt, coir fibre, black curled fibre, and curled hair and fibre mixture. In each case the sample was satisfactory.

## BOATING AND PADDLING POOLS AND SWIMMING BATHS

Routine sampling for bacteriological examination and testing for pH reaction and chlorine content of these waters was undertaken.

In all, 45 samples of water were submitted to the Park Hospital Laboratory for bacteriological examination, and 48 water tests for chlorine content and pH reaction were carried out by the Health Department.



The average result of examinations and tests were as follows:-

	Probable No. of Bacillus Coli per 100 ml.	Average pH value	Average Free Chlorine	Average Temperature
Swimming Baths	0	7.65	1.7	74.6
Paddling and Boating Pools	One isolated occasion: 35 Average otherwise: 3	7.81	0.26	-

#### OPENING OF NEW CREMATORIUM

The new Crematorium situated on land adjoining the Eltham Cemetery was officially opened on the 16th July, 1956, and operated from the 15th August. Information on the design of the crematorium and of its modern features has been given by me in a previous Annual Report. The Crematorium is under the administration of the Woolwich, Greenwich and North-West Kent Joint Crematorium Committee, comprising the Boroughs of Woolwich, Greenwich, Dartford, Bexley and Erith and the districts of Chislehurst and Sidcup, and Crayford. Cremations from other areas are also accepted. Originally two cremators were installed, but having regard to the number of cremations now taking place, the Joint Committee have decided to provide a third. From the 15th August to the end of the year 580 cremations took place. The number from each district was as follows:- Woolwich 168; Greenwich 34; Chislehurst and Sidcup 55; Dartford 40; Bexley 123; Crayford 23; Erith 37 and other areas 100.

#### MORTUARY FACILITIES

The Borough Council has an arrangement with the Boroughs of Lewisham and Deptford whereby mortuary facilities are provided by these two Boroughs. Nearly all these cases are referred by the Coroner. Those from the Eltham area go to Lewisham and those from Woolwich, Plumstead and Abbey Wood to Deptford. Payment is made by the Council to these neighbouring authorities for this work.

#### BURIAL OF THE DEAD

Arrangements were made during 1956 for the burial of nine persons, who had died in the Borough, other than in hospitals, under authority given to the Council by Section 50 of the National Assistance Act, 1948, where it appeared that no other suitable arrangements were



being made for their burial.

The total expenses of the Council in carrying out this work amounted to £103.18.4d., more than half of which (£59.4.8d.) was recovered from the estates of the deceased persons.

#### SMOKE OBSERVATIONS AT INDUSTRIAL PREMISES

All complaints of smoke nuisance are immediately investigated by the Council's Smoke Inspector, and in addition routine observations are carried out on factory chimneys. Several visits to factories were made during the year and advice given on smoke prevention methods. Once again poor quality fuel was blamed by factory managements where excessive emission of smoke had been noticed. The number of complaints of smoke nuisance received during the year was 28, and three notices were served.

#### APPLIANCES IN NEW COUNCIL DWELLINGS

All new Council dwellings have been provided with a modern smokeless fuel appliance in the living room, complete with gas ignition, and it is one of the conditions of tenancy for these new dwellings that only smokeless fuel may be consumed. Full instructions and advice has been given to tenants in the use of these appliances, and supplies of smokeless fuel have been adequate. The Director of Housing reports that tenants generally have appreciated the provision made, and have co-operated with the Council in its endeavours to reduce the atmospheric pollution in the Borough.

#### ATMOSPHERIC POLLUTION - RECORDING AND MEASURING

Monthly measurements of deposits of sulphur trioxide and solid matter are taken at five stations situated within the Borough which are maintained by the Council. In addition, the Council have set up three smoke measuring stations where daily readings are obtained. It will be seen from the following tables that, in general, the pollution by sulphur trioxide and solid matter is less in the summer months than in the winter, thus emphasising the part played by domestic chimneys in pollution of the atmosphere.

TABLE No. 11. MEASUREMENT AND RECORDING OF ATMOSPHERIC POLLUTION. JANUARY-DECEMBER, 1956

STATIONS	Weight of Sulphur Trioxide collected mg/100 sq.cm/day											
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	A pr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
No.1 Woolwich Dockyard	3.6	4.0	2.6	2.5	2.2	2.1	1.8	1.3	1.6	2.9	3.6	2.6
No.2 Municipal Offices	5.3	6.0	3.7	3.7	2.5	2.5	2.1	1.6	1.6	4.0	5.5	3.8
No.3 Abbey Wood Omnibus Garage	4.0	3.7	2.6	2.5	2.0	1.9	1.3	1.0	1.1	3.0	4.7	2.9
No.4 Shooters Hill Golf Club	4.2	2.5	3.0	2.9	1.9	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.3	2.8	4.4	3.2
No.5 Eltham High Street Area	2.4	2.9	1.7	1.8	1.0	0.9	0.6	0.5	0.6	1.6	2.5	1.7
OTHER STATIONS IN COUNTY OF LONDON												
Highest	8.3	9.1	6.8	6.6	5.4	4.7	2.9	6.9	4.9	6.6	7.5	7.1
Lowest	1.0	1.4	1.4	1.1	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.8	0.9	1.0
STATIONS	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	46.7	26.8	47.6	43.1	32.5	33.3	35.0	28.0	31.8	28.1	34.6	33.0
No.2 Municipal Offices	28.6	15.3	31.0	24.2	18.4	20.1	20.0	16.6	13.8	18.2	21.6	21.6
No.3 Abbey Wood Omnibus Garage	24.7	12.1	27.6	26.1	17.9	15.5	16.1	15.8	19.4	18.4	23.5	18.1
No.4 Shooters Hill Golf Club	14.2	7.8	16.7	18.9	13.6	15.8	13.5	12.4	12.1	9.4	13.8	11.1
No.5 Eltham High Street Area	13.7	9.2	12.5	13.6	10.8	11.6	12.6	12.4	6.9	8.8	10.5	8.7
OTHER STATIONS IN COUNTY OF LONDON												
Highest	112.1	109.5	86.0	52.7	75.3	73.1	123.0	137.0	116.9	54.5	67.7	102.7
Lowest	12.5	5.4	10.5	13.5	5.3	11.3	10.8	9.6	6.9	8.8	6.3	8.7



## THE CLEAN AIR ACT, 1956

The new Clean Air legislation received the Royal Assent on the 5th July, 1956, and makes far-reaching changes. The Act has been framed as part of the Public Health Code, and its enforcement in London is the responsibility and function of Metropolitan Borough Councils. The first appointed day for the coming into operation of certain provisions of the Act was the 20th December, 1956.

The most important provisions of the Act are as follows:-

Section 1: The emission of "dark smoke" from any chimney, including domestic chimneys, will be an offence. The former 'best practical means' defence of the Public Health Act has been repealed. Section 1 will not come into operation until the second appointed day on a date to be fixed by the Minister.

Defences in legal proceedings under Section 1 are (a) lighting up from a cold furnace (b) some unforeseeable and unavoidable failure of the furnace or equipment and (c) the use of unsuitable fuel, suitable fuel being unobtainable.

Section 2 deals with temporary exemption from the provisions of Section 1, so that for a period of not more than seven years from the passing of the Act it will be a defence to prove (a) that the contravention was due to the nature of the building and equipment and not to failure in use or maintenance, (b) that it had not been practicable to make the alterations necessary to prevent the emission of dark smoke. The local authority may on application at its discretion issue certificates valid for one year at a time in relation to existing furnaces and equipment, such certificates giving a qualified and temporary exemption from strict compliance with Section 1.

Section 11 deals with Smoke Control Areas and is one of the most important provisions of the Act. It became operative from the 20th December, 1956, and enables local authorities to establish smoke control areas by means of Orders confirmed by the Minister. The effect of an operative Order is, broadly speaking, to prohibit entirely the emission of smoke from that area, but the provisions of the Act are flexible and allow for adaptation to local circumstances. Smoke Control Areas may, therefore, either be completely smokeless or they may be areas in which certain classes of buildings are exempt so that the area as a whole will not be entirely smokeless. The Minister has also power to make Orders exempting any class of fire-place from the provisions of Section 11, subject to any conditions specified in the Order. In a Smoke Control Area the occupier of any building from which smoke is emitted is guilty of an offence. Exemption from the requirements of Section 11 is given to railway



engines, and vessels; and also to Crown premises (subject to representations being made by the local authority to the responsible Minister).

The procedure for making and bringing into operation a Smoke Control Order consists of four separate stages (1) submission to the Minister of a provisional plan, with a preliminary estimate of the cost and fuel requirements; (2) following approval in principle by the Minister a detailed survey and collation of the requirements and cost of adaptations to private houses, etc.; (3) the making of the Order by the local authority and submission of the Order to the Minister for confirmation; (4) action to bring the confirmed Order into operation. The operative date of the Order cannot be earlier than six months from the Minister's confirmation. During this time the necessary adaptations will be carried out. The Order would not come into operation during the winter months.

Section 12: Adaptations of fireplaces: This section provides that if the owner or occupier of a private dwelling which is in a Smoke Control Area has to incur expenditure in the conversion of appliances, the local authority shall repay him at least seven-tenths of the expenditure. This payment is dependent upon the work being done to the satisfaction of the authority and that it is done either after the confirmation of the Order, but before its coming into operation, or is reasonably incurred as a result of a notice served by the local authority requiring it to be done.

Section 13: This Section gives the Minister power to make a contribution towards the expenses incurred by a local authority under Section 12, and also where the authority carries out conversions to its own houses. In each case the Exchequer contribution is the same, namely 40 per cent. of the cost of the approved works of adaptation. The minimum local authority contribution in the case of privately owned houses is, therefore, 30 per cent., the owner or occupier bearing the remaining 30 per cent.; and in the case of Council-owned dwellings, the local authority is left to bear 60 per cent. of the cost, part of which (but not exceeding 30 per cent.) may be passed on to the tenants by way of rent.

#### 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 one of my previous Annual Reports.

During the year improvements were made in the Public Laundry



service at Plumstead Baths, and two more 25 lbs. capacity washing machines were installed to meet the growing demand for this service. This Laundry is open from 7.30 a.m. to 9.30 p.m. Monday to Friday, and from 7.30 a.m. to 8.30 p.m. on Saturdays. The charge for the use of a washing machine is 2/- for half-an-hour, which is sufficient time to wash 25 lbs. dry weight laundry, and the charge for the use of a hydro extractor is 1d.

The Indoor Cricket School at Eltham Baths again had a very successful season, and the Kent County Cricket Club's Coaching Scheme for schoolboys was an outstanding feature.

The successful conversion of the Woolwich Baths plant from coal burning to oil burning has had a marked improvement in the cleanliness of the surrounding area. Following the success of the Woolwich conversion, arrangements were in hand at the end of the year for the conversion of the Plumstead Baths plant to oil burning.

The Chief Administrative Officer of the Baths Department reports that during the twelve months ended 31st March, 1956, there was an increase of 7,343 compared with the previous year in the total number of attendances. Total attendances during that period were as follows:-

Swimming	465,248
Slipper Baths	140,631
Turkish Baths	8,100
Public Laundry	12,924
Free Baths to Old Age Pensioners and Unemployed Persons	3,688
	<u>630,591</u>

## HOUSING

### REPAIRS

At the end of 1956, there were estimated to be 42,517 dwellings in the Borough. The number inspected for housing defects under the Public Health or Housing Acts was 7,256 (compared with 7,452 in 1955) and 1,403 houses were found to be not in all respects reasonably fit for habitation.

A total of 909 houses were rendered fit by informal action by the Public Health Inspectors. This informal action included the service of intimation notices.



In 494 instances it was necessary to serve statutory notices in order to ensure the carrying out of the requisite work.

House-to-house inspections under the Housing (Consolidated) Regulations, 1925, were continued, the total number of inspections in 1956 being 2,114.

### OVERCROWDING

During the year 24 families were found to be living in overcrowded conditions, and reports were made to the London County Council on behalf of these persons. In one case the County Council provided other accommodation. A further 160 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 287 occasions, compared with 111 in 1955.

### INDIVIDUAL UNFIT HOUSES

Twenty two houses were represented by me during the year as being unfit for human habitation and incapable of being made fit at reasonable expense. Following my representation formal notices were served on the owners under the provisions of the Housing Acts to secure the demolition or closure of these houses, and the Council subsequently made Demolition Orders in respect of the following 13 houses, and Closing Orders in respect of the remaining nine houses:-

Demolition	1, Glyndon Road,
Orders:-	1a, Glyndon Road
	3, Glyndon Road
	3a, Glyndon Road,
	23, Chapel Hill
	6, Borgard Road
	30, Anglesea Road
	94, Bloomfield Road
	4, Anglesea Avenue
	37, Spray Street
	39, Spray Street
	21, Samuel Street
	11a, Belson Road



Closing	47, Glenside Road
Orders:-	207, Avery Hill Road
	31, Waverley Road
	17, Purrett Road
	158, Plumstead High Street
	1, Maxey Road
	1, Armstrong Place
	14, Armstrong Street
	2, Swetenham Place

A further eight individual unfit houses had been represented to the Council at the end of the year, for demolition or closure.

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

4, Delvan Street	Basement rooms
35, Woolwich Common	Basement front room
15, Nightingale Place	Basement front and back rooms
50, Woodrow	Basement rooms
19, Nightingale Place	Basement rooms
20, Willenhall Road	Basement rooms
235, Burrage Road	Basement front room

During the year the Council determined Closing Orders in respect of 97, Raglan Road (part), 207, Avery Hill Road and 99, Prospect Vale, and the basement rooms at 29, Majendie Road.

I also represented to the Council that the dwelling house 39, Tewson Road was unfit for human habitation, but capable of being made fit at reasonable expense. Notices under Section 9 of the Housing Act, 1936, were served, and subsequently the Council, in default of the owner, made these premises again fit for habitation.

#### IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

Under the provisions of the Housing Act, 1949, owners of property may apply to the local authority for a monetary grant to assist them in improving or converting their property. There is a twelve point standard of fitness with which an improved house must comply. All applications for Improvement Grants, which are submitted to the Borough Treasurer, are referred to the Health Department for an inspection to be made to determine whether the proposed work will satisfy the provisions of the standard.

The majority of applications were in respect of the provision of bathrooms and hot water systems.



Visits are also made and preliminary advice given to owners concerning proposed improvement and conversion schemes.

The number of inspections relating to applications for Improvement Grants during the year totalled 98.

### CERTIFICATES OF DISREPAIR

During 1956, 17 applications were received from tenants for the issue of Certificates of Disrepair under the provisions of the Housing (Repairs and Rents) Act, 1954. Two of these applications were refused, the conditions at the premises concerned not being sufficiently serious to warrant the issue of a Certificate.

Four applications were received from owners for the revocation of Certificates of Disrepair, of which three were granted, the Health Committee being satisfied that in each case all the work listed on the Certificate had been satisfactorily carried out. The remaining application was refused as the work had not been completed satisfactorily.

Three Certificates of Disrepair were also issued to tenants under the provisions of the Rent and Mortgage Interest (Restrictions) Acts, the houses concerned not being in a reasonable state of repair.

### SLUM CLEARANCE

#### CLEARANCE AREAS

During 1956 further substantial progress was made by the Council in its slum clearance programme. Details of the work carried out during the year are as follows:-

Samuel Street (No. 1) Area: (53 houses). This area comprises the following dwelling houses:-

71-83 (odd) Samuel Street  
87-119 (odd) Samuel Street  
129-141 (odd) Samuel Street  
71-113 (odd) Frances Street

The Clearance Order was made by the Council in May, 1956.

Samuel Street (No. 2) Order: (47 houses). This Order was made by the Council in May 1956 following my representation and comprises the following houses:-



39-43 (odd) Samuel Street  
 49-67 (odd) Samuel Street  
 66-78 (even) Frances Street  
 117-125 (odd) Frances Street  
 129-151 (odd) Frances Street  
 25-31 (cons.) Chapel Hill  
 33, Chapel Hill  
 2-6 (cons.) Harrington Buildings

Samuel Street (No. 3) Order. There are only two houses included in this area, namely 15 and 17, Samuel Street, and the Council's Order was confirmed by the Minister on the 26th September, 1956.

Samuel Street (No. 4) Order. This Order relates to Nos. 3-9 (odd) Samuel Street and was confirmed by the Minister on the 26th September, 1956.

Samuel Street (No. 5) Order. This area comprises Nos. 25-35 (odd) Samuel Street and was made by the Council in May, 1956.

Frances Street (No. 1) Order. This Order was made by the Council in 1956 following my representation. The properties comprised in the area are Nos. 17-24 (cons.) Chapel Hill and Nos. 42-62 (even) Frances Street.

Frances Street (No. 2) Order. This was made by the Council following my representation and relates to Nos. 22-36 (even) Frances Street and 19, Borgard Road. The Order was made by the Council in May 1956.

North Kent Grove Clearance Order. The Minister confirmed this Order on the 6th September, 1956, without modification. The houses included in the area are Nos. 1-21 (cons.) North Kent Grove, 1-5 (cons.) North Kent Place and 33, Belson Road.

The Ann Street (Nos. 1-4) Areas. At the end of the year I represented to the Council that the houses comprised in the following four areas were unfit for human habitation and should be dealt with as clearance areas:-

No. 1 Area: 160-170 (even), 161-179 (odd) and 185 Ann Street, 125-137 (odd) Villas Road, 21 and 23, Waverley Road.

No. 2 Area: 3-9 (odd) Brewery Road.

No. 3 Area: 108-134 (even), 138-142 (even), 109-145 (odd) and 145a, Ann Street, 147-155 (odd) Ann Street; 24a, 24b and 26-34 (even)



Glyndon Road; 86-92 (even) and 100, 122 and 124 Robert Street; 83-101 (odd), 105 and 107 Villas Road.

No. 4 Area: 12 and 14, Glyndon Road.

There are 100 dwelling houses in the above mentioned four areas. In addition there are approximately 60 properties on adjoining land which are not considered representable but which it is necessary for the Council to acquire in order to obtain a cleared site of convenient shape and dimensions for the satisfactory redevelopment of these clearance areas. These added lands include, in addition to dwellinghouses, a number of retail shops, a warehouse, coal yard, doctor's surgery and a public house.

The four clearance areas have a gross area of approximately 4.4 acres and the adjoining land comprises nearly 3 acres. There are approximately 120 families living in dwellings in the four areas, and 68 families in dwellings in the "added" land.

The Council propose to redevelop this area at a density of about 100 persons per acre. This development will constitute the first stage of the Glyndon Area Scheme.

Kingsman Street (Nos. 1 and 2) Areas. In addition to the representation of the abovementioned areas, I also represented that the houses 82-96 (even) and 102-114 (even) Kingsman Street were unfit for habitation and should be dealt with by the Council as Clearance Areas. These properties are now in the Council's ownership.

#### SLUM CLEARANCE - COMPENSATION

During the year the Government passed the Slum Clearance (Compensation) Act in order to relieve hardship among owner-occupiers or tenants of certain premises declared unfit by the local authority. The object of the Act was not to alter the long-established principle that owners of slum dwellings should apart from payments for good maintenance, receive compensation beyond the value of the site, but rather to relieve acute hardship in a limited number of cases, particularly where the owners had in recent years been driven by extreme housing shortage to buy unsound and sub-standard dwellings to live in themselves.

#### HOUSING PROGRESS

The number of dwellings built in the Borough of Woolwich during the year 1956 may be summarised as follows:-



By the Borough Council	238
By the London County Council	119
By the Housing Associations	38
By private enterprise	<u>99</u>
Total:	<u>494</u>

In addition, a further 188 dwellings were under construction by the Borough Council at the end of the year.

Since the St. Mary's Comprehensive Development Scheme was commenced, 380 families (comprising 1,176 persons) have been rehoused from the Area, and 248 new dwellings erected since building commenced in August, 1952. Further schemes are in hand, and plans are under way for the erection of multi-storey blocks of flats.

The final stages in the development of the Coldharbour Estate were in hand at the end of the year, with the erection of some blocks of flats in the central shopping area, including a seven-storey point block with lift to all floors, while a communal laundry for the use of some 150 tenants is provided in the basement. An Estate Office and Branch Library have also been erected.

Building operations continued on the Bostall Estate and on several smaller sites in the Borough.

At the 31st December, 1956, there were 8,978 tenancies in properties owned or controlled by the Council, of which 463 were in Requisitioned Properties. During the year, 158 properties were released from Requisition, the occupiers of 87 of these properties being accepted as direct tenants of the owners.

There were 3,104 applications on the Housing Register at the end of the year, compared with 3,732 at the end of December, 1955.

The information regarding the housing progress in the Borough during 1956 has been kindly supplied by the Director of Housing.

### HEALTH EDUCATION

#### FILM PROGRAMMES AND INFORMAL TALKS

A full programme was again undertaken by the Council's Health Education Unit during 1956.

Ninety-one sessions, consisting of sound films, filmstrips and



informal talks were presented throughout the spring and winter months to local organisations in their own meeting places. Thirteen of these programmes included informal talks on some aspect of the work of the Health Department. Audiences attending totalled over 4,200 persons.

Of the thirteen informal talks given to organisations, three were on the subject of the "Work of the Health Department", seven on "Clean Food" and one on each of "Refuse Disposal", "Clean Air" and "Pest Control".

The audiences attending these sessions varied considerably in numbers. The old people's clubs continue to have the largest audiences, with 300 or more members attending.

A pleasing feature of the work is the number of requests received for second visits by the Unit. It has been found that an initial visit to an organisation with sound films and a short talk on the "Work of the Health Department" is generally followed by a request for a further visit on a specialised subject, such as, Food, Rodent Control, Smoke, etc.

The programmes shown during the year were of approximately one hour's duration and were built up, as in past years, of sound films of 20-30 minutes' duration on a health subject, followed by some general interest films. Every endeavour is made to ensure that the health film is suitable for the type of audience, and that all the items are of interest.

Of the 91 programmes presented, nine were given to old people's meetings, 51 to groups of mixed adults, including six professional bodies, 26 to religious and social meetings and five to youth meetings. Fifty-seven programmes were shown in the afternoon and 34 in the evening.

The film "Guilty Chimneys", which the Council purchased from the Gas Council, was again shown extensively, and towards the end of the year it was used virtually at every session. Invariably it provoked a good deal of discussion, and many people have stated that they found it most interesting.

A London firm specialising in the manufacture of sterilising and detergent materials produced an excellent 30 minute colour film on Clean Food. Although designed primarily for food handlers, it had an appeal to everyone, and particularly to housewives. This film was kindly made available to the Department, and it was shown widely.

Several letters of appreciation were received during the year



from organisations. They expressed their pleasure in the service which the Council provided, and stated that they considered it to be of great value in disseminating information and publicity, and in learning more of the work of their local authority.

### LEAFLETS AND LITERATURE

Leaflets on a variety of subjects are made available to the public. It is the practice to distribute these at Health Education sessions when the subject matter of the films may be further usefully expanded in this manner. All the available copies of the second edition of the Home Safety Booklet produced during the year were distributed in this manner. During the year the London County Council also produced a Home Safety Booklet, and this was given wide distribution.

Considerable publicity was given to the coming into force of the new Food Hygiene Regulations. A leaflet was prepared which set out the general principles of the Regulations as clearly as possible. The Health Inspectors distributed these leaflets when calling on food shops of all kinds.

As in past years, 500 copies per month of the booklet "Better Health" were made available to members of the public during the year, and were distributed through the Council's libraries and other public buildings and at the Health Education sessions. The Council make a contribution to the funds of the Central Council for Health Education.

One of the large poster sites used by the Department was removed during the year owing to the expansion of the industrial land on which it stood. The remaining large poster site continues to be used.

### INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

#### PREMISES WHERE FOOD IS PREPARED AND OFFERED FOR SALE

A total of 3,052 inspections of food premises was carried out during the year.

Details of the registered food premises at the end of 1956, together with numbers of inspections carried out during the year, are as follows:-



TABLE No. 12

Description	No. in Borough on 31.12.1956.	No. of Inspections
Dairies	1	12
Distributors of Milk	155	243
Ice Cream Premises	319	669
Premises where meat is potted, pickled, pressed and preserved	106	153
Premises where Sausages are manufactured	92	116
Premises where fish is cured or prepared for frying.	39	93
Wholesale dealer in Margarine	1	1
Restaurants, cafes and snack bars	208	745
Industrial and School Meals Service canteens	95	244
Markets	1	Daily
Bakehouses	12	18
Itinerant vendors	-	7
Non-registered premises	-	323
Greengrocery and fish shops	-	134
Public Houses	147	301

#### NEW FOOD HYGIENE REGULATIONS

Important changes in the Food and Drugs legislation came into force on January 1st, 1956. The Food and Drugs Act, 1955, became the principal Act for controlling the composition, labelling, fitness and hygienic handling of food, and the new Food Hygiene Regulations the principal instrument for enforcing good food hygiene practice.

The Food Hygiene Regulations materially strengthened the powers of local authorities to enforce a satisfactory standard of food hygiene and to require the observance of proper safe-guards to prevent food poisoning.

Most of the Regulations came into operation on the 1st January, 1956, but the operation of certain provisions involving alterations to the structure or the installation of additional equipment was deferred until July 1st, 1956.

During the early months of the year, a complete survey of all catering establishments was carried out and the occupiers advised of the provisions of the new Regulations and the additional work and



equipment required to bring the premises up to the new standard. A booklet giving information on the new legislation was widely distributed throughout the Borough. In many cases the installation of additional sinks, wash-hand basins, water heaters and refrigerators was necessary and in other cases improvements to the structure and fixtures was required.

A further complete survey was made of these premises after July. The occupiers of the majority of the catering establishments were co-operative and showed a desire to improve their premises on the advice given by the Health Inspectors, and considerable improvement of conditions in restaurants, cafes and canteens was effected during the year.

For various reasons, several restaurants and cafes in the Borough closed during the year, the total number of such premises being reduced from 204 to 180, but the number of Industrial and School meals service Canteens increased from 92 to 102.

A total of 745 inspections of restaurants and cafes and 244 of factory and school canteens were made by the Food Inspectors.

In only 16 cases was it found necessary to serve formal notices requiring compliance with the Food Hygiene Regulations and in no case was it necessary to institute legal proceedings.

During the visits made by the Health Inspectors to these catering premises, every opportunity is taken to give practical advice to the food handlers on good food hygiene practice.

#### FOOD HYGIENE REGULATIONS - ISSUE OF CERTIFICATES OF EXEMPTION

During the year the Council issued exemption certificates in respect of three kiosks exempting them from the necessity of providing a piped water supply and wash-hand basin. The goods sold at these premises were predominantly pre-packed, and because of the special circumstances, including the restricted accommodation, the Council considered that it would be unreasonable to insist on a piped water supply.

#### PUBLIC HOUSES

During the year 301 inspections were carried out, special regard being had to the requirements of the Food Hygiene Regulations. There are 147 licensed premises in the Borough, of which 35 serve main meals. In 19 cases washing facilities were found to be inadequate and in each case the Brewers agreed to install additional facilities in order to comply with the requirements of the Regulations.



## WOOLWICH MARKET

The Borough Council controls the Woolwich Market situated in Beresford Square, through which large quantities of fruit and vegetables pass each week. Free washing facilities are available in the near-by conveniences for food handlers. A large number of visits were made by the Food Inspectors to this Market during the year.

## MILK SUPPLY

Within the Borough at the end of the year there was one dairy and 135 registered distributors of milk. The Council also approved registration of a further 27 distributors of milk who sell milk within the Borough from premises outside. A total of 232 dealers' licences and 83 supplementary licences were issued under the provisions of the Milk (Special Designations) Regulations, 1949, authorising 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 of fat content was:-

<u>Fat Content</u>	<u>No. of Samples</u>
4.5 per cent. and over	2
4.0 per cent. and over	4
3.5 per cent. and over	93
3.0 per cent. and over	103
Below 3 per cent.	2

During 1956, 175 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 satisfactory.

A further 185 samples of "Pasteurised" or "Tuberculin Tested Pasteurised" milk were submitted for the Phosphatase test to determine the adequacy of pasteurisation. All the samples were reported to be satisfactory.

Twenty two samples of "Sterilised" or "Tuberculin Tested Sterilised" milk were submitted to the Park Hospital for Turbidity test and satisfactory results were reported in each case.

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

The practice of taking samples of milk in the course of delivery



to schools, hospitals and institutions in the Borough was continued during the year. Of the 68 samples taken, 24 samples were submitted for the Phosphatase test, 24 samples for the Methylene Blue test, and 20 for chemical examination.

Routine visits to the premises of milk distributors were carried out during the year. Defects were found at two milk premises and notices to remedy the defects were served on the persons responsible.

### ICE CREAM

There were 334 registered ice cream premises in the Borough at the end of the year, of which five premises were used for manufacture and six for the storage of ice cream.

Pre-packed ice cream only is sold from the majority of these premises.

Routine inspections of all the premises are made, and during the year six defects were found and subsequently remedied. Five informal notices and one formal notice were served.

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

During the year eight samples of ice cream were submitted to the Laboratory for grading by the Methylene Blue Test. The results of the tests indicated that seven of the samples were in Grade I and one in Grade II.

### MEAT INSPECTION

The incidence of parasitic infections of cattle to which I referred in my report of 1954, namely *Cysticercus Bovis*, the parasite producing tapeworm in man, and *Distoma Hepaticum* (Liver Fluke) which destroys the liver of cattle, showed no decline during 1956. The animals mostly affected were cattle originating from Ireland.

Altogether *Cysticercus Bovis* was found in 68 instances during the inspection of Ox carcasses. Otherwise all carcasses were in good condition, and after refrigeration treatment to destroy the cysts the meat was released for human consumption.

A large number of ox livers were rejected because of acute



infection by Liver Fluke. Of the 11,671 cattle inspected in the Borough during the year it was found necessary to condemn 3,120 livers because of Liver Fluke. Many more livers were affected but in a less acute form and were passed as fit by the Inspectors after careful removal of the affected parts.

It appears that there is urgent need for the cleaning of the pastures where the cattle are grazed if they are to be reared free of this parasite.

Details of the carcasses inspected at the Garland Road Abattoir during 1956 are as follows:-

TABLE No. 13

Carcasses & Offal Inspected and Condemned in Whole or in Part, 1956

	Cattle excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs	Horses
Number killed and inspected	11,025	646	8,543	13,761	17,144	-
<u>All diseases (except Tuberculosis &amp; Cysticerci)</u>						
Whole carcasses condemned	-	1	54	1	9	-
Carcasses of which part condemned	3,867	166	64	596	2,354	-
Percentage of the number inspected affected with these diseases	35.0	25.8	1.3	4.3	13.2	-
<u>Tuberculosis only</u>						
Whole carcasses condemned	3	2	4	-	2	-
Carcasses of which part condemned	599	106	-	-	256	-
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis	5.4	16.7	.04	-	1.5	-
<u>Cysticercosis</u>						
Carcasses of which part condemned and treated by refrigeration.	68	1	-	-	-	-
Generalised and totally condemned	-	-	-	-	-	-



## MEAT REGULATIONS - MARKING OF MEAT FOR EXPORT

During 1956 the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food agreed, on the application of the Council, to the Council's Meat Inspectors marking meat inspected by them at the Garland Road Abattoir and intended for export to Europe. The exporters requested certificates indicating that each consignment of meat was fit for human consumption. Small charges were made for the issue of such certificates. During the year 636 beef carcasses, consisting mainly of cow beef, were inspected prior to export to Belgium.

## LICENSING OF SLAUGHTERHOUSES AND SLAUGHTERMEN

There are two licensed slaughterhouses in the Borough, one being the Garland Road Abattoir through which large numbers of animals pass each year. The other in Herbert Road is not being used at the present time.

Eight slaughtermen's licences were issued by the Council during the year to men working at the Garland Road Abattoir.

## UN SOUND FOOD - COMPLAINTS

Several complaints of alleged unsound food sold to the public were brought to the notice of the Department during the year. All these complaints were fully investigated. In several instances nothing was found to be wrong with the food. For instance, alleged unfit pies were found to be fit, dirt on the inside of a milk bottle was found to be marks on the bottle and canned fish and sausage meat alleged to be bad were found fit.

However, in the majority of the cases the complaints were fully justified. Some of the more serious complaints related to string and maggots in bread, foreign matter in canned tomatoes, maggots in chocolates, unfit cake, unsound prunes and unsound tinned fruit pie, cement in a bottle of milk, unsound liver and oil in bread.

The food preparing premises were investigated and advice given to food handlers where necessary.

In a number of instances where there was evidence of negligence or carelessness, the Council decided to institute legal proceedings.

Proceedings were taken in respect of the following unsound food: glass splinters in milk (two complaints), fines totalling £20, with £5.5.0d. costs; a washer in a currant scone - fined £5 with £1.1.0d. costs; cardboard in a bottle of milk - fined £5



with £2.2.0d. costs; a pencil in a loaf of bread - fined £5 with £1.1.0d. costs; plastic in a loaf of bread - fined £5 with £1.1.0d. costs; Dirty milk bottle - fined £5 with £2.2.0d. costs.

Warning letters were sent to the manufacturers in respect of complaints of a wood screw in peanuts and of metal in a mincemeat pie.

#### UN SOUND FOOD: EXAMINATION OF FOOD SUSPECTED OF BEING UNSOUND

The routine examination of food suspected of being unsound was continued throughout the year. The co-operation of the food traders is, of course, very important in this matter, and numerous requests are received from traders for an inspection of suspected foodstuffs. If found to be unfit the food is voluntarily surrendered and Condemnation Certificates issued.

Altogether, 30,085 articles of food, weighing approximately 64 tons were condemned as unfit during the year, the majority of these articles, weighing approximately 50 tons, being from the large Abattoir in the Borough.

#### FOOD SAMPLING, 1956

During the year ended 31st December, 1956, 618 samples of food and drugs (i.e. 407 informal and 211 formal samples) were submitted for analysis to the Public Analyst. Of these, seven formal and 18 informal samples were reported to be adulterated or otherwise not complying with the statutory requirements, giving a percentage of 4.0 compared with 5.0 in 1955 and 3.8 in 1954. No private samples were examined during the year.

The following table gives details of the adulterated samples:-

TABLE No. 14

Sample	Article	Formal or Informal (F or I)	Adulteration or Irregularity
732	Canned Ham and Tongue	I	Description regarded as incorrect and misleading.
757	Canned Ham and Tongue	F	"
685	Milk	F	Ingredients corresponded to the presence of 2 per cent. of added water.



Sample	Article	Formal or Informal (F or I)	Adulteration or Irregularity
701	Condensed Full Cream Milk, Unsweetened	I	Abnormally thick, curdy and unsuitable for ordinary use, apparently caused by high acidity.
158	Cake Flour	I	Deteriorated. The flour was caked, apparently through exposure to damp, and contaminated by a spider beetle.
20	Coffee Extract	I	Incorrectly labelled.
34	Ham and Egg Veal	I	Contained starchy filler, the presence of which was not mentioned on the label.
91	Ham and Tongue	I	Contained excessive sodium nitrite.
121	Canned Pork Luncheon Meat	I	Contained insufficient meat.
140	Digestive Tablets	I	Incorrectly labelled.
201	Digestive Tablets	F	-"-
54	Milk	F	Ingredients corresponded to a deficiency of one per cent. of the solids-not-fat.
56	Milk	F	Ingredients corresponded to a deficiency of two per cent. of the milk fat.
83	Sterilised Milk	F	Ingredients corresponded to a deficiency of one per cent. of the milk fat.
45	Chutney	I	Contained carcasses of mites, approximately 700 per ounce.
80	Chutney	F	Contained carcasses of mites, approximately 2000 per ounce.



Sample	Article	Formal or Informal (F or I)	Adulteration or Irregularity
139	Ground Rice	I	Deteriorated and infected by mildew.
252	Chocolate Flavouring	I	Contained Benzoic acid preservative, 500 parts per million, which is not permitted.
253	Meringue Mixture	I	False description on label.
311	White Bread	I	Contained dirty mineral grease coloured green by compounds of copper.
357	Glycerine Honey and Lemon	I	The proportion of glycerine was insufficient to justify the description on the label.
460	Bramble Seedless	I	The label did not comply.
315	Minced Pork Roll	I	Had an unpleasant taint, probably due to decomposition through overheating.
355	Cut Peel	I	Contained four small beetles
329	Cayenne Pepper	I	Deteriorated, being caked and mildewed.

The foods examined during the year were as follows:-

Baking powder	3	Mineral drinks	9
Beverages	2	Fish	19
Cheese and Cheese Spreads	6	Fish Paste	6
Coconut	2	Flavouring Essence	4
Coffee and Chicory	9	Flour	5
Colouring matter	2	Fruit	16
Confectionery	54	Fruit Crystallised and Glace	3
Cream	5	Gravy preparations	4
Custard powder	6	Ice Cream	13
Curry powder	2	Jam and Marmalade	10
Dessert powder	5	Jelly	11



Lemonade Powder	3	Proprietary Foods	18
Margarine	2	Rice	4
Meat	27	Salad Cream	2
Meat paste	3	Salt	2
Meat products	16	Sauces, Mixed	16
Meringue Powder	3	Soups	7
Milk	209	Spice	6
Milk pudding, Canned	3	Stuffing Mixtures	2
Mincemeat	4	Suet	5
Oats, Breakfast	2	Sugar	3
Olive Oil	3	Tea	5
Peas	3	Tomato Juice, Canned	2
Peel, Candied	3	Treacle	2
Pepper	3	Vegetables, Canned	10
Pickles	13	Vinegar	5
Puddings	5	Wine, Alcoholic	3
		Others	27

### PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE

The following diseases are compulsorily notifiable in the Borough: Anthrax, Cholera, Continued Fever, Diphtheria, Dysentery, Encephalitis Lethargica, Erysipelas, Enteric Fever, Food Poisoning, Glanders, Hydrophobia, Leprosy, Malaria, Measles, Membranous Croup, Meningococcal Infection, Ophthalmia Neonatorum, Pneumonia (Acute Primary), Pneumonia (Acute Influenzal), Poliomyelitis, Polio-encephalitis, 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 Public Health Inspectors at the earliest opportunity and disinfection is carried out wherever applicable. Where the patient is nursed at home, Public Health Inspectors visit to see that home isolation is carried out satisfactorily, and at the end of the infectious period, where necessary, the bedding, etc. belonging to the patient is removed for treatment at the Disinfecting Station and the rooms sealed and fumigated.

### POLIOMYELITIS

There were six confirmed cases in the Borough during the year, four being non-paralytic and two paralytic, with no deaths. Altogether medical practitioners notified 27 patients as suspected cases, almost all the notified cases being transferred to the Brook



Hospital for observation and treatment. Final diagnosis of these included tonsillitis (five patients), osteomyelitis, subarachnoid haemorrhage, pyrexia of undetermined origin, enteritis and ?Coronary thrombosis.

### MALARIA

Two cases of malaria occurred in the Borough. Both concerned soldiers who had contracted the disease abroad. Both were confined to the Royal Herbert Hospital for treatment.

### PARATYPHOID FEVER

There were no cases of typhoid fever, but five confirmed cases of paratyphoid fever. Investigations were made as to possible contacts and source of infection.

### FOOD POISONING

Few formal notifications of food poisoning were received, and only seven of these cases were confirmed. There were no major outbreaks. The only outbreak involved four members of a family who, however, were not seriously ill. Australian tinned ham was the food suspected, although it was not possible to obtain a sample of the food for laboratory investigation. Of the single cases, one concerned a New Eltham man who became ill along with several of his colleagues at a St. Mary Cray factory after the midday meal consumed at the Works Canteen. This case was later confirmed as one of food poisoning. Although the duration of the illness was comparatively short, the patient was very ill. Meat pie was the food suspected. Another patient was a man of 86 years who, it was found, had kept tinned foods, including meat, open in his food cupboard for long periods, and it is thought that possibly careless habits in regard to his own food preparation had been responsible for his illness.

### MENINGOCOCCAL INFECTION

There were seven confirmed cases, three of which proved fatal. Twenty-four other cases were notified but not confirmed. Altogether, 22 of the patients were admitted to hospital. Seventeen of them were under ten years of age.

### PUERPERAL PYREXIA

During the year, 88 cases were notified, almost all from hospital. Twenty-nine of the hospital notifications referred to patients whose home addresses were outside the Borough.



TABLE No. 15

## NOTIFICATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES (EXCLUDING TUBERCULOSIS) 1956

DISEASES	Under 1 year	1-5 years	5-10 years	10-15 years	15-35 years	35-45 years	45-65 years	65 and over	Age Unknown	Total	Total No. admitted to Hospital
Diphtheria	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Scarlet Fever	-	27	74	10	2	-	1	-	-	114	11
Paratyphoid Fever	-	-	1	1	2	-	1	-	-	5	5
Meningococcal Infection	1	2	1	1	1	-	1	-	-	7	7
Poliomyelitis	-	1	2	1	2	-	-	-	-	6	6
Erysipelas	-	-	-	-	-	3	6	5	-	14	4
Dysentery	14	119	166	66	71	28	30	16	14	524	47
Zymotic Enteritis	8	18	9	4	3	2	1	1	2	48	22
Scabies	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	4	-
Pneumonia	3	12	3	4	5	4	22	25	-	78	11
Food Poisoning	1	-	1	1	1	2	1	-	-	7	1
Puerperal Pyrexia	-	-	-	-	75	11	-	-	2	88	88
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	8
Whooping Cough	27	80	85	10	1	-	1	-	4	208	17
Measles	13	120	86	2	8	-	-	-	5	234	31
Typhoid Fever	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Malaria	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2	2
Encephalitis	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-

DIPHTHERIA

Seven persons were admitted to hospital as being suspected cases of diphtheria. However, there was no confirmed case, final diagnoses being tonsillitis 5, glandular fever 1 and impetigo 1.

SONNE DYSENTERY

During 1956 there was a large increase in the incidence of sonne dysentery, this disease accounting for twice as many notifications as any other infectious disease notified. There were altogether 524 notified cases, compared with 33 in the previous year. The cases were generally mild. Over 50 patients were admitted to hospital but there were no deaths.

A large proportion of persons notified were school children. In such circumstances the common mode of transmission by contact infection is not easy to counter. However, by bacteriological investigation of



patients and contacts and with the wholehearted co-operation of the County Council School and Health staffs, the spread was checked.

### TUBERCULOSIS

The number of primary notifications of tuberculosis (155) was a similar figure to that of the previous year.

There were 22 deaths in the Borough attributable to tuberculosis, against 23 the previous year.

TABLE No. 16

The following is an extract from the Tuberculosis Register for 1956:-

	Pulmonary			Non-Pulmonary		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Cases notified for the first time.	96	49	145	6	6	12
Other additions to Register during the year, including transfers of patients from other areas	41	32	73	3	2	5
Cases on Register at 31st December, 1956	1016	799	1815	116	111	227

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

	Formal Notifications										
	Number of Primary Notifications of New Cases										
	0-1	1-5	5-15	15-25	25-35	35-45	45-55	55-65	65-75	75 & up	Total (all ages)
PULMONARY -											
Males	-	2	7	15	7	18	17	13	16	1	96
Females	1	2	3	8	8	13	8	3	2	1	49
NON-PULMONARY -											
Males	-	2	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
Females	-	1	-	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	4
Total	1	7	12	26	15	31	27	16	18	2	155



TABLE No. 17 - Tuberculosis

Table of Notifications and Deaths compared with Population -  
Borough of Woolwich

Year	Estimated Civilian Population excluding Army	Primary Notifi- cations	Deaths from Tubercu- losis	Deaths per 1,000 of popu- lation	Total Deaths all causes	Percentage of Tuber- culosis Deaths against all Deaths
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
1955	145,000	154	23	.15	1,537	1.4
1956	144,000	155	22	.14	1,524	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 Carnecke Gardens, Eltham, being administered by the Regional Hospital Board.

Reports on a number of patients found to be living in unsatisfactory conditions were made during the year to the Borough Council and County Council Housing Departments recommending priority rehousing.

MASS X-RAY - REPORTS ON LOCAL SURVEYS

The Director of the South East London Mass Radiography Unit reported that at the surveys carried out during the months of October, November and December in various parts of the Borough, a total of 2,966 persons were X-rayed, of which 1,385 were men and 1,581 women.

The Unit visited the Eltham and Abbey Wood areas and also visited four large factories in the Borough, one being in Woolwich,



one in Plumstead and two in Eltham, where large numbers of the employees were X-rayed.

Only 89 persons were recalled for further X-ray, and in 36 of these cases no further action was required.

When the Unit visited four local hospitals during the month of August, 57 men and 270 women were X-rayed, only ten persons being recalled for further examination.

The Unit was also stationed in Eltham High Street during the latter part of October, where a total of 5,706 persons were X-rayed, of which only 137 were found to have some abnormality or other.

### DISINFECTION AND DISINFESTATION

During 1956 the Department disinfected 183 rooms after cases of infectious diseases, and of these 50 rooms had been occupied by tuberculous persons. A total of 1,122 inspections regarding verminous conditions were made and 258 rooms were disinfested for vermin.

Many requests were again received from residents in the Borough wishing to dispose of unwanted bedding and furniture. In the main the bedding and furniture was in a dirty and often verminous condition, and had formerly been used by persons removed to hospitals or institutions, or deceased. In twenty-nine instances such articles were removed to and destroyed at the Plumstead Destructor, the number of articles destroyed totalling 125. Of this total, 20 were mattresses, 19 bedsteads, 11 sets of bedding, 31 items of furniture and 44 other sundry items.

A request was received from a resident for bedding to be disinfected following non-infectious disease, a charge of 10/- being made for this work.

Requests were again received from several residents for Certificates of Disinfection to accompany new clothing sent to friends and relatives abroad. The clothing concerned was disinfected by the Department and six such certificates were issued. Charges made for this work totalled £1.10s.0d.

A local firm, who export clothing to Africa, had two consignments of clothing disinfected; the total charges being £22.

### PERSONAL CLEANSING

For the convenience of residents the Borough Council maintains



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

The number of persons cleansed in 1956 was 868 and the number treated for scabies was 47.

Details are as follows:-

	Pre-School Children		School Children		Adults		Total
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Men	Women	
Verminous Persons Cleansed	17	39	187	529	14	82	868
Treatment of Scabies	3	1	11	22	3	7	47

#### 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 bona fide signature of a doctor practising within the area.

During the year, 343 certificates were authenticated by me. Of these, 309 related to smallpox, 21 to cholera and 13 to typhoid fever.

#### LABORATORY FACILITIES

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

Specimens sent to this laboratory include samples of milk and ice cream, samples of food in suspected food poisoning cases, specimens of meat from the Abattoir and samples of swimming bath water. The following summary relates to the work carried out by the laboratory on behalf of the Council during 1956:-



<u>Type of specimen</u>	<u>No. examined</u>
Food	19
Ice cream (Methylene blue test)	9
Milk (Methylene blue, phosphatase and turbidity tests)	222
Water (from swimming baths, children's paddling pools and boating lakes)	45
Blood	2
Processed Bovine Blood Plasma	2
Compound glycerine of thymol	1
Organs from animal carcasses	5
Faeces (mainly for shigella sonnei)	<u>478</u>
Total	<u>783</u>

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 and at St. Nicholas Hospital. General practitioners referred 12 sputum specimens for examination, and the hospital carried out 89 other sputum examinations during the year. Twenty-eight nasal and throat swabs were referred to the hospital by general practitioners for examination.



