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Contributors

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BOROUGH OF RUTHIN.

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

for the year 1948.

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

THE MANOR HOUSE,
RUTHIN,

November 21st, 1949.

**The Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses
of the Ruthin Town Council.**

I have the honour to present to you my annual report for the year 1948, prepared in accordance with Circular 3/49 Wales, issued by the Welsh Board of Health.

For the first time, the number of inhabited houses in the area reaches four figures, though only twelve traditional type houses were completed during the year. The birth rate was high for this area, 53, the average over many years being about 40 to 45. The actual rate, however, 14.8 per 1000 population is low compared with 17.9 for the whole of England and Wales. The death rate of 11.7 compared with 10.8 for the whole of England and Wales, is, however, very satisfactory; the population of the area is, on the whole, an elderly population, with a high proportion of retired persons, and the very slight increase over the average death rate for the country is an advertisement of the healthy state of the town and its climate. There were no deaths due to maternal causes, and the infant mortality was nil.

There were again no notifications of diphtheria; the immunisation is now the responsibility of the County Council, but the rate must be high, it has been over 98% for seven or eight years. During the spring, there was a mild epidemic of whooping cough and of pneumonia, but there were no deaths from either.

Tuberculosis notifications dropped from 7 in 1947 to 4, and there was again only one death.

The quality of the water supply remains high, and the bacteriological reports were uniformly perfect. The supply needed supplementing during the summer and autumn, but the lack of pressure in the upper parts of the town remains the chief problem.

The sewage has been a problem, but the new scheme will, I think, prove perfectly adequate for present and future needs in the town, which is growing. The population has increased by 700, that is 25% in the last 10 years, and there is still a great need for houses for the many people employed in the town, a high percentage of whom have to travel daily by bus.

During 1948, Mr. Jacks left the Council's employment, and Mr. Tudor Evans succeeded him after an interval. Mr. Evans has proved a most helpful colleague, and I would like to acknowledge his co-operation in every branch of the work.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

ENID HUGHES,

Medical Officer of Health.

SECTION A.

Vital Statistics

OF THE AREA.

Population	3,573
Number of inhabited houses ...	1,004
Product of a penny rate	£79

BIRTHS.	Total.	Rate per 1,000 population.	Rate for England and Wales.
Births	53	14.8	17.9
Still-births	2	0.55	0.52
 DEATHS.	 42	 11.7	 10.8
From Infectious disease	none		
From Cancer	7		

INFANT MORTALITY.

Deaths of children under 1 year.	None.
Deaths from diarrhoea and vomiting under 2 years of age.	None.

MATERNAL MORTALITY.

No woman died as a result of any maternal accident or infection or from abortion.

SECTION B.

Infectious Diseases.

Disease.	Number notified.	Deaths.
Typhoid Fever	None	None
Para-typhoid	One	None
Cerebro-spinal Fever	None	None
Scarlet Fever	One	None
Whooping Cough	Eleven	None
Diphtheria	None	None
Erysipelas	One	None
Small-pox	None	None
Measles	Six	None
Pneumonia	Eleven	None
Acute polio-myelitis	None	None
Acute polio-encephalitis	None	None

One case of para-typhoid fever occurred in a person who had been staying in Scotland, and was taken ill on the night of return home. The case was a similar phage to other cases in this County, about twenty miles away; there had been no known contact with these other cases, and the Ruthin patient had been away fourteen days before this first malaise, and twenty days before the onset of severe illness. The patient had visited Glasgow where para-typhoid was known to be prevalent, but the infections were dis-similar. Though I corresponded with the Medical Officer of Health of the area where the patient had been staying, I was quite unable to establish any possible cause of the infection. Presumably, it was common with the others in this County, but the infection must have taken place away from this area, and no further cases were reported here or elsewhere.

Again, there were no notifications of diphtheria in the area.

C. TUBERCULOSIS.

	Notifications and deaths.	Pulmonary.	Non-pulmonary.
Total	4	3	1
Deaths		2	0

Compared with 7 notifications in 1947, this is not unsatisfactory.

In no instance have notified cases been living in insanitary conditions, and no case could be attributed to over-crowding. The Council has always pursued the policy of giving first priority of Council houses to tubercular persons. The after-care, etc., is not the responsibility of the Borough Council.

D. CANCER.

Seven deaths due to cancer were notified. The staff of the Liverpool Radium Institute visit the surgery of one of the local doctors regularly once a month, and this is a useful after-care and diagnostic amenity. The visit began at the instigation of this doctor, and seems to be used by the Institute for all patients in the area, quite satisfactorily.

E. MATERNAL MORTALITY.

There were no maternal deaths.

The County Council hold fortnightly ante-natal clinics. Most patients prefer to have their babies in hospital, and the local hospital is essential for this purpose.

F. AMBULANCE SERVICE.

This is run by the local Red Cross and St. John Associations. The work is too heavy for voluntary services, though very well done. It is made heavier by the lack of local hospital beds for minor accidents, acute medical cases, and cases for observation, which in a rural area cannot safely be left at home, but might very well be left in the local hospital under the local G.P.; at present all cases have to go twenty miles, and often more.

SECTION G.

Water.

The water is an upland surface water supply belonging to the Borough Council, and supplemented as required by the Birkenhead Corporation supply, also an upland surface supply.

- (i) The quality of the water is tested from time to time bacteriologically, in order to check the efficacy of the chlorinating scheme. During 1948 it was always satisfactory when so tested.
- (ii) The quantity was never restricted, as the supply was supplemented as follows:
 - Quarter 1st April to 30th June 1,203,800 gallons
 - Quarter 1st July to 30th Sept. 1,871,200 gallons
 - Quarter 1st Oct. to 31st Dec. 323,000 gallons
- (iii) The water is not plumbo-solvent.
- (iv) There has been no suspected contamination.
- (v) Number of houses, 1,004.
 - (a) Number supplied by main supply direct to house, 848.
Population supplied by mains to house, 2,973.
 - (b) Number of houses supplied by stand-pipes, 156.
Population obtaining water from stand-pipes, 600.

Drainage and Sewerage.

The sewerage is by agricultural drainage.

The sewage farm has worked very satisfactorily during the year. Drains have been cleaned periodically and the ground flooded systematically.

All defective drains and sewers have been attended to and new drains regularly inspected by means of the water test. No trouble has been experienced during the year apart from flooding at the Anchor Corner during heavy rains.

A new sewage scheme has been prepared and will in due course be submitted.

Meat and Food.

CARCASES INSPECTED AND CONDEMNED.

	Inspected.	Condemned.	Tubercular only.	Non- tubercular.
Cattle	1,153	76	53 4.5% of number inspected.	23 2% of number inspected.
Sheep	5,256			
Calves	386			
Pigs	51			

In addition, several parts were condemned, but the percentage in relation to the whole weight of carcasses inspected is negligible.

FOOD POISONING.

No case of food poisoning was reported during the year.