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WELSH BOARD  
14 AUG 1957  
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BRECON BOROUGH COUNCIL  
REPORT  
of the  
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH  
for the year 1956.

Officials.

Medical Officer of Health.....T.C.R.George, M.R.C.S.,  
L.R.C.P.,  
D.P.H.,

Public Health Inspector.....S.Jinks,

Sanitary Inspector's  
Certificate of the Royal Sanitary Institute and Sanitary Inspector's  
Examination Joint Board; Meat and Other Foods Certificate of the  
Royal Sanitary Institute; Testamur of the Cardiff Technical College.



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Brecon Borough Council

Report of the Medical Officer of Health

1956

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I beg to submit my annual report on the sanitary conditions and the state of the public health in the Borough of Brecon during the year 1956.

In this report I have endeavoured to deal briefly with all matters within my responsibility regarding public health and preventive medicine and I have included comments on all subjects specifically requested in Circular 19/56(Wales) by the Welsh Board of Health.

Section 1. General and Vital Statistics.

Area. 2868 acres. The Borough of Brecon, which has an area of 2868 acres, is a county town of a shire of its own name, containing the County Offices of various government departments and a large military camp and Barracks. The town consists of the parishes of St. Johns' and St. Marys' on the north side of the river Usk, these parishes being divided by the Honddu stream; and of the parish known as St. Davids' Within and also, more familiarly, as Llanfaes, which lies south of the river Usk and eastward of the confluence of the Tarrell stream with that river.

The two parts of the town are connected by an ancient stone bridge over the Usk while to the south is the new National Park, the Brecknock Beacons and surrounding countryside.

The town is agricultural in nature and farming is the predominant occupation in the surrounding countryside.

<u>Population.</u>	Census 1931.....	5332
	Census 1951.....	6466
	Estimated mid summer 1956.....	6190

The Registrar General's estimates for the last ten years are shown below.

1947. 1948. 1949. 1950. 1951. 1952. 1953. 1954. 1955. 1956.

5515. 5627. 5658. 6562. 6593. 6671. 5933. 6150. 6180. 6190.

The population increased between the two last census years and since then there has been no significant change.

Inhabited houses. The number of inhabited houses was 1697 giving an average per house of 3.6 persons.

<u>Live Births.</u>	<u>Males.</u>	<u>Females.</u>	<u>Total.</u>	<u>Rate per 1000 Pop.</u>
Legitimate	47	41	88	
Illegitimate	1	1	2	
	48	42	90	14.5

The corresponding rate for the whole of England and Wales was 15.7. The district rate was therefore lower than the national average and also lower than the district deathrate.

Illegitimacy. Two illegitimate births were registered during the year.

<u>Still Births.</u>	<u>Males.</u>	<u>Females.</u>	<u>Total.</u>	<u>Rate per 1000 live&amp;still births</u>
	1.	0.	1.	9.9

The corresponding rate for the whole of England and Wales was 23.0. The district rate was therefore lower than the national average.

<u>Deaths.</u>	<u>Males.</u>	<u>Females.</u>	<u>Total.</u>	<u>Rate per 1000 Pop.</u>
	53	40	93	15.0

The corresponding rate for the whole of England and Wales was 11.7  
The district rate was therefore higher than the national average and  
also higher than the district birthrate.

Maternal Deaths. No deaths occurred during the year which could be  
attributed to childbirth.

Infantile Mortality. This is the deathrate occurring in children of  
under one year of age.

<u>Males.</u>	<u>Females.</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Rate per 1000 live births.</u>
2.	2.	4.	40.

The corresponding rate for the whole of England and Wales was 23.8.  
The district rate was therefore higher than the national average. Three  
of these deaths occurred when the child was under 4 weeks of age.

Deaths from Special Causes.

Infectious disease.....	Nil.
Respiratory tuberculosis.....	Two.
Other forms tuberculosis.....	Nil.
Cancer.....	19.

Analysis of Causes of Deaths. Males.....53. Females.....40.

	<u>Males.</u>	<u>Females.</u>
Respiratory tuberculosis.....	2.	0.
Malignant neoplasms, stomach.....	2.	2.
Malignant neoplasms, lung.....	4.	0.
Malignant neoplasm, breast.....	0.	2.
Other malignant neoplasms.....	9.	0.
Leukaemia.....	0.	2.
Diabetes.....	0.	1.
Vascular lesions of nervous system.....	3.	8.
Coronary disease.....	8.	3.
Hypertension with heart disease.....	0.	1.
Other heart disease.....	16.	14.
Other circulatory disease.....	2.	0.
Pneumonia.....	1.	1.
Bronchitis.....	3.	0.
Gastritis.....	0.	1.
Nephritis.....	0.	1.
Hyperplasia of prostate.....	1.	0.
Congenital malformations.....	0.	2.
Other causes.....	2.	0.
Accidents, non motor vehicle.....	0.	1.
Suicide.....	0.	1.

The deaths are classified under the headings given in the New Abridged  
List of causes of deaths.

The following table shows the number of deaths from tuberculosis and  
cancer in recent years.

	<u>Cancer</u>	<u>Tuberculosis</u>
1947.....	5.	1.
1948.....	7.	6.
1949.....	15.	5.
1950.....	5.	3.
1951.....	10.	3.
1952.....	14.	1.
1953.....	14.	0.
1954.....	12.	0.
1955.....	15.	2.
1956.....	19.	2.

Section 2. General Provisions of Health Services.

Public Health Officers. There was no change in the public health officers of the Council during the year. Mr. S. Jinks remained as your Public Health Inspector.

Laboratory Facilities. During the year laboratory facilities were available at Cardiff, Carmarthen, Swansea, Aberystwyth and Brecon. All water samples were sent to the Cardiff Laboratory and any investigation required in the control of infectious disease was also performed by the Public Health Laboratory at Cardiff. Milk sampling was performed by the Cardiff Laboratory, whilst the Brecon War Memorial Hospital made use of the Beck Laboratory, Swansea. The Cardiff Laboratory was used for the examination of milk for the presence of tuberculosis.

Nursing and other facilities. The County Council is responsible for the provision of the ambulance and home nursing services. The County also administers the maternity and child welfare clinics where treatment is obtainable for minor ailments, dental, eye and orthopaedic defects. Immunisation against diphtheria and whooping cough is also carried out at these clinics.

Hospitals. The hospital needs of the residents of the Borough, for all diseases apart from infectious disease, are provided by the Brecon War Memorial Hospital. There is also the St. David's Hospital which deals with cases of chronic illness.

The arrangements for the treatment of infectious disease remains the same as in previous years. Merthyr Borough Council treat the patients from the Borough suffering from infectious disease and these are conveyed to Merthyr in ambulances maintained by Merthyr Borough Council. These arrangements are proving extremely satisfactory.

For the treatment of cases of smallpox, arrangements have been made by the Welsh Board of Health for beds to be available at the Penrhys Hospital, Rhondda.

Disinfection. In the main the methods used for any disinfection required have been fumigation and spraying.

Section 3. Sanitary Circumstances.

Water Supply. The Brecon Borough water supply is taken from a stream which originates on the Brecon Beacons. It is then conveyed to a large storage reservoir and then through slow sand filters to a small clear water chamber. After this the water is chlorinated.

(a) Quantity. The reservoir holds approximately 2,375,000 gallons and the average daily consumption is 370,000 gallons of which 270,000 gallons was for domestic consumption, representing an approximate consumption of 44 gallons per head per day.

Normally the water supply is fairly adequate but no pumping was necessary during the year although some difficulty is always experienced in supplying the upper reaches.

(b) Quality. The results of water samples taken during the year have indicated that, whilst the final water after chlorination and as consumed in the Borough could be classified as excellent, the water before treatment could only be regarded as unsatisfactory. It is essential that the depth of sand in the filters should not be allowed to drop below a minimum of 12 inches.

Chemical Examination. 4 chemical examinations of the water were made, there is no plumbo solvent action by the water and it is of the highest degree of organic purity.

(c) Piped Supply. All the houses in the Borough, with the exception of 17 of those on the extreme borders have a tapped supply to the house. The 17 others have their own private supplies.

(d) New Scheme. The Borough Council have agreed to take a bulk supply of water from the Brecknock R.D.C. to augment their existing supplies particularly for the higher districts of the Borough. The Council have received the Minister's Authority to this supply and the necessary installation work will commence early in 1957 and is estimated will be completed by the end of the year.

Drainage and Sewerage. The sewage in the Borough is treated by downward filtration and the effluent finally passes into the River Usk. The effluent is unsatisfactory and the Council have now instructed a Consulting Engineer to prepare plans and details of a new sewage works.

Number of visits made by Public Health Inspector in connection with drainage work.....133.

Closet Accommodation. The number of houses within the Borough unconnected with the sewage system was 31.

Provision of Separate Water Closet Accommodation.

Number of houses requiring provision of separate water closet accommodation.....2.

Public Cleansing. There was no change in the methods adopted for the weekly collection and disposal of house refuse; this work being done by the Council employees under the supervision of your Surveyor. The refuse is disposed of by tipping.

Sanitary Inspection of the Area. The sanitary inspection of the area was undertaken by your Public Health Inspector, Mr. S. Jinks. At this juncture I must state that I am indebted to the Public Health Inspector for the figures and details of his work contained in this report. This information has proved most useful in the preparation of this report.

Nuisances.

Number of complaints received.....	104.
Number of complaints investigated.....	104.
Number of premises inspected.....	107.
Number of premises revisited.....	67.
Number of Preliminary Notices served.....	28.
for (a) Structural defects.....	22.
(b) Sanitary defects.....	6.
Number of Statutory Notices served.....	9.

Result of Notices served.

Number completed.....	24.
Number in hand of builder.....	4.

Number and type of nuisance abated by service of notice.

Dampness - 11, Defective eaves, troughing and downspouts - 5, Defective internal plastering - 6, Defective roofs - 12, Defective Floors - 2, Defective W.C. pans and cisterns - 9, Defective Windows and Doors - 1, Defective drains - 8.

Houses let in Lodgings. It is not considered that any of the houses in the district are of such a nature as to require control under byelaws made under Section 6 of the Housing Act, 1936.

Offensive Trades. There are no offensive trades in the district.

Common Lodging Houses. There are no common lodging houses in the district.

Licensed Premises.

Number of licensed premises.....	26.
Number of visits to such premises.....	28.

Particular attention has been given to the provision of sufficient and suitable sanitary accommodation and proper washing facilities.

Details. Provision of sanitary conveniences and washing facilities.

Number of premises with separate sanitary accommodation.....	23.
Number of premises without separate sanitary accommodation.....	3.
Number of premises with proper washing facilities.....	23.
Number of premises without proper washing facilities.....	3.

Improvements to sanitary conveniences in two premises have been carried out during the year.

Shops.

The number of shops in the district.....	148.
Number of inspections made by Public Health Inspector.....	54.

Factories.

The number of factories on the register.....	52.
Number of inspections made.....	40.
Number of defects found.....	3.
Number of notices served.....	3.

Camping Sites.

Number of caravans stationed and used.....	10.
Number of licences to erect/station a caravan granted.....	10.
Number of inspections by Public Health Inspector.....	20.

There is also one recognised yard which is mainly used by caravans during the Statutory Fairs of May and November.

Eradication of Bed Bugs and Steps taken to combat infestation.

All premises found as a result of inspection or complaint to be infested with bed bugs or other vermin is treated with D.D.T. preparations which have been found to be very successful.

Number of premises inspected.....	5.
Number of premises disinfested.....	5.

Old Metal Dealer's Order, 1952.

Section 86 of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1907 came into force on the 25th. April 1952.

Number of registered dealers.....	2.
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Rodent Control. One part-time Rodent Operator is employed who works under the supervision of the Public Health Inspector.

Details of Inspections and Treatments

	<u>Premises</u>			
	<u>Business</u>	<u>Dwelling</u>	<u>Municipal</u>	<u>Agricultural</u>
Number of inspections.....	546	2143	20	32
Number infested.....	12	53	11	3
a) Major infestations.....	0	0	0	0
b) Minor infestations.....	12	53	11	3
Number of treatments.....	12	53	11	0



Sewer Treatment. During the year two maintenance treatments were carried out. Details are given below:-

	<u>1st.Treatment</u>	<u>2nd.Treatment</u>
Number of manholes.....	177.....	177.
Number of manholes.....	27.....	22.
Number of prebait takes.....	8.....	9.
Number of complete prebait takes.....	8.....	4.

Pet Animals Act, 1951.

Number of licensed pet shops.....1.

Section 4.Housing.

1.Housing Need.Applicants for Council Houses. There is still a definite demand for housing accommodation in the Borough. It must be remembered that apart from the normal residents the demand is increased due to the fact that the town is a military and administrative centre for Government and other departments.

Bearing in mind the standard laid down by the Central Housing Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Health on the question of "Housing Need" in their report "Selection of Tenants" and with particular reference to their standard for overcrowding based on bedroom deficiency, the Council's waiting list showed the following details.

<u>Type of Applicant</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Residing in Borough</u>	<u>From outside Borough</u>
Without separate accommodation and bedroom deficiency	23	23	0
Without separate accommodation	9	9	0
<u>T.B.Applicants</u>	1	1	0
Unfit house, statutory overcrowding and bedroom deficiency	4	4	0
Unfit house and bedroom deficiency	19	19	0
Unfit house	19	17	2
Other houses, statutory overcrowding and bedroom deficiency	1	1	0
Other houses, bedroom deficiency	12	9	3
Other applicants	44	37	7
Applicants for Aged Persons Bungalows	30	25	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>17</b>

Housing Consolidated Regulations, Article 31.

- 1.The number of houses which on inspection were considered to be unfit for human habitation.....115.
- 2.The number of houses the defects in which were remedied in consequence of informal action by the local authority or their officers.....2.
- 3.The number of representations made to the local authority with a view to
  - (a)the serving of notices requiring the execution of works or
  - (b)the making of demolition or closing orders.....9.

4. The number of notices served requiring the execution of works..0.
5. The number of houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices.....1.
6. The number of demolition or closing orders.....0.
7. The number of houses in respect of which an undertaking under sub-section 3 of section 11 of the Housing Act, 1936 was accepted.8.
8. The number of houses demolished.....2.

Allocation of Houses.

During the year the following relettings of houses took place.

3 at Ffynnon Dewi  
1 at Trenewydd

Post War Housing.1. By Borough Council.

a) Houses completed	Ffynnon Dewi	- 64 houses
	No. of 4 bedrooms	6
	No. of 3 bedrooms	52
	No. of 2 bedrooms	6
	Adelaide Gardens	- 51 houses
	No. of 4 bedrooms	4
	No. of 3 bedrooms	38
	No. of bungalows	9
	Bryn de Winton	
	Number of 3 bedrooms	40

b) Future Housing.

22 houses are to be built at Bryn de Winton to rehouse families from slum houses.

2. By Private Enterprise.

Total number of houses erected in the year.....12.

Housing Act, 1949.

Number of applications for Improvement Grant.....7.

Number of applications approved.....7.

Housing Inspections by Public Health Inspector.

Number of house to house inspections.....99.

Number of visits to Council houses.....421.

Section 5. Inspection and Supervision of Food.Milk and Dairies Regulations, 1949.

Number of registered dairies in Borough.....6.

Number of distributors licensed by Borough Council.....9.

Number of producer/distributors in Borough.....2.

Number of producer/distributors from Rural District.....1.

Total number distributing in Borough.....12.

Milk (Special Designation) (Raw Milk) Regulations.

Number of dealers authorised by Borough Council to use Special Designation Tuberculin Tested.....4.

Milk (Special Designation) (Pasteurised and Sterilised Milk) Regulations

Number of dealers authorised by Borough Council to use designation pasteurised.....1.

Number of dealers authorised by Borough Council to use designation Tuberculin Tested (Pasteurised).....5.

Number of dealers authorised to use designation Sterilised.....1.

Record of Inspections.

Number of visits to dairies.....24.

Milk Sampling.

Number of samples for bacteriological examination.....10.

Number of samples for biological examination.....2.

Meat. There is a Public Slaughterhouse in the Borough which is sufficient to meet the needs of the district and neighbourhood. The Slaughterhouse has been leased to the Fatstock Marketing Corporation, but all its modern facilities are available to local butchers.

Meat Inspections.

Number of inspections.....531.

Carcases and offal Inspected and Condemned In Whole&Part

	Cattle excluding cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep Lambs	Pigs	Horses
Number killed	692	35	735	5472	1082	-
Number inspected	692	35	735	5472	1082	-
<u>All Diseases except Tuberculosis and Cysticerci.</u>						
Whole carcasses condemned	-	2	6	27	2	-
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	203	20	-	219	9	-
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis or cysticerci	29.3	62.8	0.8	4.3	1.01	-
<u>Tuberculosis only</u>						
Whole carcasses condemned	-	-	-	-	-	-
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	3	3	-	-	25	-
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis	0.4	8.6	-	-	2.3	-

Cattle excluding cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep Lambs	Pigs	Horses
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Cysticerci

Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	2	-	-	-	-
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Carcases submitted to treatment by refrigeration	2	-	-	-	-
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Generalised and totally condemned	-	-	-	-	-
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Total Weight Condemned of Home Killed Meat in lbs.weight for T.B.

Whole carcasses	-	-	-	-	-
Part carcasses & organs	<u>85</u>	<u>615</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>307</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>85</u>	<u>615</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>307</u>	<u>-</u>

For Other Diseases

Whole carcasses	-	1321	408	830	94	-
Part carcasses	838	387	-	109	108	-
Organs	<u>3225</u>	<u>211</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>591</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>-</u>
Total weight	<u>4063</u>	<u>1919</u>	<u>483</u>	<u>1530</u>	<u>228</u>	<u>-</u>

Frozen & chilled meat condemned in lbs.weight	26	-	-	-	-	-
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Other Foods.

Type of Food Premises	Number	Inspections	Notices served	No. registered under Sec.14. F.&D.Act,1958.
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Cafe/Restaurant	18	31	-	-
Grocers	24	24	-	-
Butchers	10	21	-	9
Wet Fish	2	10	-	-
Fried Fish	3	15	-	-
Greengrocers	5	11	-	-
Sweets	7	12	-	-
Bakehouses	11	30	2	-
Icecream Producer/ Retailers	1	10	-	1
Icecream Retailers	37	24	-	37
School Canteens	7	10	-	-

Ice Cream(Heat Treatment)Regulations.

Number of inspections of premises.....13.  
Number of samples taken for bacteriological examination.....1.

Other Foods Condemned.

Number of tins condemned.....557.  
Number of lbs. of other foods condemned.....935.

Food Hygiene Regulations.

A survey has been made of food premises and improvement effected in a number of premises.

Method of Disposal of Condemned Food.

1. The Borough Council require users of the slaughterhouse to inform them where meat is disposed. Meat is stained with a green vegetable dye and disposed of to a processing firm.
2. Condemned tins etc. are disposed of by burying in the Council tip.

Section 6. Prevalence and Control of Infectious Disease.

The following cases of notifiable infectious disease were reported to me during the year:-

Paratyphoid Fever.....	1 case.
Scarlet Fever.....	1 case.
Meningococcal Meningitis.....	1 case.
Measles.....	1 case.
Whooping Cough.....	3 cases.

As is shown above, very little infectious disease was notified during the year. The above cases were nursed at home with the exception of the case of paratyphoid fever and that of meningococcal Meningitis, both of which were removed to Merthyr Isolation Hospital. No death occurred as a result of these infectious disease cases.

Number of cases investigated by Public Health Inspector.....3.  
 Number of disinfections including those required for tuberculosis..6.  
 Number of sewer swabs taken.....10.

Veneral Disease. The County Council has an agreement with the General and Eye Hospital, Swansea for the treatment of these cases. The tracing of contacts and the following up of defaulters is the responsibility of the County Council.

Tuberculosis. The following details show the position as regards tuberculosis in recent years.

Number of cases on register at commencement of year.....	46.
Number of fresh cases added during the year.....	5.
Number of cases removed as disease arrested.....	10.
Number of cases removed as left district.....	4.
Number of deaths during the year.....	2.
Number of cases left on register at end of year.....	35.

The number of notifications in recent years is shown below:-

<u>1947.</u>	<u>1948.</u>	<u>1949.</u>	<u>1950.</u>	<u>1951.</u>	<u>1952.</u>	<u>1953.</u>	<u>1954.</u>	<u>1955.</u>	<u>1956.</u>
7.	11.	8.	13.	11.	6.	4.	2.	6.	5.

Diphtheria Immunisation. As a result of the National Health Service Act, 1946, the County Council are responsible for the immunisation of children against diphtheria and details for the district will be found in the annual report of the County Medical Officer.

No cases of diphtheria were notified during the year.

It is pleasing to see that the incidence of diphtheria continues to fall. The object of the immunisation campaign, however, remains the same: to secure the immunisation of not less than 75% of babies before their first birthday. It must be remembered that diphtheria still kills and that elimination of the disease is conditional upon the maintenance of an adequate level of immunisation. If parents leave their children unprotected there may be a return of diphtheria outbreaks.

Yours faithfully,

T.C.R. George,

Medical Officer of Health