

[Report 1943] / Medical Officer of Health, Alton U.D.C.

Contributors

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URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL OF ALTON.

Council Offices,
Alton, Hants.

Gentlemen,

I beg to submit the Annual Report for 1943.

The health of the town has been well maintained and, apart from a mild and brief epidemic of influenza, infectious diseases were unusually few.

Water Supply from the Council's own well and works is sufficient for all needs and when recently tested for quantity gave satisfactory results. The water, coming from the chalk, is hard but pure and has no plumbo-solvent action. The water is chlorinated and a constant supply is maintained.

Of the area supplied Alton and Holybourne have only a few outlying farms and cottages not on the mains, but Beech is without a piped supply. These outlying areas are dependent on rain water tanks and wells both of which run dry after spells of drought. There is a piped supply to about 90% of the houses in the district.

Sewage Works continue to work efficiently and produce a fair effluent.

Deaths during the year were 93 - 42 males and 51 females and again were mostly due to the diseases of advancing years, i.e. Cancer 13. Circulatory failure 35. Cerebro-vascular changes 12 and Old age 4. Of the deaths 22 occurred at ages between 70 and 80 and 16 at over 80. There were four deaths of infants under one year, 2 due to Spina Bifida, one to Inter cranial haemorrhage and one to convulsions.

Of the other causes of death Acromegaly Epilepsy, Diabetes and Pulmonary Tuberculosis produced one each. Two civilians and one non-civilian were killed in road accidents.

Infectious Diseases. Pulmonary Tuberculosis which showed the usual rise in the early years of the war has now apparently returned to normal. The notifications are as below :-

Year	1938.	1939.	1940.	1941.	1942.	1943.
Notification	4	5	9	11	7	5

Measles with 149 notifications and whooping cough with 44 are higher than last year.

Scarlet Fever with 14 is lower. No cases of Diphtheria occurred amongst the civilian population but one was reported of a non-civilian.

Other cases of infectious disease include Pneumonia 8. Erysipelas 4 and Cerebro-Spinal Fever 1.

Diphtheria Immunisation was carried out on 443 children. All schools were visited for this purpose and thoroughly combed for children who had escaped immunisation or needed its renewal. Of this total pre-school children (age 1 - 5) account for 115 which is satisfactory as it is greater than the increase of this class by births.

(OVER)

Births. The number registered was 105 - 49 Boys and 56 girls. Two of the girls were illegitimate.

Scabies. Scattered cases still occur and the source of infection can rarely be traced; on the whole the town is freer than in previous years and the cessation of stoving of blankets etc. has had no ill effects in causing recurrences and is a considerable economy. When cases occur an effort is made to have the whole household treated, as contacts may not show the disease for a lengthy period and in the past doubtless accounted for many apparent recurrences.

Welfare and Cleanliness and infestation of heads with lice in children is dealt with mostly by the School Nurse, who informs me that these are improved but there are a few households who are persistent offenders. She is of opinion that the new Lethane Oil preparations are not particularly effective in the hands of the parents, probably because they will not take the trouble to apply properly. There was an outbreak of lice in heads in a factory for which I arranged treatment, some twenty women being involved.

Veneral Disease. Lectures were given in a factory and at the Assembly Rooms by the Central Council for Health Education. There have been no cases under Regulation 33 B.

Housing of Working Classes etc. Alton unfortunately has a number of aged cottages mostly without damp courses etc. These houses require many repairs to keep them in habitable condition.

Housing Inspections.

Number of houses inspected for defects and in consequence of defects	24.
Number of above found to be unfit for habitation	11.
Number of houses rendered fit as a consequence of informal action	11.

Camping Sites. One case of encampment on an unlicensed site was attended to. Attention was paid as necessary to one licenced camping site, while a licence was granted during the year for a site on which to install a caravan for health reasons.

Bats. A survey of properties under the Infestation Order 1943 is in progress. This survey was almost complete at the end of the year and disclosed that major infestation of premises in the Urban District was very small. The cases found are being dealt with.

Milk Supply. Regular inspections have been made during the year of cowsheds, dairies and milk stores. Two notices to cleanse and carry out repairs to cowsheds and dairies have been complied with.

Slaughterhouses and Condemned Food. Regular visits by the Sanitary Inspector are made to the two Ministry Slaughterhouses in the district and periodical visits to food shops. All condemned food is as far as possible disposed of to authorised waste product merchants, or under supervision to local pig and poultry keepers, the small quantity not suitable for disposal in this way being destroyed at the Sewage Disposal Works. Every effort is thus made to avoid the destruction of food where possible consistent with public health.

I am, Sirs,

Your obedient Servant,

R.J. WILLSON. M.B., B.C., D.P.H.

Medical Officer of Health,

Alton Urban District Council.

5th May, 1944.