

[Report 1973] / Medical Officer of Health, Axbridge R.D.C.

Contributors

Axbridge (Somerset, England). Rural District Council.

Publication/Creation

1973

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AXBRIDGE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT
=====

of the

CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR
=====

1973

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS :-

Dr. B. I. DENNIS

M.B., B.S.,
Acting Medical Officer of Health,
Somerset House, Oxford Street,
Weston-super-Mare.

R. T. BARRON

M.A.P.H.I.,
Chief Public Health Inspector.
Certificate of R.San.A. (Scot.)
Certificate of R.S.H. for Inspectors
of Meat and other Foods.

M. E. NORTHCOMBE

M.A.P.H.I.,
Deputy Chief Public Health Inspector.
Certificate of R.San.I./S.I.E.J.B.
Certificate of R.S.H. for Inspectors
of Meat and other Foods.

D. GRANTLEY SMITH

M.A.P.H.I.,
District Public Health Inspector.
Certificate of R.San.I./S.I.E.J.B.

G. F. SHARP

M.A.P.H.I.,
District Public Health Inspector.
Diploma qualifying for appointment as
a Public Health Inspector and
Inspector of Meat and other Foods.

J. S. S. STRONG

Technical Assistant.

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

1917

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS :

Dr. A. I. LEWIS

M.S., B.S.,

Acting Medical Officer of Health

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M. K. WELLS

M.A.P.H.I.,

Deputy Chief Public Health Inspector

Certificate of W.S.M.I., B.S.P.H.

Certificate of W.S.M.I. for Inspectors

of Meat and other Foods.

D. GRANTLEY SMITH

M.A.P.H.I.,

Assistant Public Health Inspector

Certificate of W.S.M.I., B.S.P.H.

G. F. SWAN

M.A.P.H.I.,

Assistant Public Health Inspector

Highly qualified for appointment as

a Public Health Inspector and

Inspector of Meat and other Foods.

Technical Assistant.

J. S. S. STONE

of the

CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

1973

To: The CHAIRMAN and MEMBERS of the
AXBRIDGE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit the Annual Report for the Year 1973. It being the last occasion on which this will be done, I have included extracts from previous Annual Reports of the Department's work which I trust will be of interest and serve to indicate the changing emphasis and improving standards throughout 80 years of environmental health control.

HOUSING

Progress continues to be made in dealing with sub-standard houses, but if the Government's objective of the elimination of all unfit houses within 10 years is to be achieved, whilst in the same period every family is to have available all the standard amenities, then an accelerated programme must be a first consideration for the new District Councils.

The number of Improvement Grant enquiries did not diminish, and during the year 60 applications were approved for works to full discretionary grant standard, and 10 approved for the installation of standard amenities.

During the year, 34 houses were made fit, defects remedied in 44, 4 were closed and 2 demolished.

5 applications for Qualification Certificates were received and 3 were granted.

"There is no doubt that new cottages are required for the working classes, but care will have to be taken that such be for them only and not for town people who like to have a little cottage in the country for week-end visits" (1913).

"There are scores of unfit cottages in occupation, and it is not only a waste of time and materials to patch up many of them, but it is unwise from a health point of view to extend the life of these hovels which, while they barely give shelter, breed T.B. and other diseases and undermine the general health of the occupants" (1923).

"The position as regards overcrowding is also extremely serious, resulting in lowering the vitality of its victims and piling up an enormous burden for the State in the future" (1923).

"It is essential that existing houses be kept waterproof and habitable, as every house so restored saves the erection of a new house costing nearly £350" (1929).

CARAVANS and CAMPING

At the height of the holiday season the caravan parks and camping sites now accommodate up to 17,000 people, a very significant increase in the population of the District.

There are 63 licensed static holiday caravan sites and 12 licensed transit sites. 35 caravan sites are subject to exemption certificates, whilst of the tented sites 8 are licensed and 39 unlicensed.

The number of residential caravans on licensed sites is now 476, housing 796 adults and 115 children. These figures compare with 322 residential caravans ten years ago, 125 twenty years ago, and 72 when they were first recorded, with the comment :

"this type of camping appears to have become a permanent feature of our national life" (1951).

"The realisation by town-dwellers that the countryside can provide a cheap and healthy holiday has produced problems for Rural Districts who, whilst not discouraging such means for obtaining recreation, must prevent abuses which may be to the permanent disadvantage of their areas" (1932).

"The tendency to proceed with the surreptitious erection of hutments and other forms of sub-standard temporary buildings was not as evident as formerly, and it is hoped to prevent the further establishment of railway carriages, bus and tram bodies as holiday dwellings. It is unlikely that many more of the horse-drawn type of caravan will be constructed" (1937).

FOOD CONTROL

Routine inspections of all types of food premises were carried out during the year with a view to continued improvement in the standards of storage, display and food-handling.

There was a satisfactory response to the informal approach of the Inspectors, and no statutory proceedings were instituted.

"Standards are constantly improving, the Sanitary Inspector and his Assistant being most tactful and successful" (1923).

"All too often, when asking for adequate facilities for hand-washing to be provided, one is met with a blank look or even open hostility and the question 'why'?" (1948).

Particulars of the various types of food premises in the District are given below:-

Food Premises in Area (excluding registered dairy premises)

No. of Premises

A. Food Manufacturing Premises

Edible Fat Refinery	1
Cheese Straw Factory	1
Cheese Factory	1
Bakers	7
Pickle Factory	1

Food Premises in Area
(excluding registered
dairy premises)

No. of
Premises

B. Wholesalers

Greengrocers	3
Dairy Produce	4
Grocers	2
Cheese Depot	2
Confectioners	1

C. Retail Shops

Grocers	116
Confectioners	60
Butchers	24
Fishmongers & Greengrocers (combined)	3
Greengrocers	31
Dairies	2

D. Catering Premises (including School
Meals and Licensed Premises)

208

E. Premises registered under the provisions
of Section 16 of the Food & Drugs Act,
1955 (excluding premises used for the
Manufacture, Storage and Sale of Ice Cream

Sausage making	12
Fish Frying	10

UN SOUND FOOD

There was a marked increase in the number of complaints relating to foods, many unfortunately still associated with careless stock rotation and lack of knowledge on the part of retailers concerning the time/temperature factors governing satisfactory storage of perishable foods. Much time was spent by the Inspectors in educating shops' staffs as to their responsibilities towards the public in these matters.

In those instances in which food manufacturers became involved, we received active co-operation in our investigations.

Unsound food surrendered for safe disposal is listed below, the bulk of the canned and other foods being goods found damaged on delivery to the large wholesale grocery depot in the District. The increased amount of frozen food surrendered is, in part, attributable to more frequent breakdown of cabinets reaching the end of their effective life :

Canned Foods	-	1 cwt.	50 lbs.
Canned Meats	-	1 cwt.	40 lbs.
Other Foods	-	7 cwts.	54 lbs.
Frozen Foods	-	14 cwts.	17 lbs.
Meat at Retail premises	-	-	111 lbs.

"17 tins of food were seized or surrendered" (1929).

MEAT

The 2 private Slaughter-houses in the District continued in operation and necessary structural repairs and re-decoration were achieved. All food animals killed were inspected by Public Health Inspectors for fitness for human consumption, and the following table gives details:-

	Cattle excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep	Pigs
Number killed	107	-	-	381	226
Number inspected	107	-	-	381	226
<u>All diseases:</u>					
Whole carcasses condemned	-	-	-	-	-
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	12	-	-	7	15
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease	11.2%	-	-	1.8%	6.6%
Weight of meat condemned (in lbs.)	83	-	-	34	61

"Certain of the 29 Slaughter-houses are used very little, and a better control might be exercised if Butchers made arrangements for killing to be done co-operatively thus allowing some premises to be closed. It is noticeable that declarations of disease in animals come from certain butchers only, and the inference is that those who fail to give notice use the privilege of having a private slaughter-house to conceal evidence of disease" (1929).

MILK and ICE CREAM

There are 5 registered Dairies and 119 premises registered for the distribution of Milk.

Ice Cream sales take place from 191 registered premises.

"Dairying is the chief industry of the District, cows and cowsheds being kept fairly clean though hardly up to the Continental standard. The milk is excellent in quality, and I often personally test this by drinking it during my numerous inspections" (1913).

"As regards methods, buildings and sanitation, there is much room for improvement. Opinion has been forced on me that many of the difficulties put forward are an excuse for what is nothing more than apathy" (1920).

"There is a small percentage of indifferent producers who seem unable to understand their obligation to the public, whose standard is the lowest possible, and whose sole aim appears to be to obtain gallonage, the quality or cleanliness of the milk being matters over which they concern themselves very little" (1929).

"Churns should not be left out in the fields, or washed in ditch water" (1932).

WATER

Each of the sources of chlorinated mains supply to the District was regularly examined for bacterial purity and all were satisfactory.

We co-operated with the Analyst in the County-wide survey of domestic water supplies possibly subject to metallic contamination from their own service pipes, and 26 samples were taken at selected properties. In the 2 cases where levels in excess of the prescribed minimum were recorded, the services were renewed by the owners.

7 samples of water were taken for bacteriological examination from premises not receiving a supply from the public mains and none of these samples proved to be unsatisfactory.

"Some of the inhabitants of Lympsham have to send 3 miles for their drinking water" (1894).

"Shipham has again been short of water at times, the district being an increasing one, largely residential, and using much water for baths, etc." (1913).

"Of 12 samples of water taken at Allerton, 11 were bad and 1 unsatisfactory" (1916).

"The South Marsh system has been extended and a supply for Allerton is now available, but its parishioners are at present averse to taking a supply from the mains" (1932).

DRAINAGE

Schemes now completed and proposals in hand will result in all except 3 Parishes in the District being at least partly sewered, although many properties will continue to have to rely on septic tank systems.

"The complete extension scheme will place Cheddar in the position of being one of the best if not the best sewered villages in the West of England" (1923).

"Cheddar, Axbridge and Wrington have sewer systems, but for the most part privies and cesspits are in general use and often overflow into an adjacent ditch. The streams and rhynes are the main drainage of the district although efforts are being made to supplant privies with earth closets, and in some places W.C's are in use" (1929).

"The Council has been very progressive in providing water supplies, but this action has resulted in larger usage of water and greater reliance on water courses and ditches for the disposal of filthy water, so that in general there are more nuisances arising in the district from such effluents than from other sources" (1935).

REFUSE COLLECTION and DISPOSAL

Disposal of ordinary household refuse continued on the controlled tip at Axbridge, whilst bulky refuse was tipped in Banwell Quarry.

It might be expected that the availability of these free services would remove the inclination of some people to deposit their rubbish in public places, but it was our regular task in lane and lay-by to clear these dumps which despoil the countryside.

The Department operates a fleet of 8 refuse vehicles and in the latter part of the year the collection routes were altered to take account of the new County boundaries. The servicing and maintenance of all the Council's vehicles was also rationalised and based on the Moorland Street Depot.

"House refuse is removed by the individual householder and the cesspits emptied periodically in the same manner. It is desirable that the village dumps containing sundry old tins and other refuse be regularly removed" (1923).

"Orders investing the Council with powers for removal of household refuse have been applied for in respect of Cheddar and Winscombe" (1929).

"A refuse collection scheme for 15 parishes in the North Marsh was initiated utilising the new 10 cubic yard covered vehicle to give a fortnightly service" (1939).

"The total collapse in the demand for salvaged bottles and jars, etc. was unexpected, but it is apparently now more economical to manufacture new glassware than to collect, sort, wash, sterilise and return to circulation the used article" (1948).

"It is disheartening to stand on the refuse tip and see masses of paper which could have been burned, vegetable matter which could have been composted or fed to pigs and chickens, also cinders which could have been sifted from ash to supplement our scarce fuel supplies. If all householders put out only bottles, tins and ashes, the amount of refuse to be collected would fall by one third" (1953).

CIVIL AMENITIES ACT

A contractor operating a car-breaking business from part of Banwell Quarry removes and disposes of cars abandoned in the District. 23 vehicles were dealt with in this way, but the legal formalities associated with actual abandonment and the tracing of owners tend to make this a long drawn out procedure.

CLEAN AIR ACT

2 applications for the approval of chimney heights were dealt with.

The possible pollution problems associated with the new Battscombe Quarry lime-burning project were reviewed in consultation with H.M. Alkali Inspectorate, the County Council and the firm itself. The modern kiln, with electrostatic precipitators, plus improved dust suppression in the new stone-handling equipment, could well result in a lower total dust escape from the Quarry activities, and 4 monitoring stations have already been set up to record background precipitation levels as a basis for comparison later.

There were 5 complaints of smoke arising from the burning of trade refuse, but in only 2 instances was sufficient evidence obtained to

enable the Department to proceed to a satisfactory conclusion, albeit informally.

Stubble burning and garden bonfires have reached the proportions where improved legislation is now needed to give a greater measure of control.

NOISE ABATEMENT ACT

5 complaints of noise nuisance were received during the year, 3 being confirmed and remedied following informal action.

The alleged nuisances ranged from compressors and heavy lorries to funfairs and pop groups, whilst the barking of dogs at boarding establishments was again the subject of complaint. Legislation at present available to Councils is unfortunately not designed to secure the "instant silence" often expected by distraught complainants, but recent Ministerial advice to Planning Authorities points to much greater consultation in future on siting and perimeter sound levels in all cases of proposed development with noise potential.

RODENT CONTROL

In addition to dealing with complaints survey work continued, with farm and business premises, etc. being inspected as possible sources of infestation and block treatments carried out where appropriate. The national trend towards an increasing number of mice infestations was also evident in this area, and there was the suggestion of Warfarin resistance, probably brought about by the comparatively small food intake of these rodents.

	<u>NON</u> <u>AGRICULTURAL</u>	<u>AGRICULTURAL</u>
A. Total number of premises (including nearby properties) inspected following notifications	610	31
Number infested by (1) Rats	220	31
(2) Mice	54	21
B. Total number of properties inspected for rats and mice for reason other than notification	450	161
Number infested by (1) Rats	100	58
(2) Mice	51	20
C. Number of sewage systems test baited	22	
Number of sewerage systems needing treatment and treated for rat infestation	1	
D. Number of Council owned properties (excluding Council houses) treated for rat infestation	10	

Number of treatments of Council owned properties for rat infestation

19

E. Number of premises treated by Council's rodent operator :

(a) For rat infestation	312	19
(b) For rat and mouse infestation	12	16
(c) For mouse infestation	62	4

OFFICES, SHOPS & RAILWAY PREMISES
ACT, 1963

The following is a copy of the report submitted to the Minister of Labour for the year ending 31st December, 1973:-

A. Registration and General Inspections

Class of Premises	No. of premises registered during Year	Total No. of registered premises at end of Year	No. of registered premises receiving general inspections during Year
Offices	3	76	30
Retail Shops	4	136	96
Wholesale Shops, Warehouses	-	9	7
Catering establishments open to the public, Canteens	2	55	45
Fuel Storage Depots	-	-	-
TOTALS:	9	276	178

B. Number of Visits of all kinds by Inspectors to Registered Premises 204

C. Analysis of persons employed in Registered Premises by Workplace

Offices	...	590
Retail Shops	...	335
Wholesale Departments, Warehouses	...	57
Catering establishments open to the public	256
Canteens	...	19
Fuel Storage Depots	...	-
TOTAL:	1,257) Males: 529) Females: 728

D. Exemption (relating to all classes of premises)
Space, Temperature, Sanitary Conveniences,
Washing Facilities

No. of exemptions current at 31.12.73	Nil
No. of exemptions granted or extended during year	Nil
No. of applications refused or exemptions withdrawn during year	Nil
No. of cases where employees opposed application	Nil
No. of Appeals to Court made	Nil
No. of Appeals to Court allowed	Nil

E. Prosecutions

Prosecutions instituted of which the hearing was completed in the year	Nil
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F. Number of Inspectors appointed under Section 52(1) or (5) of the Act

4

Number of other Staff employed for most of their time on work in connection with the Act

Nil

ACCIDENTS

All 6 accidents notified during the year were of a minor nature, 2 being investigated and informal advice given.

FACTORIES ACT

Prescribed particulars on the Administration of the Factories Act, 1961

Part I of the Act

1. INSPECTIONS for purpose of provisions of health

<u>Premises</u>	<u>Number on Register</u>	<u>Number of :</u>	
		<u>Inspections</u>	<u>Written Notices</u>
(i) Factories in which sections 1, 2, 3, 4 & 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	3	1	-
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	90	47	-
(iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding Outworkers' Premises)	5	2	-
TOTALS:	98	50	-

2. Cases in which DEFECTS were found

Number of cases in which defects were found

	<u>Found</u>	<u>Remedied</u>	<u>Referred:</u>	
			<u>To H.M.</u>	<u>By H.M.</u>
Want of Cleanliness (S1)				
Overcrowding (S2)				
Unreasonable temperature (S3)				
Inadequate ventilation (S4)				
Ineffective drainage of floors (S6)				
Sanitary Conveniences (S7)				
(a) Insufficient	1	1	-	1
(b) Unsuitable or defective	1	1	-	-
(c) Not separate for sexes	-	-	-	-
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Outwork)				
TOTALS:	2	2	-	1

PART VIII of the Act (outwork Sections 133 & 134)

	No. of out- workers in August list required by Sec.133(i)(Ic)	No. of cases of default in sending lists to the Council	No. of prose- cutions for failure to supply lists	No. of instances of work in un- wholesome premises
Corn Dollies	6	-	-	-
Wig making	1	-	-	-
Dressing Dolls	13	-	-	-
Glove making	1	-	-	-
False Eyelashes	3	-	-	-
All other	-	-	-	-
Classifications				
TOTALS:	24	-	-	-

SUMMARY OF WORK CARRIED OUT BY OR UNDER
THE SUPERVISION OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTORS

Number of visits paid in connection with :

Improvement Grants	1,330
Housing Survey, repairs etc.	450
Refuse Collection service	220
Infested premises	30
Caravan and Camping Sites	502
Food premises and catering establishments	905
Ice-Cream premises	16
Milk and Dairies	43
Water Supplies	34
Swimming Baths	70
Infectious diseases and food poisoning	40
Nuisances and complaints	666
Drainage systems	106
Swill-boiling plants	32
Abandoned Cars	58
Total no. of inspections and re-inspections carried out	4,756

I would like to thank the Chairman and Members of the Council for their support, and the Medical Officer of Health and the other Chief Officers for their assistance and co-operation.

"The progressive policy of the Council and the requirements of new legislation render the duties of the various Committees and the officers more onerous and exacting in each succeeding year. The results achieved, however, fully justify the efforts" (1936).

I echo these sentiments of a predecessor of mine and in conclusion wish to record my appreciation of the work of all the staff in the Public Health Department during a year in which the increasing pressures associated with Local Government Re-organisation could have affected our service to the public.

I remain,
Your obedient servant,

R. T. BARRON

Chief Public Health Inspector.

I would like to thank the Chairman and Members of the Council for their support and the Medical Officers of Health and the other Officers for their assistance and co-operation.

The progressive policy of the Council and the requirements of new legislation under the Public Health Act, 1936, and the various Committees and the Officers have worked and executed in each succeeding year. The results achieved, however, fully justify the efforts made.

I am sure that the appreciation of the work of all the staff in the Public Health Department during a year in which the increasing pressures associated with local government re-organization could have affected our service to the public.

I remain,
Your obedient servant,
R. T. BARNES

Chief Public Health Inspector.

1936

Item	1935	1936
Salaries	1000	1100
Grants	500	550
Expenses	200	220
Other	100	110
Total	1800	1980

Summary of the work done during the year 1936

Item	1935	1936
Deaths	100	110
Births	200	210
Marriages	50	55
Divorces	20	22
Adoptions	10	12
Other	10	11
Total	490	500