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WELSH BOARD OF HEALTH
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BOROUGH OF RUTHIN.



Annual Report

of the

Medical Officer of Health

for 1938.

*Medical Officer of Health—ENID HUGHES, M.D.,
Lond., B.S., Lond.,
M.R.C.S., L.R.C.S., D.P.H.,*

*Sanitary Inspector— P. E. THOMAS. M.I.M. & C.E.
A.R. San. I. C.S.I.B.*

R. T. ROBERTS, PRINTER, RUTHIN.



The Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors

Ruthin Borough Council.

THE MANOR HOUSE,

RUTHIN.

15TH JULY, 1939.

To

MR. MAYOR, MISS BEECH & GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present to you my Annual Report for the year 1938, prepared according to the schedule of the Welsh Board of Health.

During the year the population has increased by 14, a smaller number than usual. The Death rate has risen, and the Birth rate has fallen. The Birth rate is lower than that for England and Wales, and the death rate is higher. In both instances these figures have been corrected for possible errors due to a high average age of residents, common, in Rural areas. I am at a loss to account for this rise in the death rate, as there was no epidemic of influenza, and the winter was unusually mild. The death rate from cancer showed no alteration compared with 1937, and the deaths from tuberculosis were less. Nevertheless, cancer amounted for 21% of all deaths at all ages.

There was remarkably little notifiable disease, one death from infectious diseases, and no deaths from puerperal causes. This is a good record.

Notifications of tuberculosis were more numerous than at any time since 1932. The majority of the notifications occurred during the last quarter of the year. It is a pity that the Public have so much prejudice against early investigation, and resent examination by the experts. Delay in admission due to a shortage of available beds is common, and evidently not peculiar to this District. It is a matter of conjecture whether the best use of beds is made by admission of operation cases, which occupy beds for years, and show a very poor recovery rate, and a poorer recovery rate to full work. It is felt by many Physicians that the greatest number might be achieved by limiting such admissions, and leaving more beds available for early cases with a good prognosis. That it would be cheaper is undoubted, but that is not the only consideration.

Real advance was made during the year in diphtheria immunisation, and it was possible at the end of 1938 to feel that 50% of school children were so protected. In view of the proposed evacuation of children into the area in the event of an emergency, the Council view this with satisfaction.

The outstanding Public Health achievement during the year was the starting of the Slum Clearance Scheme, the demolition of 36 of the worst houses in the Borough, and the re-housing of the occupants in the Canol-y-Dre Housing Site. The new houses are excellent, well situated and give much satisfaction. The Housing Schemes in the Borough accounts for only a sixpenny rate. The average householder probably only pays 10/- or 15/- a year towards this expense. I am of the opinion that if the average householder knew the great satisfaction of good housing to his fellow citizens, and the low cost to himself, he would not grumble at the cost, but would demand more houses for those unable to bear the full cost. The Housing Rate is money well spent, a claim not always justified by many charitable concerns.

The Water Supply continues satisfactory, a matter of great satisfaction to the Health Officers of the Town. The Sewage Farm is working pretty well to capacity.

I would again like to thank the Sanitary Inspector, Mr. Thomas, for his continued co-operation and excellent work.

Your obedient Servant,

ENID HUGHES.

Medical Officer of Health.

SECTION A.

Statistics and Social Conditions of the Area.

Area	...	...	...	...	2016 acres.
Resident Population (estimated mid-year, 1937).					3188
Number of inhabited houses	...		...		924
Rateable value	...	...	...		£18,700
Sum represented by a penny rate	...		...		£71

The staple industry of the area is Agriculture; one laundry and two mineral water factories offer industrial employment. The unemployment during the year was less than in 1937, chiefly owing to building activities, 50 new houses being erected during the year. Unemployment is not extensive but there is not much opportunity for young male persons employed in industry.

Vital Statistics.

		Total.	Male.	Female,
Live Births.	Legitimate	38	21	17
	Illegitimate	3	—	3
		—	—	—
		41	21	20

Live Birth Rate per 1,000 resident population 12.9.

Live birth rate in 1937 15.1.

Live birth rate for England and Wales 15.1.

Standardised birth rate for the Area 11.2.

		Total.	Male.	Female.
<i>Still Births.</i>	Legitimate	1		1
	Illegitimate	0		

Still Birth Rate per 1,000 Live Births 21.9.

Still Birth Rate in 1937 20.9.

Still Birth Rate in England and Wales 0.6.

	Total.	Male.	Female.
<i>Deaths.</i>	41	22	19
<i>Death Rate</i> per 1,000 resident population		15.1.	
Death rate in 1937		13.5.	
Death rate for England and Wales		11.6.	
Standardised death rate		11.2.	

Deaths from Puerperal Causes (Headings 29 & 30).

	Deaths.	Rate per 1,000 Total Live & Still Births.
No. 29 Puerperal Sepsis	0	0
No. 30 Other Puerperal causes	0	0
Total	0	0

Figures in 1937 were similar.

Death Rate of Infants under 1 Year.

All infants per 1,000 Live Births	21.9.
Ligitimate Infants per 1,000 legitimate live births	26.8.
Illegitimate Infant per 1,000 illegitimate live births	0.
Total Infants Mortality Rate for 1937	62.5.
Total Infant Mortality Rate for England and Wales	53.0.

<i>Deaths from Cancer (all ages)</i>	Total.	Male.	Female.
	9	4	5

This is the same number as in 1937.

<i>Deaths from Measles (all ages)</i>	0	0	0
<i>Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages)</i>	0	0	0
<i>Deaths from Diarrhœa (under two years)</i>	0	0	0

There was little epidemic illness during 1938. The wet summer prevented the usual autumn sore throats and there was a marked reduction in severe streptococcal infections, though erysipelas occurred in mild form in one of the institutions. There was only one death from pneumonia during the year.

It is still my opinion that as I stated last year and the year before that instructions in nutrition by lectures and demonstrations would greatly improve the health of the community. Though no action was taken by the Council in this matter in 1938, it is their intention to do so in 1939.

SECTION B.

General Provision of Health Services in the Area.

1. (1) Public Health Officers : Part-time Medical Officer of Health.
Part-time Sanitary Inspector.

- (2) Public Health Services .—

- (a) Laboratory facilities—No change.
- (b) Ambulance facilities—The nearest ambulance is at Denbigh. There is no great use for an ambulance in this small area, but on rare urgent occasions its absence is very irksome.
- (c) Nursing at home—No change.
- (d) Treatment Centres and Clinics—No change.
- (e) Hospitals—No change. The shortage of Ear, Nose and Throat beds remains, as I commented last year, a great handicap to patients of all ages suffering from complaints requiring such hospitalisation.

SECTION C.

Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.1. (i) *Water.*

The Water Works functioned satisfactorily during the year, with the exception of the month of May when some trouble was experienced with the filters due to biological growths, which propagated very rapidly during the exceptionally warm spring.

A few samples taken in June showed *Bacillus-coli* in slight excess of the bacteriological standards. These were not of human origin, and rapidly disappeared on adjustment of chlorination. The need of the acquisition of the gathering ground by the Council is urgently proved. I reported to this effect at the Ministry of Health enquiry before the Council acquired these works, and it is satisfactory to note that the Council are now (in 1939) negotiating for its purchase.

A new water main was laid to the Canol-y-Dre Housing site and to new houses erected off Greenfield Road.

The pressure, whilst improving, remains bad at the top of Llanfair Road.

(ii) *Drainage and Sewerage.*

There has been no alteration in this and the Disposal Works have proved satisfactory. A new sewer was laid to the Canol-y-Dre Housing site.

2. (i) *Rivers and Streams.*

There was no pollution of Rivers and Streams.

3. (i) *Closet Accommodation.*

Number of Water Closets converted during the year	10.
Number of Dry Closets remaining at the 31st December, 1938	35.
Number of Water Closets	899.

(ii) Public Cleansing.

The scavenging of the Streets is carried out regularly and the gullies are emptied at regular intervals.

The collection of House Refuse is carried out once weekly to all premises. During the year 40,959 Ashbins and 151 Ashpits were emptied, making a total of 876 loads equivalent to about 657 tons.

Whenever possible, soil is spread over the exposed parts of the tip so as to keep this as tidy and sanitary as possible.

*(iii) Sanitary Inspections of the Area.**Factories, Workshops and Bakehouses.*

These are regularly inspected and are kept in a satisfactory state.

(b) Nuisances.

During the year general inspections were made for the detection of nuisances.

Number of Houses inspected and re-inspected	107.
Number of Houses at which nuisances were found	31.
Nuisances abated	31.
Inspection of New Buildings and Drains	50.
Choked drains liberated	10.
Insanitary Yards	—
Miscellaneous	7.
Preliminary Notices and Letters written	114.

(c) New Buildings.

During the year forty-eight new buildings have been completed.

(iv) Shops and Offices.

The shops and offices are inspected periodically.

(v) Camping Sites.

1. No sites used.
2. No Licences issued.

(vi) Smoke Abatement.

No complaints of nuisance from smoke have been received during the year.

(vii) Swimming Baths.

There are no Privately owned or Public Baths in the Area.

(viii) Eradication of Bed Bugs.

- | | |
|--|------|
| 1. (a) Council houses found to be infested | Nil. |
| (b) Other houses | 40 |
| (c) Other houses disinfected | 40. |
2. Method used was Zaldecide.
 3. Before removing belonging of tenants to Council houses, spraying with Zaldecide was carried out.
 4. The work was carried out by the Council's Employees.
 5. No education of Tenants to prevent re-infestation has so far been found necessary.

4. *Schools.*

The sanitary condition of the Schools remain improved. No school closure was necessary.

SECTION D.

Housing.

1. *Inspection of Dwelling-houses during the year.*
 1. (a) Total number of Dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects—under Public Health or Housing Acts 173
 - (b) Number of inspections made for the purpose 216
 2. (a) Number of Dwelling-houses (included under Subhead (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations 1925 64
 - (b) Number of inspections made for the purpose 73
 3. Number of Dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation 36
 4. Number of Dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the previous sub-heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation. 6
2. *Remedy of Defects during the year without the Service of formal Notices.*
 1. Number of Defective Dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers 6
3. *Action under Statutory Powers during the Year.*
 1. Proceedings under the Housing Act 1936—Section 9, 10 and 16.
 - (a) Number of Dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs Nil

(b) Number of Dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices :—

- | | |
|--|-----|
| (i) By Owners | Nil |
| (ii) By Local Authority in default of Owners | Nil |

2. Proceedings under the Public Health Acts.

- | | |
|--|-----|
| (a) Number of Dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied | Nil |
| (b) Number of Dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices :— | |
| (i) By Owners | Nil |
| (ii) By Local Authority in default of Owners | Nil |

3. Proceedings under the Housing Act 1936—Section 11 & 13.

- | | |
|--|----|
| (a) Number of Dwelling-houses in respect of which demolition Orders were made | 29 |
| (b) Number of houses demolished in pursuance of Demolished Orders | 29 |
| (c) In the case of thirteen houses which came under the scope of the Council's Slum Clearance Scheme an agreement was reached with the owners to use the premises for other purposes than the occupation of them for human habitation. | |

4.	Proceedings under the Housing Act 1936. Section 12	
	(a) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made	Nil
	(b) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or underground rooms having been rendered fit	Nil
4.	<i>Housing Act 1936—Part IV—Overcrowding.</i>	
1.	(a) Number of Dwelling-houses overcrowded at the end of year	42
	(b) Number of Families dwelling therein	42
	(c) Number of Persons dwelling therein	195
2.	(a) Number of New cases of Overcrowding reported during the year	Nil
3.	(a) Number of New cases relieved during the year	Nil
	(b) Number of Persons concerned in such cases	Nil
4.	Particulars of any cases in which Dwelling-houses have become overcrowded after the Local Authority have taken steps for the abatement of overcrowding	None

A start has been made in the demolition of Unfit houses and the re-housing of the population, but it is only a start and more remains to be done than has been done in the last four years.

SECTION E.

Inspection and Supervision of Food.(a) *Milk Supply.*

There are nine farms and eleven dairies in the Area and seventeen wholesale and retail sellers of milk in the Borough. The farms and dairies are all regularly inspected and have been found to be in a fairly satisfactory condition.

(b) *Meat and other Foods.*

The Slaughterhouses and Meat Shops have been regularly inspected.

Carcases inspected and condemned :-

	Cattle, Cows, excluding Cows	Calves.	Pigs,	Sheep, Lambs.
Number Inspected	98	18	62	584
<i>All Diseases except Tuberculosis.</i>				
Whole carcasses condemned	—	—	1	—
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	8	—	3	21
Percentage of the number inspected with Disease other than Tuberculosis	8%	—	6%	3½%

Tuberculosis only.

Whole carcasses condemned	—	—	—	—
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	—	—	—	—
Percentage of the number inspected affected with Tuberculosis	—	—	—	—

(c) *Nutrition*

No action to instruct or interest the population in the true value of nutrition was taken in 1938. This was commented upon in my report for 1936 and for 1937. It has been decided to show instructional films in the Autumn of 1939.

SECTION F.

Prevalence of, and Control over Infectious and other Diseases.

2. There was extremely little notifiable infectious diseases during 1938. There was a short sharp outbreak of Diphtheria in an institution, communicated from outside the area and limited entirely to the institution.

The Borough escaped the epidemic of polio-myelitis in the autumn, though cases occurred within a five miles radius.

The Borough continued to offer free immunisation against diphtheria to school children, but the response was poor. During the Autumn a change of policy was decided on, to authorise the Medical Officer of Health to visit the schools for the purpose and a vastly better response was obtained. During the year 179 children were so immunised. The two shot Alum Precipitate Toxin method was used. No Schick testing before or after was done.

No information is received by the Medical Officer of Health of the number of pre-school children immunised at the Welfare Clinic by the County Medical Officer of Health. This is regrettable as the Local Authority has no knowledge of the state of the child population in this respect, and there is no information at the schools of previous immunisation.

A wide-spread epidemic of mild jaundice occurred in the Western end of the Town. The water was examined frequently and found not to be the cause.

Notifiable Diseases During 1938.

Disease.	Age Group.	Total cases notified.	Cases Admitted to Hospital.	Total Deaths
Small Pox	Nil	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever	5	1	1	0
Diphtheria	3	2	2	0
	5	2	2	1
	10	1	1	0
Enteric Fever	Nil	0	0	0
Puerperal Pyrexia	20	2	2	0
Pneumonia	2	1	0	0
	20	1	0	1
	65	2	0	1
Erysipelas	45	1	0	0
	65	3	3	0

4. (a) *Prevention of Blindness.*

No action was taken under Section 76 of the Public Health Act 1936,

(b) *Tuberculosis.*

No action was necessary under the Public Health (Prevention of Tuberculosis) Regulations 1925, or under Section 172 of Public Health Act 1936.

5. Tuberculosis and Mortality during 1938.

Age periods.	Respiratory.				Non Respiratory				Deaths.			
	Respiratory.		Non Respiratory		Respiratory.		Non-respiratory.		Respiratory.		Non-respiratory.	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
0—	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1—	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
5—	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
15—	0	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
25—	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Totals.	0	6	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	

The notifications of Pulmonary Tubercle in women of the 15—25 group is regrettable. The occupations of the five women were .—

Nursing	two
Factories	two
Typist	one

There were no non-notified tuberculosis deaths.



