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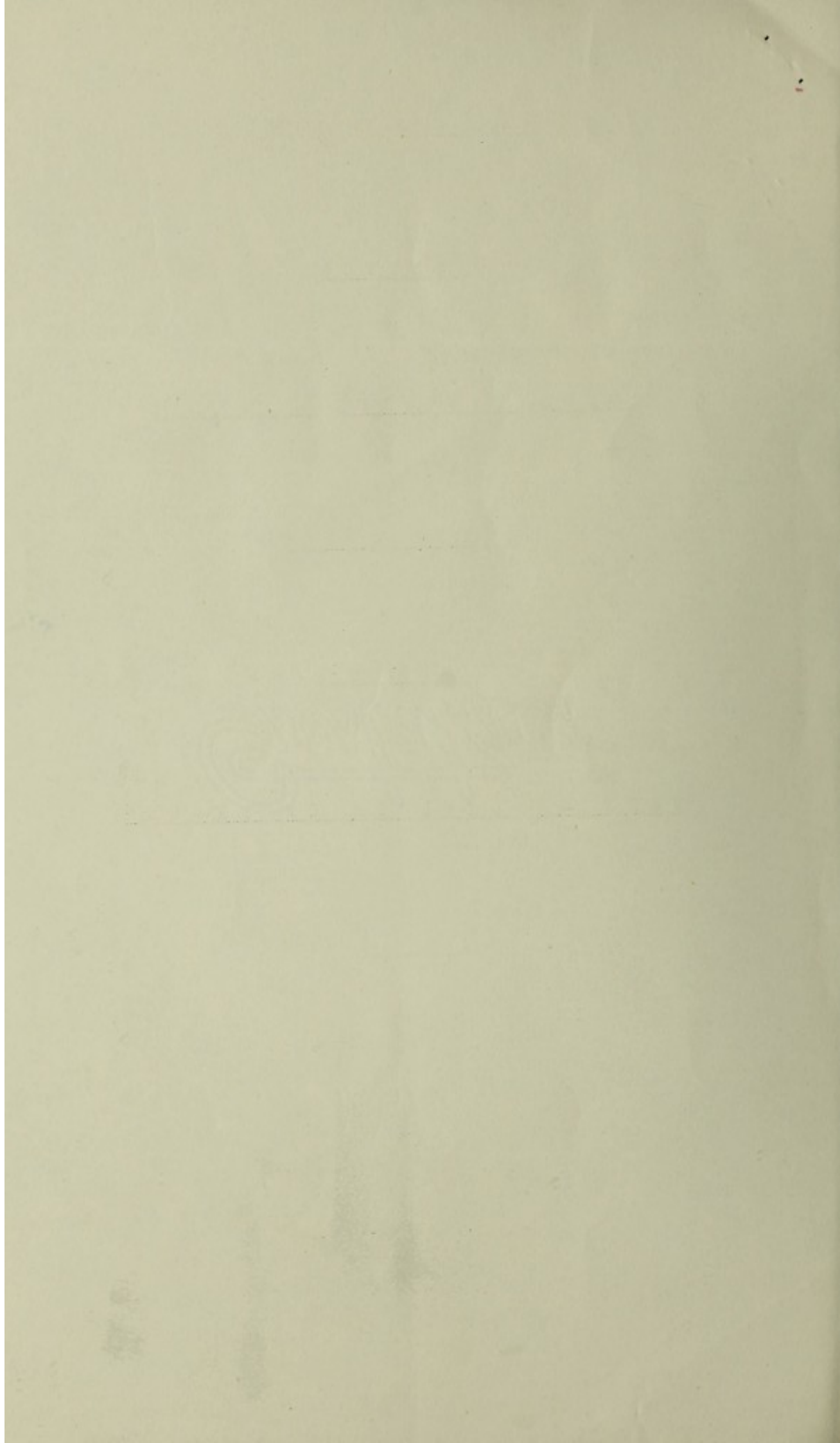
R E P O R T

O F T H E

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

1 9 5 1





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RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL OF ALNWICK

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

1 9 5 1

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Report for 1951 is on the lines of that for 1950.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

The area of the District remains at 92,946 acres.

The number of inhabited houses is 3,963. Thirty seven new houses were erected during the year, of which five were built by Private Enterprise and the remainder with State Assistance.

The Rateable Value is £50,609 and the sum represented by a penny rate is £207. 5. 11.

The Population is estimated at 11,920 and this figure is taken in calculating the Birth and Death Rates.

VITAL STATISTICS.

Births.

The number of live births - corrected for inward and outward transfers - was 179 of which 97 were males and 82 females. Three of the males and three of the females were illegitimate.

There were two Still Births - both legitimate.

Birth Rate	1951	-	15.0	per thousand	per annum
"	"		1950	-	16.2
"	"		1949	-	15.1

Birth Rate	1951	-	15.5	"	"	"	"
(England & Wales)							

Deaths.

The number of deaths - corrected for inward and outward transfers - was 160, of which 79 were males and 81 females.

Death Rate	1951	-	13.4	per thousand	per annum
"	"		1950	-	12.6
"	"		1949	-	12.9

Death Rate	1951	-	12.5	"	"	"	"
(England & Wales)							

Infantile Deaths.

The number of deaths in infants under one year of age was 5 (3 males and 2 females) one of the males being illegitimate.

Infantile Death Rate 1951 -	27.9	per thousand births.
" " " 1950 -	21.0	" " "
" " " 1949 -	55.8	" " "
Infantile Death Rate 1951 -	29.6	" " "
(England and Wales)		

Causes of Death at all Ages.

Pulmonary Tuberculosis.....	3	Pneumonia.....	7
Other Tubercular Diseases.....	1	Bronchitis.....	5
Cancer & Malignant Disease....	24	Other Respiratory Diseases	2
Diabetes.....	3	Gastric & Duodenal Ulcers	5
Vascular Disease of the		Nephritis.....	5
Nervous System.....	20	Prostatic Disease.....	2
Heart Disease.....	41	Accidents.....	7
Other Circulatory Diseases....	8	Other Diseases.....	14
Influenza.....	13		

Infectious Diseases.

The number of Infectious Diseases notified during the year was 135 as follows:-

Scarlet Fever.....	17	Pneumonia.....	2
Measles.....	103	Chicken-Pox.....	3
Whooping Cough.....	11	Pulmonary Tuberculosis....	6
Non-pulmonary Tuberculosis...	1		

No cases of Diphtheria or Infantile Paralysis were notified during the year. There was an epidemic of Influenza in January and a number of cases of Measles in the first quarter of the year.

LOCAL HEALTH SERVICES.

The Dental, Orthopaedic, Chest and Ante-natal Clinics situated in the Urban District are under the control of the County Council, as also are the Ambulance, Nursing and Home Helps Services. All these services are available for persons living in the Rural District, and appear to working quite satisfactorily. The Alnwick Infirmary and Fever Hospital are also available for the treatment of cases from the Rural District.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES.

Water Supply.

With the exception of the supply to Swarland, no serious shortage was experienced during the year as a result of drought conditions.

During alterations to the shaft at Shilbottle Colliery, and since, there have been dangers of interference with the quality of the water supply. Accordingly, temporary chlorination has been resorted to and weekly samples taken of the supply.

The Parish of Birling, formerly supplied with water from the Sturton Grange supply, was connected to the Warkworth Supply and the Sturton Grange Supply disconnected. Some 29 houses were involved in this change over.

An extension of main to supply the Decca Navigator Site at Low Buston was completed and an extension by a private owner to two houses at Boulmer Moor, enabled a well supply to be discontinued.

The Council approved proposals to instal a water softening plant at the Gallowmoor Borehole.

A Ministry of Health Inquiry was held in November, into proposals concerning the sinking of a borehole at Longframlington, and works to supply water to the western portion of this District. The Inspector's findings have not yet been published.

Water Samples.

Some 41 samples of water have been taken from the Shilbottle supply. These are not listed, but 33 samples contained no coliform organisms, and of the 8 samples which showed presence of *Bacillus Coli* 3 showed counts of 1, while the remaining 5 were clearly unsatisfactory.

The following is a list of other samples taken:-

<u>Location</u>	<u>Bacillus Coli</u>
1. Village Pant, Newton on the Moor.....	Nil.
2. Tap in School House, Newton on the Moor..	7
3. Tap opposite Reading Room, Newton/Moor...	35
4. Roadside trough, Old Swarland.....	Nil.
5. Alnmouth Village Supply.....	Nil.
6. Lesbury Supply.....	Nil.
7. Sturton Grange Supply.....	Nil.
8. Kirkwell Cottages, Hauxley.....	5
9. Gallowmoor Borehole.....	Nil.
10. Stamford Borehole.....	Nil.

SEWERAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

Another year has passed without any relief to the outstandingly unsatisfactory sewerage and sewage disposal systems in the District. The so called "Number One Priority" for renewals and improvements to the existing system at Togston is not any nearer fulfilment than it was twelve months ago.

Unsatisfactory reports continue to be received from the Northumberland Rivers Board regarding the Shilbottle Sewage Works.

Closet Accommodation.

In existing properties 43 new waterclosets have been installed. Abolition of 22 privy-middens, 11 pail closets and 10 ash closets has resulted from these new installations. In 31 cases the water closets were drained to septic tanks, used either individually or in combination with other properties. The remaining 12 were discharged to public sewers.

Of the 43 conversions to the water carriage system, 35 were carried out with the aid of a grant of £10. 0. 0. from the Council and four of the remainder were subject to a grant paid for improvement to houses under the Housing Act, 1949.

Public Scavenging.

After one year and nine months' experience with the Direct Labour Scavenging System, it continues to prove more efficient and cheaper overall, than did the Contract System. There have been a handful of complaints, compared with shoals under the Contract System, and this in itself has effected an unseen saving, namely on travelling expenses, which were formerly inflated through the inevitable "chasing-up" of certain Contractors.

Two small Parishes - Birling and Brotherwick - have been included in the Scavenging Scheme. In all, some 155 properties have newly been added to the collection schedule, while only 13 have been removed. It is of course obvious that such additions cannot go on in future without dislocation of the service or unless further labour and another vehicle are made available.

SANITARY INSPECTION.

Summary of Inspections & re-inspections	No. of Visits	No. of Informal Notices	No. of Defects remedied
Structural Defects (houses)	86	39	33
Dampness	19	10	6
Overcrowding	4	2	1
Drainage (defective)	27	9	17
Food Premises	15	2	2
Slaughterhouses	2	1	-
Tents, Vans, etc.	16	3	3
Factories	14	-	2
Insanitary Ashpits, etc.	37	21	34
Keeping of Animals	4	1	2
Offensive Accumulations	18	6	6
Totals	242	94	106

General Inspections	No. of Visits
Refuse Depots	24
Refuse Collection	8
Rodent Control	4
Fumigations	11
Public Convenience	4
Petrol Storage	7
New Drainage (inc. re-inspections)	34
Nuisances (actual and alleged)	50
Total	142

DISINFESTATION.

Disinfestations of houses infested with fleas and with bugs have been carried out. The infestation of bugs came to light when a local doctor was removing the plaster of Paris splint from the limb of a child, and found that a number of bugs had secreted themselves behind the splint.

DISINFECTION.

Fumigation of rooms, bedding, etc. after infectious disease was carried out directly by the Sanitary Inspector in 7 cases. It has not been necessary this year to arrange for any steam disinfection at centres outside the District.

Disinfection of County Library Books was carried out in 3 cases.

RODENT CONTROL.

The following is a summary of the Annual Report which has already been submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act, 1949:-

	<u>Local authority</u>	<u>TYPE OF PROPERTY</u>			<u>Total.</u>
		<u>Dwelling Houses.</u>	<u>Agric- ultural.</u>	<u>Business and Industrial. B.211)</u>	
Properties in District	29	3,333	841	Other 104) 315	4,518
" Inspected	29	124	2	42	197
" Found to be Rat Infested	18	108	2	4	132
" Found to be Mouse Infested	-	-	-	1	1
Block Control	10 treatments involving land & properties.				

As the progress of work is reported to the Council each month, it does not appear necessary to cover the same ground in this report.

FOOD INSPECTION.

The following are the totals of various foods surrendered and condemnation certificates were issued in all cases:-

Canned Goods.....50 cans
Bacon.....24 lbs.
Ham.....15 lbs.
Sugar.....1½ cwts.
Fish.....32 cwts. (Mussels)

No complaint has been received this year regarding the transport and handling of meat since the Ministry of Food commissioned a properly constructed van for the distribution of meat from the central slaughterhouse at Alnwick.

COWSHEDS AND DAIRIES.

There are 239 farms (excluding Smallholdings) in the District and of these the Milk Regulations Officer advises that 104 are registered for milk production. This is a decrease on last year, of 8, but there is no information as to the cause of the reduction.

There are 5 registered distributors supplying milk in the District.

ICE CREAM.

No ice cream is manufactured in this District, but during the year 5 new registrations were approved under Section 14 of the Food and Grugs Act, 1938. These were all in respect of premises from which ice cream is sold from refrigerator cabinets in pre-wrapped blocks manufactured outside the District.

A number of vans, mainly centred in the Urban Districts of Alnwick and Amble, sell loose ice cream in the Rural District.

It was at one of these vans that a complaint originated that a young girl suffering from "pink-eye" was serving ice cream. The allegation was investigated and it was found that although the girl had undoubtedly been suffering from eye trouble, it was not infectious. The owner of the van did, however, agree that the girl cease accompanying the van until the condition had been cleared.

FOOD PREMISES.

A complete and thorough inspection was made at 15 food premises during the year, including a factory for the preparation and pickling of mussels in Swarland, which had been transferred from premises at Hauxley.

New catering establishments at Alnmouth and Craster were commenced during the year.

HOUSING.

The Council completed the building of 32 permanent houses during the year and 5 new houses were completed on behalf of private owners.

During the same period 11 dwellings were demolished. Three of these were temporary dwellings in the Council's control and two were demolished by the Council after the owner had defaulted in doing so. The remainder were demolished by owners where Clearance Orders had been operative since before the War.

In conjunction with the survey for sewerage and sewage disposal, the following provisional categorisations under the Rural Housing Survey have been made:-

	<u>CATEGORY</u>				
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Craster Parish	18	27	15	2	30
Dunstan Parish	12	8	45	2	10
Eglington Parish	-	6	14	24	5
	30	41	74	28	45

The following is a re-statement of the meaning of the categorisations:-

1. Satisfactory in all respects.
2. Minor Defects.
3. Requiring Repair, structural alteration and improvement.
4. Appropriate for reconditioning.
5. Unfit for habitation and beyond repair at reasonable expense.

Under the Housing Act, 1949, 4 applications for an improvement grant were received by the Council. Of these, 1 was rejected by the Council and 3 were forwarded to the Ministry and approval recommended. The Ministry approved 1 of these and rejected 1, while the third was withdrawn by the applicant concerned.

It is felt that, up to date at least, this Act has not been taken advantage of, as was its former counterpart, the Housing (Rural Workers) Act, for one outstanding reason. Owners are apparently reluctant to have agricultural houses "untied".

FACTORIES.

There are 51 factories on the register. Of these 20 are "non-power" factories and 31 are factories in which mechanical power is used. A total of 19 inspections have been made during the year, but apart from requiring cleansing of closet accommodation and some other minor faults, no action, other than verbal notification, has been required.

One factory has been inspected for adequacy of means of escape in case of fire and a certificate approving these arrangements has been authorised by the Council.

(Signed) B. TREVOR-ROPER,

Medical Officer of Health.

