Contributors

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MARARY

ANNUAL REPORTS

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

AND THE

Sanitary Inspector and Building and Sanitary Surveyor.

FOR THE YEAR 1938

GAZETTE PRINTING WORKS, ALNWICK



Rural District of Alnwick

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is the report for the year 1938. As instructed by the Ministry of Health, I begin with the names of the staff of the Authority.

- 1. Richard Rothwell, Clerk to the Alnwick Rural District Council.
- 2. Scott Purves, M.D., M.B., C.M.Ed., Medical Officer of Health.
- 3. Oswald Mozart Farrell, Cert. S.I.B., M.S.I.A., Chief Sanitary Inspector and Building and Sanitary Surveyor.
- 4. R. Sinclair, Assistant Sanitary Inspector.
- 5. L. Anderson, Assistant Surveyor.

CLIMATIC CONDITIONS.

The rainfall of 1938 was distributed in a very curious way. Looking back, one thinks of the year as dull and sunless. Yet it was not, and the ultimate result was a rainfall eleven inches short of 1937. The most remarkable feature was the warm dry spell in February and March succeeded by a cold and still dry period in April and May. I give below the monthly table kindly supplied to me by Mr James Hay, of the Alnwick Castle Gardens.

RAINFALL FOR 1938.

January		 	2.58
February		 	1.09
March		 	.72
April		 	.26
May		 	1.87
June		 	3.54
July		 	3.03
August		 	3.00
Septembe	r	 	1.71
October		 	3.39
November	r	 	2.39
December	1. 11	 	4.83

28.41 inches.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

The Area of the Alnwick Rural District is 93,000 acres or 145.3 square miles.

The Population, as estimated by the Registrar-General, is 12,140.

The Number of inhabited houses is 3,831.

The Rateable Value is £49,103.

The sum represented by a penny rate is £208.

VITAL STATISTICS.

The estimated population, as stated above, is 12,140, an increase of 80 over the year 1937.

After reckoning the inward and outward transferable deaths I find that the number is 167. This is arrived at by adding 26 deaths of persons belonging to the District who died outside it and subtracting 3 who died within the District but did not belong to it. This makes a net addition of 23 to the 144 on the local regsters. In a district like ours, which has no hospitals, the inward transfers must always be much in excess of the outward transferable deaths and this disparity is likely to increase with the steady development of the hospital habit. In reckoning the births a simlar condition appears. Here all the transfers are inward, accounted for entirely by births in hospitals and nursing homes in Newcastle. Thus the Registrar's returns of births total 143, to which are added 9 births which occurred out of the District although belonging to it. This brings the total births to 152.

The births and birth rate, and the deaths and the death rate are shown on the table below and for comparison the figures for the two preceding years are given.

		Births.	Birth Rate per 1000 per annum.	Deatns.	Death Rate per 1000 per annum.
1936	 	171	14.10	. 144	11.79
1937	 	157	12.99	141	11.67
1938	 	152	12.52	167	13.75

The above table can hardly be regarded as satisfactory, inasmuch as the deaths exceed the births by 15 and that the number of deaths is considerably greater than in previous years. The birth rate for England and Wales is 15.1 per thousand per annum against 13.7 in our district. The death rate for England and Wales is 11.6 against 13.7 for our district. Of the births 73 were males and 79 females, a disparity in favour of the female sex not quite so marked as in 1937.

The following table shows the ages at which the deaths occurred for comparison the figures for the previous year are also given.

	one	and under	and under	and under	and under	25 and under 35yrs.	and under	and under	and under	and under	yrs. and	Total.
1937	 . 15	0	I	I	4	6	3	10	21	38	43	142
1938	 . 12	2	0	4	3	12	5	10	25	43	51	167

Comparing these two years one may say that although the number for 1938 is greater yet the distribution as regards age is better. Thus the infantile deaths in 1938 are two less and the deaths over 65 are more numerous by 13, showing that the excess of deaths in 1938 was chiefly caused by old age.

DEATHS IN THE SUB-DISTRICTS.

The Alnwick Rural District is divided into two subdistricts, viz., Warkworth and Embleton. The Warkworth subdistrict extends from Lesbury and Alnmouth to the Alnwick and Rothbury Road, including Warkworth, Radcliffe, Felton, and Shilbottle. This sub-district, containing the above large villages, is much the more populous, and covers the south and east part of the district. The Embleton sub-district takes in the northern and western part of the District again from Lesbury to the Alnwick and Rothbury Road, including smaller villages of Boulmer, Longhoughton, Craster, Embleton, and Glanton. For the table below I take the 1931 census, 12,607 against 12,140 in 1938.

		Population.	Deaths.	Death Race.
Warkworth	 	 7,536	104	13.8
Embleton	 	 5,981	63	10.5

INFANTILE DEATH RATE.

The deaths of children under one year, although 3 less than the two preceding years, cannot be considered as satisfactory as this gives an infantile death rate of 78.9 per thousand children born, as against 95.5 for 1936 and 1937. This compares badly with the infantile death rate for England and Wales, which was 53. The causes of the infantile deaths were as follow: — Congenital debility and prematurity, 6; pneumonia, 3; diarrhœa, 3. Six of the deaths were of males and 6 of females. All the deaths were of legitimate children. The following table shows the incidence of the deaths as regards the sub-districts and the appropriate rates :—

Later General Maria	Births.	Infantile Deaths.	Birth Rate.	Infantile Death Rate.
Warkworth	 104	9	13.8	86.5
Embleton	 63	3	10.5	47.6

From the above table it will be seen that in Warkworth sub-district the infantile death rate is above the rate for the country, whereas in Embleton the opposite is the case. The numbers, however, are too small to give an average from which to draw conclusions.

PUUK	LAW	ULLILI	(UII) MARIT	•	
Sub-districts.		Men.	Women.	Children	Totals.
Warkworth		31	44	39	114
Embleton		4	16	5	25

ABLE-BODIED CASES.

Sub-districts.	Men.	Women.	Children	Totals.
Warkworth	 I	I	2	4
Embleton	 0	0	0	0

NOTIFIABLE INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

I will first deal with the ordinary notifiable infectious diseases, excluding tuberculosis, which will be taken later in the report. In the year 1938 there were notified 41 cases of infectious disease, against 39 during the year 1937. The following table shows the incidence of the cases as regards the sub-districts.

			Warkworth.	Embleton.	Totals.
Scarlet Fever	 	 	10	20	30
Diphtheria	 	 	I	5	6
Erysipelas	 	 	3	0	3
Chicken Pox	 	 	I	0	I
Pneumonia	 	 	I	0	I
			16	25	41

Scarlet Fever.—This disease in one place only occurred in epidemic form. This outbreak was confined to the children attending the Dunstan School and there I had to recommend school closure, rather on account of the slightness than the severity of the cases, the symptoms being so evanescent as to often escape observation. The rest of the cases occurred in sporadic outbreaks, and were dealt with as they arose, by isolation in hospital where necessary, by isolation at home in single children, or by immunisation of the other members of the family, where removal was not desired. The serum for the immunisation is provided by the Council and although expensive, is much cheaper than keeping children in hospital for several weeks.

Diphtheria.-Only one case of diphtheria occurred in the Warkworth sub-district, but unfortunately it was the only fatal attack. All the other cases occurred in one outbreak in and about West Bolton, in December. The infection apparently arrived in an adult who had been on a visit. Before the gravity of the throat attack had been appreciated the children in the house had become infected, and they in turn infected the West Bolton School. Two dairy farms were affected by the outbreak and extreme precautions had to be taken. Fortunately there has been no sign of milk infection. The attacks among the children have been of a distinctly benign character, which may be accounted for by the general immunisation by the one shot method two years ago, which if it did not prevent altogether, yet minimised the severity of symptoms, which in several cases amounted to nothing beyond finding diphtheria by swabbing the throats.

Puerperal Pyrexia.—No case of this disease has occurred in the District during 1938, which may be accounted for by the good district nursing service.

Enteric Fever.—No case of this disease has been notified during the year 1938.

Ophthalmia Neonatorum.—During the year 1938 no case of this disease has been notified in the District.

TUBERCULOUS DISEASE.

During the year 1938, 9 cases of tuberculous disease have been notified in the District. Of these 6 were cases of pulmonary and 3 cases of non-pulmonary tuberculosis. There were 11 deaths from tuberculous disease, 9 being from pulmonary and 2 non-pulmonary. As regards the subdistricts the distribution was as follows :--

			CATIONS. Non- Pulmonary.	DEATI Pulmonary.	Non-
Warkworth	 	4	2	6	0
Embleton	 	2	I	3	2
			-		
	Total	s 6	3	9	2

The notification of tuberculous disease is satisfactorily carried out in the District.

Sanda Malanda I	New Cases.				Deaths.			
Age Periods.	Pulmonary		Non- Pulmonary		Pulmonary		Non- Pulmonary	
	М.	F.	M.	F.	М.	F.	М.	F.
0	0	0	0	Ο.	0	0	0	0
I	0	0	0	0	0	0	I	0
5	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15	I	I	0	I	0	2	0	0
20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
25	0	I	0	0	2	I	0	0
35	0	I	0	0	0	2	0	0
45	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	.0
55	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
65 and over	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	I
Totals	3	3	0	3	4	5	1	I

NEW CASES OF TUBERCULOUS DISEASE AND MORTALITY IN THE DISTRICT.

The total number of deaths from tuberculous disease in 1938, as shown above, was 11. The number of deaths from the same cause in 1937 was 4.

The deaths from the various kinds of cancer was 28, as against 18 in the year 1937. The usual ratio between deaths from tubercle and cancer in the District has been about one to two, but as the death from the former decreases that from the latter goes up.

SPECIAL CAUSES OF SICKNESS.

Although the death rate of the District for 1938 is higher than usual, yet there has been no special cause of sickness or death in the District, and the higher mortality was confined to the age. The new water supply to Felton has now been laid in and the sewage scheme is well advanced.

Last year I reported strongly commending the Fountains Abbey Settlement at Swarland. I am sorry to have to qualify this somewhat, as on further inspection I have been disappointed to see how little use is being made of the land surrounding the very neat cottages. It looks as if many things were being done **for** the settlers, without a corresponding effort **by** the settlers.

UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE DISTRICT.

Owing to the fact that the Alnwick Rural District surrounds two urban districts and that the unemployment areas follow different lines from the sanitary districts, it is impossible to give exact figures as to unemployment. The chief kinds of employment in the District are agriculture and coalmining. In the former there appears to be a distinct shortage of labour, notwithstanding the diminution of farm work by laying down land to grass. For the coal mining part of the District things have been fairly prosperous and this also applies to quarrying. Altogether I think we may take it that in this rural district the unemployed are few.

NURSING ARRANGEMENTS IN THE DISTRICT.

The arrangements for the nursing in the District conducted by the County Nursing Association, are in every way satisfactory and nothwithstanding the spread out character of our Rural District, every part is covered by an excellent staff. The same association, beyond district nurses, also supplies special nurses at rates suitable to the means of the patients who are able to pay comparatively moderate charges. This has been found a great benefit and convenience.

HOSPITALS AVAILABLE FOR THE DISTRICT.

There is no general hospital in the District, but it is very well served by the Alnwick Infirmary and the Alnwick Union Hospital, both within the District and the Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle-on-Tyne, without the District. The Alnwick Infirmary is a modern, mainly surgical, hospital of 25 beds. This is a voluntary hospital and has been found sufficient to serve the District efficiently. Although nearly always full there is practically no waiting list. It is at present proposed to enlarge and improve the operating theatre and if we are to judge from the past there is little doubt that the increasing funds for that purpose will be forthcoming. The efficiency of this institution is greatly strengthened by a close connection through its consultants with the Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle, an arrangement which is mutually advantageous, by reducing the waiting list of this great hospital for ordinary cases and securing special treatments not available in a small hospital. The Alnwick Union Hospital provides treatment for chronic incurable and old age cases.

ISOLATION HOSPITAL.

For about 40 years the provision of an isolation hospital has been under consideration. Many schemes have been proposed and plans have been prepared, even sites chosen, but, alas, we get no for'arder and we still have to rely on the hospitality of the Urban District Council. 'It is ill to look a gift horse in the mouth,' but it has been proved that the small Urban Isolation Hospital is insufficient for the service of the two districts. The latest proposal is for a large isolation hospital to serve all the northern part of Northumberland. The site most favoured would appear to be at Belford. Against this it is proposed that there should be two isolation hospitals, one at Berwick-on-Tweed and another at Alnwick. And so there the matter stands until further orders.

JOINT SMALLPOX HOSPITAL.

This hospital of about 25 beds is situated in a well isolated position about three miles south of Alnwick. It is jointly maintained by the Alnwick Rural, Alnwick Urban, Belford, Rothbury, and Amble Councils, and is inspected regularly by a committee from those councils.

There is no Tuberculosis Hospital in the District, but provision for the treatment of this disease is made by the County Council at Wooley Sanatorium. The County Council also provides open-air shelters for the home treatment of tuberculous patients.

There is no Maternity Hospital in the District, but the Alnwick Infirmary admits cases requiring Caesarian Section, as an exception to their rules, which must not be taken as the thin end of the wedge as regards ordinary maternity cases. A good many cases where trouble is expected or where home conditions are unsuitable go to the Princess Mary Maternity Hospital in Newcastle. The County Council provides an excellent consultant service for difficult obstetric cases. Cases of puerperal pyrexia and septicaemia are very rare in the district, a condition due to an excellent service of maternity nursing.

There is no Orthopaedic Hospital in the District, but an orthopaedic clinic is carried on in the town of Alnwick.

There is no Special Children's Hospital in the District, but the needs of the District are served by the general hospitals, the Babies' Hospital and the Fleming Memorial Hospital in Newcastle, and by the Cripples' Home at Gosforth and the Poor Children's Home at Stannington.

PUBLIC HEALTH (PREVENTION OF TUBERCULOSIS REGULATIONS, 1925).

During the year 1938, I have not been called by the County Council Veterinary Inspector to inspect any carcases.

AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

The Alnwick Rural District Council have an excellent ambulance stationed at Alnwick. Several other ambulances serve the District, for instance, those at Whittle Colliery and Broomhill. We have no ambulance for the transport of infectious diseases except a trailer van for smallpox kept at the smallpox hospital.

LABORATORY WORK.

The facilities afforded by the County Council for the examination of pathological specimens are good and prompt, and are fully taken advantage of by the medical practitioners.

Finally, I have to thank the Chairman of the Council, the Chairman of the Sanitary Committee, and the members of the Council for their consideration and support and the Clerk and the Inspectors for their co-operation and help.

SCOTT PURVES, M.D., M.B., C.M.Ed.,

Medical Officer of Health.

Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor's Annual Report

For the Year Ending 31st December, 1938

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

WATER SUPPLIES.

The scheme for supplying water to the villages of Felton, Acklington, and Togston, and the R.A.F. Aerodrome from the Old Shaft source at Swarland received the approval of the Ministry of Health, and work is now in progress and nearing completion. It is hoped that the new supply will be put into commission in January, 1939.

Arising out of the foregoing proposal to supply the R.A.F. Aerodrome, the Council undertook to make available a temporary supply to facilitate the opening of the Aerodrome. The temporary supply was made available in March, 1938, by laying from Warkworth to Acklington, a temporary pipe line, taking its supply from the Warkworth Reservoir at Shilbottle.

A temporary supply was also afforded to the Territorial Camp at Hampeth from June to August. In this instance an electrically operated pump was erected by the Council at the C.W.S. Colliery Shaft (Cannel coal level), to augment the Hillhead Reservoir supply for the purpose of supplying the camp from the Hampeth main.

A scheme to renew the distribution mains in the old village of Shilbottle has been submitted to the Ministry of Health for approval.

The scheme prepared by Messrs D. Balfour and Son for improving the pressure in the Alumouth distribution system, has now been completed.

SEWERAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

The Felton Sewerage and Sewage Disposal Scheme has now received the approval of the Ministry of Health. The construction of the main sewer in High Street is now in progress, and a start will be made on the new disposal works early in 1939.

The scheme for extending the sewerage system to the old village of Shilbottle has been submitted to and approved by the Ministry of Health. Tenders are being invited and it is hoped that the works will be put in hand early in 1939.

General outlines of proposals for diverting the Togston sewerage system into the Morpeth R.D.C. system have been considered by the Council and referred to the Morpeth R.D.C. The scheme in principle has been accepted by the Council, who have resolved that the necessary details be submitted to the Ministry of Health.

A preliminary report and drawings have been prepared by Col. G. Reavell and submitted to the Council with respect to a new scheme of Sewerage and Sewage Disposal for the village of Embleton.

The Council have instructed Messrs D. Balfour and Son to prepare a scheme of sewerage for the village of Low Newtonby-the-Sea.

SCAVENGING.

At the present scavenging schemes are in operation in eleven villages. The refuse depots are visited regularly by a rat catcher employed by the Council, and no nuisances at the depots have been reported.

MILK SUPPLY.

There are in the District 118 cowkeepers registered under the Milk and Dairies Order, 1926.

Eight milk samples were taken during the year and submitted for bacteriological examination. No samples showed evidence of tuberculosis.

Two samples were taken as a result of unsatisfactory reports from other districts, and both proved satisfactory. In cases where unsatisfactory results were obtained, further samples are to be taken.

MEAT INSPECTIONS.

Routine inspections of carcases were made during the year at the nine private Slaughterhouses in the District. On two occasions inspections were made at farms in connection with the emergency slaughtering of beasts, the requisite notice having been given in each case. During the year 70 stone of meat was surrendered voluntarily as being unfit for human consumption.

HOUSING.

(a). Unfit Houses.

Some 379 inspections of houses have been made under the Housing (Consolidated) Regulations, 1925.

Three areas were scheduled and representations made to the Council by the Medical Officer of Health in respect of 18 properties at Glanton, Rennington, and Swarland. The areas were declared by the Council as Clearance Areas.

Clearance Orders were made in respect of the other foregoing 'Clearance Areas.' A Public Local Inquiry was held at the Counicl Chambers in March by a Ministry of Health Inspector in respect of 13 Clearance Orders at Alnmouth, Embleton, Lesbury, Newton-by-the-Sea, and Warkworth, all of which received the confirmation of the Ministry of Health except in the case of Warkworth No. 1, where one of the owners was given the option of submitting an offer with respect to the carrying out of the works.

A second Public Inquiry was held in November in respect of three Clearance Orders at Glanton, Rennington, and Swarland. The result of this inquiry is not yet to hand.

Five houses were declared by the Council to be unfit for human habitation. An undertaking by an owner to make a dwelling house fit for human habitation was accepted by the Council with respect to one house.

Two undertakings by owners not to use dwelling houses for human habitation were accepted by the Council.

In one instance a house was rebuilt on the old site.

(b). New Houses.

During the year 50 new houses were erected, and completed by private enterprise. Four Council Houses were erected and completed at Shilbottle, thirty at Lesbury, and 40 at Felton. Work has commenced on the erection of 24 Council Houses at Warkworth. Three acres of land are to be acquired at Shilbottle for rehousing purposes. A further $11\frac{1}{2}$ acres (approx.) of land are to be acquired at Radcliffe by Compulsory Purchase under the Housing Act, 1936.

(c). Overcrowding.

(i) Number of dwellings overcrowded at the 31st	
December, 1939	239
(ii) Number of cases relieved during the year	
(iii) Number of temporary overcrowding cases authorised	
during year by licence of Local Authority	2
(iv) Particulars of any cases in which dwelling houses	
have again become overcrowded after the Local	
Authority has taken steps for the abatement of	
overcrowding	Nil.

(d). Housing (Rural Workers) Act.

Ten applications were made to the Council under the Housing (Rural Workers) Acts, 1926-32, in respect of 22 houses and assistance by way of grants was offered in respect of seven applications totalling 16 houses.

During the year the reconstruction work approved has been completed in respect of 4 cases embracing 11 houses in all. In six other cases the work is progressing favourably and nearing completion.

(e). Small Dwellings Acquisition Acts.

Twelve applications for advances under the Small Dwellings Acquisitions Acts, 1899-1923, in respect of I house at Acklington Road, Togston (in the Civil Parish of Acklington), 2 houses at Alnmouth, and 9 at Warkworth, received the favourable consideration of the Council. The amount of advances made during the year totalled £5,105.

CAMPING SITES.

There are in the District eight sites of a semi-permanent character which were granted camping licences during the year. The condition of the sites as regards sanitation was satisfactory.

SWIMMING BATHS AND POOLS.

There are no swimming baths or pools open to the public in the District.

GENERALLY.

I wish to record my appreciation of the work carried out by the following members of the staff :

Mr T. Harper, Additional Inspector, until 23rd May, 1938. Mr L. Anderson, Assistant Surveyor.

Mr R. Sinclair, Assistant Sanitary Inspector.

Mr W. Dunn, Pupil, from 11th July, 1938.

In conclusion I would express my thanks to the Chairman and Members of the Council, the Clerk and Medical Officer of Health, for the consideration and support which I have received during this, my fourth complete year of office.

Your obedient servant,

OSWALD M. FARRELL, M.S.I.A.,

Chief Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor.

	Legal Proceedings.	11	7010	- A 10		LOTWICH.			1
(15)).	In progress or being dealt with.	10 8	1		22 1			1	34
Art. 19	Defects remedied thereafter.	9 1		1	6	-		A 151	4
ler 1926	Number of Statutory Notices served.	∞ 63		1	63				2
ers' Order	Defects remedied thereafter.	5		, 13.					
y Officers'	Number of Informal Notices served.	9			50			02	4
(Sanitary	Number remedied after letter or interview.	n o	1-1	12 14	1-	1	61		53
, 1938.	Total.	4 260 18	00 02	12 15	53 33	T	63	1	351
ber 31st,	Number out- standing from previous year.	3 260 8	1	1	55			and the second s	292
ng December	Number of Defects or Contraventions of Bye-laws.	2 12 10	1-03	11 15	2 - C	1	63	1	83
ear endi	Number of Inspections Jaining year.	1 379 379 14 82	12 19	12 18	17 24	27. 22. 28. 28. 28. 28. 28. 28. 28. 28. 28	4	10 11 4 55	1407
Sanitary Inspector's Annual Report: Year ending	ALNWICK RURAL DISTRICT. Population, 12,140. Inspectors: O. M. Farrell, Chief. R. W. Sinclair, Assistant.	Housing.Structural defects (Summary Sheet II.)Defective Food-storeDampnessOvercrowdingNuisances	Water Supply.InsufficientUnsatisfactory	Drainage. Insufficient	Sanitary Conveniences. Insufficient	Shops, Food-stores, etc	Offensive Trades	Ashpits improperly used	Total

SHEET I.

SHEET 2.









