

[Report 1955] / Medical Officer of Health, Benfleet U.D.C., Canvey Island U.D.C., Rayleigh U.D.C.

Contributors

Benfleet (England). Urban District Council.

Publication/Creation

1955

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/smu6t9wv>

License and attribution

You have permission to make copies of this work under a Creative Commons, Attribution license.

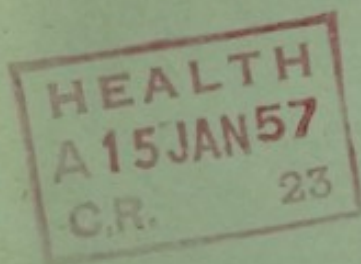
This licence permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See the Legal Code for further information.

Image source should be attributed as specified in the full catalogue record. If no source is given the image should be attributed to Wellcome Collection.



Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

L. H. H.

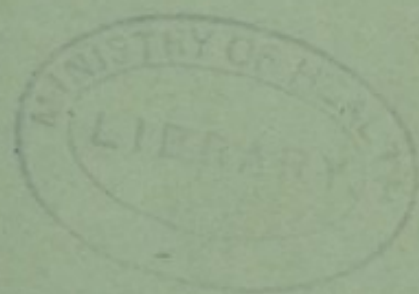


URBAN DISTRICTS

of

BENFLEET, CANVEY ISLAND

and RAYLEIGH



HEALTH REPORT

for the year

1955



Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the Year 1955

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT
LONDON ROAD,
HADLEIGH, ESSEX.

To the Chairman and Members of each of the Urban District Councils
of Benfleet, Canvey Island and Rayleigh.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the esteemed honour to present, for your consideration, my Annual Report on the health and sanitary circumstances of each of your Urban Districts for the year ending 31st December, 1955, prepared in accordance with the requirements of Ministry of Health Circular 17/55 dated 23rd November, 1955. This issue represents my 28th Report for the Canvey Island Urban District and my 26th Report for each of the Benfleet and Rayleigh Districts.

I would like to say that statistically, the Report appears to be very satisfactory and the health of the Districts concerned has maintained the usual high standard. Briefly, the incidence of infectious diseases was very low, with not a single case of either Diphtheria, Smallpox or Typhoid Fever. The number of deaths from Tuberculosis was the lowest on record and represented only 0.36% of the total deaths for the three Districts. Cancer deaths, however, increased by over 10% during the year with almost a quarter of the total being associated with the Lungs or Bronchus. The very hot summer was most probably linked with the seasonal increase in the number of cases of Poliomyelitis throughout the Country and locally. Regretfully, one local case proved fatal, the woman being on holiday from another area where infection would appear to have been contracted.

The prevention of disease is an unending task and despite the remarkable progress in this field over the past 100 years, much remains to be done. Nevertheless, achievements in the control of such diseases as Tuberculosis provide the necessary encouragement to those engaged in public health to press on in a battle which so often is unspectacular and devoid of glory. Figures are cold, especially those dealing with mortality, but it is worth emphasising that the death roll from all forms of Tuberculosis in England and Wales fell from almost 24,000 in 1945 to nearly 6,500 in 1955. That is, in the ten year period, the fall in mortality was four to one. This rapid decline, associated with improved environmental control and modern methods of treatment and diagnosis, reveals that the ultimate removal of this age-long scourge on the health of humanity is no longer a Sisyphean task. Indeed, it is sincerely hoped that similar confidence will soon become commonplace with such conditions as Cancer, Coronary Disease (Heart) and Poliomyelitis. At least, the progress of the past is the inheritance of the health worker of the future.

The faithfulness and loyalty of all members of a Public Health staff (which has seen few changes through the years), the assistance readily given by Chief Officers in the various Departments of each Council, and, above all, the sympathetic consideration of all Members to the many public health problems arising during the year, is greatly appreciated, and to all concerned, I offer my deep gratitude.

Similarly, the continued helpful co-operation of all doctors in General Medical Practice is very much appreciated, and in this connection it may be fitting to quote Sir George Newman, late Chief Medical Officer to the Ministry of Health, writing in 1919: "The Medical Practitioner is the pivot, the anchor, and the instrument of the Medical Service and his clinical skill, his experience and his practical common-sense are vital factors in both the development of the doctor/patient relationship and the effectual treatment of disease." Also, I am indebted to the Hospital and Laboratory medical and technical staffs for their valuable assistance during the year. Team-work within the medical profession is vital to the public health of any community and the integration of all medical services requires co-ordination, involving the termination of water-tight Departments and the exercise of goodwill by all concerned.

"The service and the loyalty I owe,
In doing it, pays itself." (Macbeth)

I beg to remain,

Your obedient Servant,

NORMAN LORRAINE,

F.R.S.E., M.D., Ch.B., D.P.H., R.C.P.S. (Edin.)
& R.F.P.S. (Glas.), M.R.S.H.

August, 1956.

PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEES

Benfleet Urban District—

Councillor H. R. Bridge (Chairman).
Councillor L. A. G. Cunnington (Chairman of Council) J.P.
Councillor Mrs. L. F. A. Everett
Councillor G. H. FitzGerald
Councillor Mrs. M. Goodfellow
Councillor A. R. Hart (Vice-Chairman of Council)
Councillor A. A. Ingram
Councillor E. E. J. Jeanes
Councillor L. J. Murray
Councillor T. C. Rigden
Councillor I. J. Smith

Canvey Island Urban District—

Councillor A. T. F. Bishop, J.P.
Councillor L. C. Cook
Councillor Mrs. D. G. Elkington (Chairman)
Councillor H. P. Fielder, T.D., J.P. (Chairman of Council)
Councillor Mrs. B. V. Littlewood
Councillor E. G. Nightingale
Councillor G. E. Smerdon
Councillor Mrs. E. A. White (Vice-Chairman of Council)

Rayleigh Urban District—

Councillor Mrs. M. B. Blower
Councillor E. G. Collins
Councillor Mrs. F. M. Cottee, J.P.
Councillor M. Freund (Vice-Chairman of Council)
Councillor Mrs. M. B. D. Green (Chairman)
Councillor A. W. Hardwick (Chairman of Council) J.P.
Councillor E. H. Lane
Councillor E. E. Osborne
Councillor E. G. Pullen
Councillor E. Trippier

COMPOSITE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

Representatives for Benfleet Urban District—

Councillors H. R. Bridge, Mrs. L. F. A. Everett, G. H. FitzGerald.

Representatives for Canvey Island Urban District—

Councillors Mrs. B. V. Littlewood, Mrs. E. A. White.

Representatives for Rayleigh Urban District—

Councillors Mrs. M. B. Blower, Mrs. F. M. Cottee, J.P., Mrs. M.
B. D. Green.

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF

<i>Medical Officer of Health</i>	Norman Lorraine, F.R.S.E., M.D., M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., M.R.S.H.
<i>Locum to Medical Officer of Health</i>	P. George C. Jones, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H.
<i>Secretary to Medical Officer of Health</i>	R. F. Stripp
<i>Sanitary Inspectors</i> ..	J. E. Gilbert, M.R.S.H., M.S.I.A., Senior Sanitary Inspector, Benfleet U.D.C. P. Sanders, M.S.I.A., Additional Sanitary Inspector, Benfleet U.D.C. Donald J. Legg, M.R.S.H., M.S.I.A., Senior Sanitary Inspector, Canvey Island U.D.C. A. P. J. Cook, M.R.S.H., M.S.I.A., Deputy Sanitary Inspector, Canvey Island U.D.C. E. H. Lloyd, M.R.S.H., M.S.I.A., Sani- tary Inspector, Rayleigh U.D.C.
<i>Clerical Assistants</i> ..	A. J. Hart, A.C.C.S., Benfleet U.D.C. Miss P. G. Solomons, Canvey Island U.D.C. Miss G. Ward, Rayleigh U.D.C. (Part- time).

LOCAL STATISTICS

	Benfleet	Canvey Is.	Rayleigh
Area (in acres)	6,360	*6,350	5,732
Inhabited Houses at 31st December, 1953 (according to Rate Book)	8,254	4,733	4,144
Population (1951 Census)	19,881	11,255	9,388
Population (Registrar-General's esti- mate for mid 1955)	21,490	12,040	11,490
Rateable Value	£143,077	£60,516	£80,054
Sum represented by a Penny Rate ..	£580	£232	£306
Rateable Value per head of the esti- mated population	£6.66	£5.03	£6.97

* Includes Foreshore and Saltings.

VITAL STATISTICS

	Benfleet			Canvey Island			Rayleigh		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
<i>Live Births :</i>	171	154	325	95	80	175	85	76	161
Legitimate	159	152	311	85	75	160	85	73	158
Illegitimate	12	2	14	10	5	15	—	3	3
<i>Stillbirths :</i>	4	2	6	1	—	1	2	—	2
Legitimate	4	2	6	1	—	1	2	—	2
Illegitimate	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Deaths :</i>	130	137	267	82	74	156	61	64	125
<i>Birth Rate</i> per 1,000 of the estimated resi- dent population ..	15.1			14.5			14.0		
<i>Stillbirth Rate</i> per 1,000 total (live and still) births	18.1			5.7			12.3		
<i>Death Rate</i> per 1,000 of the estimated resi- dent population ..	12.4			13.0			10.9		
<i>Death Rate of Infants under one year of age :</i>									
Total number of in- fant deaths ..	6			7			3		
All infants per 1,000 live births ..	18.5			40.0			18.6		
Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births ..	19.3			37.5			19.0		
Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegiti- mate live births ..	—			66.7			—		
Deaths of infants under four weeks of age	5			5			1		

BIRTH RATE

Benfleet U.D. 15.1 *Canvey Island U.D.* 14.5 *Rayleigh U.D.* 14.0.

During the year there was a total of 661 live births in the three areas—325 in Benfleet, 175 in Canvey Island and 161 in Rayleigh. This was an increase of 48 or 7.8% over the birth figures for 1954, although, on account of the overall increased population the average birth rate for 1955 was 14.5 as compared with 15.0 for 1954. Of the 1955 total, 351 were males (53.1%) and 310 females (46.9%) as compared

with 1954 when there was a small margin of female births. The excess of males over females was much the same in the three districts. Throughout England and Wales 51.4% of all live births were males—the same percentage as in 1954.

Throughout England and Wales the birth rate during 1955 of 15.0 live births per 1,000 of the resident population was the lowest rate recorded since 1941 when it was 14.2, which at that time was undoubtedly associated with war conditions.

Benfleet's birth rate of 15.1 is the highest since 1949 (15.4)—when the post war birth rate bulge, which had its peak in 1947, had almost subsided—and was higher than any rate during the 10 years 1931-40. Only once, apart from 1955, in the past 25 years has the birth rate for Benfleet exceeded that for the whole Country and that was in 1945 when Benfleet's rate was 16.3 as against 16.1.

In general, Canvey Island carries a higher birth rate than either England and Wales or Benfleet and Rayleigh and, on average for the past 15 years, there has been 18 live births for every 1,000 of the population, as compared with 16 in England and Wales and 15 in both Benfleet and Rayleigh. However, for 1955 the birth rate at Canvey fell to 14.5—the lowest rate recorded since 1940 when it was 13.9.

Rayleigh's average birth rate for the 20 years 1931-50 was almost the same as that for Benfleet, but in the past 5 years 1951-1955 the rate has averaged 14.0 as compared with Benfleet's 13.3. Thus the 1955 rate of 14.0 is about average for recent years.

DEATH RATE

Benfleet U.D. 12.4 *Canvey Island U.D.* 13.0 *Rayleigh U.D.* 10.9

During the year there was a total of 548 deaths in the three areas—267 in Benfleet, 156 in Canvey Island and 125 in Rayleigh. Of this total, 273 were males (49.8%) and 275 females (50.2%). The almost equal distribution of sexes was fairly uniform in all three areas. Throughout England and Wales 51.35% of all deaths were males.

For many years it has been general for the death rate to exceed the birth rate in these Districts which attract a large number of elderly people in retirement from other areas. This trend was reversed in 1954 when births exceeded deaths by 121 and I am glad to say was continued throughout 1955 when there were 93 more births than deaths. Although the total number of births in 1955 was greater than in 1954, the rate was lower because the increase was not proportionate with the increased population, the average birth rate for the three districts together for 1955 being 14.5 as compared with 15.0 in 1954. Deaths were also up by 56, but this increase was in excess of the proportionate increase of population and incurred a combined death rate of 12.1 as compared with 11.6 in 1954. As will be seen, this rate is a little higher than that for England and Wales at 11.7, but after application of the

Comparability Factor (the Registrar General's formula to counteract an area with an over balance of elderly people), the combined rate for the three areas would be 9.2 and there would be only 415 instead of 548 deaths.

Whilst the death rates for Benfleet and Canvey were higher in 1955 than in 1954, they were well below the average of the past 15 years. Rayleigh's death rate is the lowest since 1948 when it was 9.5.

From the table on page 9 it will be noticed that 211 deaths in Benfleet U.D., 105 in Canvey Island U.D., and 99 in Rayleigh U.D. were over 65 years of age, giving a combined percentage of 76.0. Of those dying at 75 years of age or over, the percentage for the three districts was 47.1, with Benfleet Urban District carrying the highest percentage, namely 53.2. Causes of death show that 81.4% of all deaths during the year were attributed to either Cancer (104), Heart Disease (80), Coronary Disease (98), Cerebral Haemorrhage (85), Pneumonia, Bronchitis and Respiratory Causes (56) or Other Circulatory Diseases (23).

INFANT MORTALITY RATE

Benfleet U.D. 18.5 *Canvey Island U.D.* 40.0 *Rayleigh U.D.* 18.6

Year by year the Infant Mortality Rate for the Country gets lower and the year 1955 recorded an all-time lowest of 24.9 per 1,000 live births or a total of 16,613 infant deaths under one year of age. Although this wastage of infant life is regrettable, one is thankful to realise that the number is reducing with the passage of time and during 1955 there were 485 fewer infant deaths than the previous year.

The rates for both Benfleet and Rayleigh were considerably lower than that for the whole Country. Benfleet's rate was the lowest recorded since 1946 when it was 16.6 and only twice before in the past 25 years has the Infant Mortality Rate for the Benfleet U.D. been lower than that recorded in 1955.

Local Infant Mortality Rates are subject to considerable variation and Canvey Island, whose average rate is generally higher than the other two Districts, rose to 40.0 as compared with 25.0 per 1,000 live births in 1954.

Rayleigh has an excellent overall Infant Mortality Rate and in the past five years has had two " Nil " rates and the other three well below the National average. The table on page 11 gives interesting averages for each District over the past 5, 10 and 25 year periods.

The 16 infant deaths occurring in the three Districts died from the following causes—Prematurity and conditions associated with the newborn 8, Asphyxia 1, Congenital 3, Broncho Pneumonia 3, Septicaemia 1. Eleven of the infants died within four weeks of birth.

Stillbirths during the year throughout England and Wales totalled 15,815, a little over 300 less than the 1954 figure, but owing to a slightly

lower birth rate represented the same proportion (2.3) of all births (live and still). The nine local stillbirths were below the National average and represented 1.4% of the total number of live and still births in the three areas.

COMPARABILITY FACTOR

District	Compara- bility Factor	Actual Number	Actual Rate	Amended Number	Amended Rate
BIRTHS					
Benfleet U.D.	1.14	325	15.1	370	17.2
Canvey Island U.D.	1.14	175	14.5	199	16.5
Rayleigh U.D.	1.10	161	14.0	177	15.4
DEATHS					
Benfleet U.D.	0.73	267	12.4	195	9.0
Canvey Island U.D.	0.81	156	13.0	126	10.5
Rayleigh U.D.	0.75	125	10.9	93	8.2

POPULATION

Benfleet U.D. 21,490 *Canvey Island U.D.* 12,040 *Rayleigh U.D.* 11,490

The estimated total population for England and Wales for 1955 was 44,623,000, representing an increase of 143,000 over the population for 1954. This increase was 0.32%. The natural increase (excess of births over deaths) was 146,054, thus it would appear that emigration must have exceeded immigration during the year.

The total increase of population for the Benfleet, Canvey Island and Rayleigh Urban Districts during 1955 was 2,710 or 6.4% on the 1954 figures—15 times greater than the increase of the Country as a whole. Of this increase, 93 was accounted for by the excess of births over deaths and the balance of 2,617 by immigration. As in last year, the greatest increase occurred in Rayleigh with 14.3%, and the increases in Benfleet and Canvey Island were 6.0% and 0.4% respectively. Local private building development is undoubtedly associated with these increases.

The slower pace of development at Canvey Island in undoubtedly associated with the setback caused by the flood disaster in 1953.

Population changes since 1930 are summarised below—

Year	Benfleet U.D.	Canvey Island U.D.	Rayleigh U.D.
1930	11,900	3,530	6,256
1940	15,140	5,240	7,810
1950	19,720	10,800	9,474
1951 (Census)	19,881	11,255	9,388
1952	19,640	11,640	9,415
1953	19,770	11,750	9,539
1954	20,270	11,990	10,050
1955	21,490	12,040	11,490

DEATHS AT VARIOUS AGES DURING 1955

Age	Number in District	Deaths		Inward Transfers	Number of deaths which apply to District		
		Outward Transfers					
<i>Benfleet U.D.</i>							
Under 1 year ..	1	..	—	..	5	..	6
1 and under 2	—	..	—	..	—	..	—
2 „ „ 5	—	..	—	..	—	..	—
5 „ „ 15	—	..	—	..	—	..	—
15 „ „ 25	1	..	—	..	1	..	2
25 „ „ 35	—	..	—	..	1	..	1
35 „ „ 45	1	..	1	..	2	..	2
45 „ „ 55	4	..	—	..	8	..	12
55 „ „ 65	18	..	2	..	17	..	33
65 „ „ 75	39	..	3	..	33	..	69
75 and upwards	85	..	8	..	65	..	142
Totals for Benfleet	149	..	14	..	132	..	267
<i>Canvey Island U.D.</i>							
Under 1 year ..	4	..	—	..	3	..	7
1 and under 2	—	..	—	..	—	..	—
2 „ „ 5	2	..	—	..	—	..	2
5 „ „ 15	—	..	—	..	—	..	—
15 „ „ 25	1	..	—	..	1	..	2
25 „ „ 35	1	..	—	..	1	..	2
35 „ „ 45	1	..	—	..	2	..	3
45 „ „ 55	2	..	—	..	6	..	8
55 „ „ 65	17	..	1	..	11	..	27
65 „ „ 75	27	..	1	..	28	..	54
75 and upwards	35	..	3	..	19	..	51
Totals for Canvey Is.	90	..	5	..	71	..	156
<i>Rayleigh U.D.</i>							
Under 1 year	—	..	—	..	3	..	3
1 and under 2	—	..	—	..	—	..	—
2 „ „ 5	—	..	—	..	—	..	—
5 „ „ 15	—	..	—	..	—	..	—
15 „ „ 25	—	..	—	..	—	..	—
25 „ „ 35	—	..	—	..	—	..	—
35 „ „ 45	—	..	—	..	3	..	3
45 „ „ 55	1	..	—	..	3	..	4
55 „ „ 65	7	..	—	..	9	..	16
65 „ „ 75	16	..	—	..	18	..	34
75 and upwards	38	..	—	..	27	..	65
Totals for Rayleigh	62	..	—	..	63	..	125

CAUSES OF DEATH DURING 1955.

		Benfleet U.D.				Canvey Island U.D.				Rayleigh U.D.		
		Male	Female	Total		Male	Female	Total		Male	Female	Total
1.	All causes	130	137	267	..	82	74	156	..	61	64	125
2.	Tuberculosis, respiratory	2	—	2	..	—	—	—	..	—	—	—
3.	Tuberculosis, other	—	—	—	..	—	—	—	..	—	—	—
4.	Syphilitic disease	1	—	1	..	—	—	—	..	—	—	—
5.	Diphtheria	—	—	—	..	—	—	—	..	—	—	—
6.	Whooping Cough	—	—	—	..	—	—	—	..	—	—	—
7.	Meningococcal Infections	—	—	—	..	—	—	—	..	—	—	—
8.	Acute Poliomyelitis	—	—	—	..	—	—	—	..	—	—	—
9.	Measles	—	—	—	..	—	—	—	..	—	—	—
10.	Other infective and parasitic diseases	—	1	1	..	—	—	—	..	—	—	—
11.	Malignant neoplasm, stomach	2	2	4	..	2	—	2	..	1	5	6
12.	Malignant neoplasm, lung, bronchus	6	3	9	..	10	1	11	..	4	1	5
13.	Malignant neoplasm, breast	—	7	7	..	—	2	2	..	—	1	1
14.	Malignant neoplasm, uterus	—	4	4	..	—	5	5	..	—	—	—
15.	Other malignant & lymphatic neoplasms	10	9	19	..	8	7	15	..	7	7	14
16.	Leukaemia, aleukaemia	1	—	1	..	—	—	—	..	—	—	—
17.	Diabetes	2	2	4	..	—	2	2	..	—	—	—
18.	Vascular lesions of nervous system	22	28	50	..	9	7	16	..	7	12	19
19.	Coronary disease, angina	28	20	48	..	17	11	28	..	12	10	22
20.	Hypertension with heart disease	2	7	9	..	3	1	4	..	1	1	2
21.	Other heart disease	16	18	34	..	7	8	15	..	7	9	16
22.	Other circulatory disease	8	3	11	..	3	3	6	..	2	4	6
23.	Influenza	—	1	1	..	—	—	—	..	—	—	—
24.	Pneumonia	6	8	14	..	5	4	9	..	4	5	9
25.	Bronchitis	6	3	9	..	5	1	6	..	5	—	5
26.	Other diseases of respiratory system	2	—	2	..	2	—	2	..	—	—	—
27.	Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	3	1	4	..	1	1	2	..	—	—	—
28.	Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea	—	3	3	..	—	—	—	..	—	—	—
29.	Nephritis and nephrosis	—	—	—	..	—	—	—	..	—	—	—
30.	Hyperplasia of prostate	1	—	1	..	3	—	3	..	3	—	3
31.	Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion	—	—	—	..	—	—	—	..	—	—	—
32.	Congenital malformations	1	—	1	..	—	1	1	..	1	—	1
33.	Other defined and ill-defined diseases	8	13	21	..	3	16	19	..	7	7	14
34.	Motor vehicle accidents	1	—	1	..	—	—	—	..	—	—	—
35.	All other accidents	1	3	4	..	3	2	5	..	—	1	1
36.	Suicide	1	1	2	..	1	2	3	..	—	—	—
	Homicide and operations of war	—	—	—	..	—	—	—	..	—	—	—

VITAL STATISTICS FOR 25 YEARS

Year	England and Wales			Benfleet U.D.			Canvey Island U.D.			Rayleigh U.D.		
	Birth Rate	Death Rate	Infant Mortality Rate	Birth Rate	Death Rate	Infant Mortality Rate	Birth Rate	Death Rate	Infant Mortality Rate	Birth Rate	Death Rate	Infant Mortality Rate
1931	16.0	11.0	66	14.4	11.3	40.2	9.2	10.5	71.4	16.0	11.0	40.0
1932	15.3	12.0	65	14.1	12.8	39.0	19.5	12.1	39.5	15.2	10.9	68.6
1933	14.4	12.3	64	11.6	12.7	33.0	14.9	12.3	29.4	13.4	9.8	10.8
1934	14.8	11.8	59	12.8	12.4	50.6	19.3	16.0	31.9	12.4	10.5	83.0
1935	14.7	11.7	57	11.6	12.0	30.3	10.9	13.2	49.1	13.4	11.7	30.9
1936	14.8	12.1	59	14.6	12.7	51.6	15.2	11.9	97.8	12.7	12.8	76.1
1937	14.9	12.4	58	12.2	12.0	68.1	12.9	12.6	130.9	13.1	11.9	51.0
1938	15.1	11.6	53	12.2	13.0	40.2	13.4	12.8	90.9	12.1	12.7	32.9
1939	15.0	12.1	50	14.1	12.3	28.9	13.6	14.0	47.1	12.6	14.2	66.6
1940	14.6	14.3	55	12.2	15.2	43.2	13.9	15.2	—	12.0	13.6	74.5
1941	14.2	12.9	59	14.2	15.9	39.1	16.1	15.1	50.5	12.0	13.7	50.5
1942	15.8	11.6	49	14.3	14.7	44.4	22.7	13.4	36.5	16.1	15.5	39.0
1943	16.5	12.1	49	15.3	16.2	47.2	20.3	17.1	75.0	14.8	14.5	17.7
1944	17.6	11.6	46	17.3	13.9	53.2	19.6	14.0	67.1	15.2	13.7	35.4
1945	16.1	11.4	46	16.3	14.9	10.6	17.2	10.4	43.7	16.3	15.9	16.2
1946	19.1	11.5	43	19.0	12.2	16.6	22.7	13.8	33.8	17.5	12.7	6.8
1947	20.5	12.0	41	19.4	15.6	20.9	23.8	13.1	29.3	22.0	15.9	26.2
1948	17.9	10.8	34	16.1	14.3	41.3	18.1	14.7	42.1	17.3	9.5	12.5
1949	16.7	11.7	32	15.4	14.3	36.5	17.8	12.2	10.6	15.9	16.2	47.0
1950	15.8	11.6	30	12.9	14.1	35.4	16.5	14.1	39.3	13.1	11.9	16.1
1951	15.5	12.5	30	12.1	15.3	29.3	18.6	14.2	14.6	13.8	14.1	—
1952	15.3	11.3	28	13.7	15.3	29.7	14.6	12.6	47.0	14.3	14.2	22.2
1953	15.5	11.4	27	13.0	14.5	35.0	14.6	20.5	23.3	12.2	14.9	17.2
1954	15.2	11.3	26	12.5	11.9	27.7	16.7	11.3	25.0	15.9	11.5	—
1955	15.0	11.7	25	15.1	12.4	18.5	14.5	13.0	40.0	14.0	10.9	18.6
Average for past 25 years	15.9	11.9	46	14.3	13.7	36.4	16.7	13.6	46.6	14.5	13.0	34.4
15 years	16.4	11.7	38	15.1	14.4	32.4	18.3	14.0	38.5	15.4	13.7	21.7
5 years	15.3	11.6	27	13.3	13.9	28.0	15.8	14.3	30.0	14.0	13.1	11.6

SOCIAL CONDITIONS

These were described at length in my 1954 Report and remain essentially unchanged apart from the following additional amenities provided during the year.

The Benfleet U.D.C. have extended their John H. Burrows Recreation Ground, providing for additional cricket and football pitches. New Dressing Rooms and four hard tennis courts have been provided. At Thundersley, nine acres have been made available for Equestrian use at Runnymede Chase and at South Benfleet the Council have built a new Bowls Pavilion.

Extensive building development is taking place, and during the year was particularly heavy in Benfleet and Rayleigh Urban Districts.

The rapid building development is reflected in the increased school population. At 31st December, 1955, 6,829 children were registered as attending maintained schools in the three areas. A small number of these children would be living in adjoining areas (Hockley, Leigh, etc.) but in addition, a number of children from Benfleet, Canvey and Rayleigh attend private and grammar schools in adjacent areas.

LABORATORY SERVICE

The three Districts continued to be well served by the Public Health Laboratory at Balmoral Road, Westcliff-on-Sea for the routine bacteriological examination of samples of food, milk, ice-cream, water and sewage, and I am indebted to Dr. R. Pilsworth, M.D., the Director in Charge, and his staff, for very helpful co-operation during the year. I am advised that during the course of the year under review, 94 samples involving milk, ice-cream, water, cockles and other foods were examined on behalf of the three Authorities. A number of these examinations included portions of slaughtered animals from the Hadleigh Slaughterhouse.

Arrangements undertaken by the Essex County Council have continued during the year for the examination of specimens by the Counties Public Health Laboratories of Victoria Street, London, S.W.1, and during the year seven chemical and bacteriological examinations were carried out on behalf of the Benfleet and Canvey Island Urban District Councils.

AMBULANCE SERVICE

The Essex County Council's Ambulance Service continued to operate very successfully throughout the year and the following summary of work carried out by the two ambulance stations in the area will give an idea of the immense value that this essential service has proved to the community.

			Thundersley Ambulance Station		Canvey Island Ambulance Station
Maternity cases	..	..	203	..	53
Accident cases	..	..	305	..	79
Other Emergency cases	..	..	567	..	141
Non-Emergency cases	..	..	15,309	..	4,250
Mileage covered	..	..	139,188	..	34,666
Miles per patient	..	..	8.5	..	7.7

The strength of both personnel and vehicles remained unchanged during the year.

At the Thundersley Station there are two stretcher case vehicles and three sitting case vehicles with a personnel strength of 17, including the Station Officer and Assistant Station Officer. At Canvey Island there is one stretcher case vehicle and five personnel.

Call arrangements continue as hitherto. Areas with an automatic telephone should dial 999 in case of emergency. This includes areas covered by the Hadleigh and South Benfleet Exchanges. Where there is no dialling system, the caller should ask the Operator for an ambulance for emergency purposes. This system prevails for areas covered by the Rayleigh and Canvey Island Exchanges. Non-emergency calls should be made by a responsible person to the County Ambulance Officer (telephone Chelmsford 4801) when it is necessary to state (1) if a trained nurse is required, (2) if a sitting case vehicle is required, and (3) in respect of a case of infectious disease, an indication of the nature of the disease as pronounced by the Medical Attendant.

Requests for the removal of cases of infectious diseases are usually made by the private doctor to the Medical Officer of Health or his staff when arrangements are made accordingly. With the exception of serious infectious conditions, such as smallpox, cases of infectious disease are carried in the ordinary ambulances of the County Ambulance Service and the vehicle used is thoroughly disinfected immediately afterwards.

The telephone number of the Thundersley Ambulance Station is South Benfleet 2323 and of the Canvey Island Station, Canvey 161.

LOCAL HEALTH AUTHORITY SERVICES

These are administered locally throughout the South-East Essex area by Dr. W. J. Moffat, Area Medical Officer, 153, High Street, Rayleigh, telephone Rayleigh 831-2, and include—

Home Nursing

Midwifery, including Ante-Natal and Post-Natal care and Confinements at home.

Health Visiting, including the home care of persons suffering from Tuberculosis.

Domestic Helps.

School Health, including the special care of handicapped children.

Clinics, which include special sessions for Mothers and Babies, Expectant Mothers, Dental Treatment for mothers and children, Eyes (schoolchildren), Minor Ailments (schoolchildren), Speech Therapy and Immunisation against Diphtheria and Vaccination against Smallpox.

All matters relating to mental health are dealt with direct through the department of the County Medical Officer of Health, County Hall, Chelmsford.

Modern well appointed Health Service Clinic buildings are situated at London Road, Hadleigh ; Kenneth Road, Thundersley ; High Road, South Benfleet ; Furtherwick Road, Canvey Island and Eastwood Road, Rayleigh.

HOSPITAL SERVICE

Patients requiring hospital treatment are normally admitted to either the Southend or Rochford General Hospitals by direct arrangement between General Practitioners and the Hospital concerned. However, when no beds are available locally, the Emergency Bed Service located at St. John's Hospital, Wood Street, Chelmsford (telephone Chelmsford 4467) undertakes to find hospital accommodation as near as practicable to the patient's home. In certain circumstances the Medical Officer of Health is requested to support applications for urgent priority. Cases of infectious disease are usually sent to the Westcliff Hospital, although serious cases of Acute Poliomyelitis are accommodated by the Poliomyelitis Unit at Rush Green Hospital, Romford.

Further information on the hospital facilities for the area are published annually in the Handbook of the North-East Metropolitan Regional Hospital Board (Secretary—G. E. Nichol, O.B.E., 11a, Portland Place, London, W.1.) or can be obtained on application to the Secretary of the Southend-on-Sea Group Hospital Management Committee (J. C. Field, F.H.A.) at the General Hospital, Rochford (telephone Rochford 56471-5).

GENERAL MEDICAL SERVICES

All matters relating to the General Medical, Dental and Pharmaceutical Services should be referred to The Clerk of the Executive Council for the County of Essex (National Health Service) (E. Bergdahl), 131/3, Fillebrook Road, Leytonstone, London, E.11.

For information, the following is a list of medical practitioners practising within the Urban Districts of Benfleet, Canvey Island and Rayleigh at 31st December, 1955—

Benfleet U.D. :

Dr. D. I. Acres, Pendley House, London Road, Great Tarpots. Tel. : Sth. Benfleet 3311.

Dr. A. C. Braby, 20, Sutherland Boulevard, Leigh-on-Sea. Tel. : Leigh-on-Sea 76545.

Dr. D. H. Eaton, "Suttons," 36, Essex Way, South Benfleet. Tel. : Sth. Benfleet 2203.

Dr. A. W. G. Elliott, 146, Hart Road, Thundersley. Tel. : Rayleigh 888.

- Dr. W. L. James, O.B.E.(Mil.), Hadleigh Hall, Hadleigh. Tel : Hadleigh 58147.
- Dr. G. J. Leyden, 1809, London Road, Leigh-on-Sea. Tel. : Hadleigh 58724.
- Dr. Joan Lush, 116, Hamlet Court Road, Westcliff-on-Sea. Tel. : Southend 3140.
- Dr. S. McGladdery, " Rosemead," 653, London Road, Hadleigh. Tel. : Hadleigh 58714.
- Dr. D. Rough, 276, Kiln Road, Thundersley. Tel. : Hadleigh 57676.
- Dr. R. C. F. Stephens, " Suttons," 36, Essex Way, South Benfleet. Tel. : Sth. Benfleet 2203.
- Dr. R. L. Timms, Thundersley Manor, Church Road, Thundersley. Tel. : Sth. Benfleet 3333.
- Dr. V. F. Tyndall, 324, High Road, Sth. Benfleet. Tel. : Sth. Benfleet 2265.
- Dr. T. M. Wilks, O.B.E., T.D., The Cottage, 123, Kiln Road, Thundersley. Tel. : Hadleigh 58515.

Canvey Island U.D.

- Dr. J. H. Beasley, " Rathruadh," Long Road, Canvey Island. Tel. : Canvey 87.
- Dr. E. W. Heining, " St. Margarets," Long Road, Canvey Island. Tel. : Canvey 288.
- Dr. J. K. Lintner, " Domovina," Furtherwick Road, Canvey Island. Tel. : Canvey 579.
- Dr. K. A. Machacek, " Domovina," Furtherwick Road, Canvey Island. Tel. : Canvey 579.
- Dr. P. J. Sonnek, " Domovina," Furtherwick Road, Canvey Island. Tel. : Canvey 579.

Rayleigh U.D.

- Dr. C. H. Bateman, " Sweyns," Hockley Road, Rayleigh. Tel. : Rayleigh 36.
- Dr. Robert Frew, " Ladybrow," High Street, Wickford. Tel. : Wickford 3020.
- Dr. T. J. Guinan, " Poplars," Hockley Road, Rayleigh. Tel. : Rayleigh 4.
- Dr. S. A. Jolliffe, 83, London Road, Rayleigh. Tel. : Rayleigh 1003.
- Dr. P. George C. Jones, " Hillcrest," High Road, Hockley. Tel. : Hockley 30.
- Dr. H. A. Nicholls, " Caradon," High Road, Rayleigh. Tel. : Rayleigh 132.
- Dr. A. Zisserman, 15, Eastwood Road, Rayleigh. Tel. : Rayleigh 994.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES

Water Supply

The water supply to this area is provided by the Southend Waterworks Company whose head office is at 13, Cambridge Road, Southend-on-Sea. Apart from a small proportion of water from local deep wells provided with electrically operated pumps, the source of supply is derived from river sources, and is pumped from the Company's main works at Langford, near Maldon. The Company's own Chemists make daily tests of the treated water going into the supply from river sources and fortnightly analyses of the water from local deep wells. In addition, half-yearly samples are examined by the Counties Public Health Laboratories. Such tests proved that the water is of normal chemical character and good bacteriological quality, and consequently pure and wholesome and suitable for public supply purposes. During 1955 the supply was satisfactory both as regards quality and quantity. No lead contamination of the water supplies was encountered during the year.

In the **Benfleet** Urban District 99.5% of all the dwelling-houses are connected to the main water supply. The supply is direct to the houses, there being no stand-pipes. Those premises not connected to the mains rely on supplies from rain-water tanks or shallow wells. Notices under the provisions of the Water Act, 1945 were served upon the owners of two dwellings during the year requiring connections to the water main, and these were complied with. Water main extensions of approximately 450 yards to afford a supply to eight existing dwellings were made. Since 1948, the District Council has arranged for the laying of 9,500 yards of water main and have contributed £7,050 towards the cost. A total of 609 new houses and bungalows erected during the year were connected to the main water supply.

At **Canvey Island** during 1955 reports of corrosion of certain water storage fittings such as water waste preventors, gas geysers and hot water radiators were investigated. After exhaustive enquiries, samples of the corrosive deposit were sent for chemical examination to the Building Research Station, Garston, Herts. It was found that the union of copper service pipes with aluminium alloy cisterns etc. and fittings, created a serious electrolytic reaction, even to a greater extent than the well known reaction of zinc with copper. Such electrolytic activity causes plating out of copper from the copper piping to the aluminium alloy fittings, thereby creating heavy corrosive deposits. All interested parties in this matter were contacted—Water, Gas and Electricity Undertakings, the manufacturers of cold and hot water appliances and the Non-Ferrous Metals Association. Steps were immediately taken by these Undertakings and the Manufacturers to investigate the matter from their own particular aspect, and subsequently heavy lacquering of aluminium alloy fittings to provide a protective film over the alloy material was put in hand as one measure to combat the trouble. The complete answer to the problem has not yet been established and the matter is still being actively pursued. However, no evidence has been given that any public health aspects were involved by this corrosion.

During the year a further 315 properties were connected to the mains supply, including properties abutting new mains laid. The 66 new properties erected during the year are included in this total of new connections. Thus, in all, a total of 4,536 properties on the Island are connected to the main water supply and a further 159 properties are served by means of stand-pipes. During the year a total of 518 yards of new water mains were laid. In the past eight years nearly ten miles of water main have been laid and over 1,400 properties connected thereto.

In the **Rayleigh** Urban District 98.88% of all dwelling-houses were supplied with main water at the 31st December, 1955. Of this figure, 0.028% were supplied by means of stand-pipes. 565 new houses and six existing houses were connected to the main supply during the year.

Drainage & Sewerage.

In the **Benfleet** Urban District it is estimated that 94% of all properties are connected to the main drainage system. 126 dwellings are served by cesspools and a further 350 houses and bungalows are provided with earth closets. During the year seven existing premises were connected to the main sewer and two to cesspools, whilst extensions or improvements were carried out to the drainage of four existing buildings. The number of connections to the main sewer was also increased by the 609 new properties which were erected during the year.

The energy of the **Canvey Island** Urban District Council is evidenced in its determination to provide a main drainage system to the whole of the area in the shortest possible time. During 1955 over 900 yards of new sewers were laid to serve existing properties in Spanbeck, Hernen and Taranto Roads and Helden, Meyel, Cassel and Gainsborough Avenues and South Parade, also to serve the new Council House Site in Haven Road, and private development in Handel & Cleveland Roads and Seaway. In addition, a short private sewer extension was carried out at the northern end of the Dutch Village.

The laying of sewers to serve existing properties in Benham, Northfalls and Springfield Roads and Zelham Drive was commenced early in 1956 as part of the original 1955 programme, and if combined drains are laid to serve properties in adjacent roads, Zider Pass, Aalten Avenue, west side of Chapman Road and the east side of Van Diemens Pass will also be served with the main drainage system. All these roads are in The Point area.

In 1955 124 properties were connected to the main sewers. During the eight years ending 31st December, 1955 $6\frac{3}{4}$ miles of sewers have been laid and 1,492 properties drained thereto.

It is estimated that the main sewers serve 90% of the properties in the **Rayleigh** Urban District. During 1955, 565 new houses and bungalows were connected to the sewer. About 276 properties in the District are provided with cesspools and a further 191 with earth closets.

Public Cleansing

In the **Benfleet** Urban District house refuse is disposed of by controlled tipping on the Benfleet Marshes. In this system, refuse is tipped in orderly layers and covered with suitable innocuous material. At the completion of the tipping the land will have been raised to such a level that it can be used for recreation purposes. During 1955 refuse was collected weekly from all accessible parts of the District and the Service functioned satisfactorily. Efforts to salvage all materials of value continued, and the sum of £1,111 10s. 2d. was received from the sale of such materials.

At **Canvey Island** controlled tipping continues to be the method of refuse disposal, the system having proved its worth from the point of view of economy, public health and land reclamation. The filling of the large tracts of land made useless by the great "borrow pits" dug out to provide thousands of tons of clay in re-building the flood damaged sea-walls is a major problem and these will take years to fill. Private agricultural land continued to be used by arrangement with the owner, and a considerable area of land has thus been reclaimed. This has been at no cost to the Local Authority as the covering material was provided by the local owner and transported at his own expense. The land purchased by the Council on the Newlands Estate, part of which has been earmarked as a permanent refuse disposal site, has not yet been utilised.

It has not been found necessary to increase the regular fortnightly domestic refuse collection service which proved adequate during the year. This is attributed to the fact that much ash is used by householders for paths, etc. and paper salvage is burned with garden refuse. Trade refuse is collected on the same basis as a free collection, but additional collections are made on a rechargeable basis for twice weekly collections, and most traders have availed themselves of this service, particularly during the summer period.

The **Rayleigh** Urban District Council endeavoured to maintain a regular house-to-house collection of refuse throughout the District, at weekly intervals in the case of made roads and at fortnightly intervals for un-made roads. Owing to labour shortages, however, there were, at times, longer periods between collections. Collection was made by two side loading vehicles of 13 and 7 cubic yard capacity. During the latter part of the year, the 7 cubic yard vehicle was replaced by one of 10 cubic yard capacity. Refuse is disposed of by controlled tipping.

Night soil was collected at weekly intervals from 91 premises.

148 tons of material was salvaged and produced an income of £1,243.

Factories Acts, 1937 and 1948

In the area covered by the **Benfleet** Urban District there is a total of 74 factories on the register of the Local Authority. 70 of these premises employ mechanical power. Inspections were made on 57 occasions during the year and 14 defects were found. By the end of the year 14 defects had been remedied by the occupiers. No legal

proceedings were taken. Also, five work-places were inspected and 16 inspections were made at sites of building operations. Four contraventions were found, all of which were remedied by the end of the year.

All listed factories on **Canvey Island** are with mechanical power, there being 25 registered at the end of the year. Where there is shown a depreciation in numbers of factories registered from one year to another it does not follow that factory premises have closed down. For the premises to be listed as such under the Acts persons must be employed carrying out the factory processes. Where the operatives are self-employed the premises are not statutory factories and where machines such as mincing machines in butchers' premises are used for a very limited period during the business hours of the premises, such premises are not listed as "factories."

Informal action was taken in respect of the drainage system of two factories, and in respect of a third—a bakehouse—to cleanse and improve the sanitary accommodation. Extension to an existing factory necessitated the construction of additional sanitary accommodation to comply with the provisions of the Factories Acts.

There were 24 Outworkers registered with the Local Authority at the end of the year. Three-quarters of these were engaged in the manufacture of clothing. Other occupations included Plastics, Card-board boxes and Christmas crackers.

The **Rayleigh** Urban District has 49 premises registered as factories under the above Acts, and 46 of these employ mechanical power. During the year 18 inspections were made and no defects were found.

Moveable Dwellings

CARAVANS—In the **Benfleet** Urban District the Council's Caravan Park in Hart Road, Thundersley continued to meet a need, and there were 203 caravans stationed thereon at the end of the year. There is also a private site in the District licensed for five caravans. There were no contraventions of the conditions attaching to the licence during the year.

At **Canvey Island** there are six licensed camping sites which are open for permanent use throughout the year. Except one site which is not on the line of the main sewer, all are provided with main drainage facilities. This excepted site is provided with flush toilets and washing facilities by the installation of a septic tank. All such sites are kept under constant surveillance, particularly during the seasonal peak periods, and no contravention of licence conditions was observed. This type of holiday accommodation, popularised since the end of World War II, appears to have become a permanent feature, possibly because of its cheapness and the freedom from restrictions, usually associated with the more conventional holiday accommodation. Environmental health discipline was well maintained by site dwellers, with an occasional word of advice to those not used to this mode of living.

There still remains a number of individual moveable dwellings on private land in use for permanent habitation, but the steady progress in private and Local Authority building is helping to discourage this

form of development. There are a number of moveable dwellings on temporary and public health licences stationed on private land in various parts of the District. These are mostly modern trailer caravans used for holiday accommodation.

There are no licensed caravan sites within the **Rayleigh** Urban District.

HOUSEBOATS—In the **Benfleet** Urban District 35 consents to moor houseboats in Benfleet Creek were issued by the Council under the provisions of the Essex County Council Act, 1952. Five houseboats were removed or demolished during the course of the year as a result of notices served on the owners. Eight appeals against notices were still outstanding at the end of the year.

As far as **Canvey Island** is concerned, houseboats are moored in Small Gains Creek, with some being in the land-locked section cut off by the construction of the dam built across the creek by the Essex Rivers Board as part of the sea defence works carried out after the Flood in 1953. These cannot now be regarded as "craft" as they lay on the bed of the Creek which has now dried out. One houseboat only is moored in Tewkes Creek. In the main, most of the houseboats are used for holiday accommodation and few are permanently occupied.

There are five houseboats in the **Rayleigh** Urban District and none are permanently occupied. It was agreed to license one of these, and steps are being taken to secure the removal of the others. Two houseboats were removed during 1955.

Atmospheric Pollution

In respect of Smoke Abatement, six smoke observations were made in the **Benfleet** Urban District during the year, but no notices were served. There were no smoke nuisances at **Canvey Island** during 1955. At **Rayleigh**, the conditions arising from the burning of industrial waste referred to in the 1954 Report showed improvement during the year.

The "SMELL" nuisance from the Thameside Oil Refineries continued to give rise for concern, and at times caused severe discomfort to residents and visitors, particularly at Canvey Island. It has been found that high humidity and south westerly winds are the two favourable conditions which render the nuisance more noticeable in these areas.

Officials and members of both Benfleet and Canvey Island Councils visited the Refineries concerned during the year, when an extensive tour of the whole plant area was made. Benfleet representatives made visits in January and June and from Canvey Island in January. These visits were an excellent opportunity for the Local Government representatives to express their concern at the seriousness of the nuisance and the adverse affect upon the areas which are normally noted for their healthy bracing air. At these visits the Management of both Refineries were found to be most helpful and co-operative and technical difficulties were explained, with details of action already taken to counteract earlier complaints. An assurance was also given that every effort would be made, regardless of financial involvement, to do everything humanly possible to minimise the cause for future complaint.

The Alkali etc. Works Inspectorate of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government are the responsible officers for ensuring that the Refineries are operated within the limits of appropriate legislation for establishments of that nature, and the fullest co-operation exists between this Central Government Department and the Local Authorities concerned.

The following is the text of a letter received from Mr. Geo. Tiplady, M.Sc., F.R.I.C., an Inspector of the Central Government Department referred to, subsequent to consultations held at the M.O.H. Office in October :—

“ In confirmation of my visit to you on the 11th October, the following steps have been taken during the current year at Thames-side oil refineries to effect reduction in odorous emissions.

At one refinery a new flare stack has been installed but attempts to improve the burning of surplus gas have raised technical difficulties and modifications are now in hand. Another refinery is also carrying out an investigation into reduction of smoke during the combustion of surplus gas.

An after burner for treatment of the waste gases before escape to air has been installed on a catalytic cracking plant. Ancillary plant has also been put to work to assist in smoother running of the unit and further modification to this end is under consideration.

Work on the reduction of odours by chemical treatment has been carried out and the investigation is to continue.”

Discharge of waste liquids into the Thames has, from time to time, polluted the western area of the foreshore at Canvey Island and the Benfleet Creek.

The question of the “ Smell ” nuisance from the Thameside Oil Refineries has been raised in the House of Commons by local Members of Parliament and supporting protests have been made by neighbouring affected Local Authorities.

During 1955 the “ Smell ” nuisance was detected on Canvey Island for 63 days spread over the year.

Rats and Mice

In the **Benfleet** Urban District a total of 348 visits were made in connection with inspections for and treatment of rats and mice infestations.

At **Canvey Island** 46 inspections were found necessary and 13 private properties were treated during the year. The Council's controlled refuse tipping site is periodically treated and special treatments are arranged as required. Except for two special treatments during the year the tip was remarkably free from infestation. Carelessness by holiday-makers during the summer season in the disposal of waste scraps of food unfortunately gives encouragement to the rodent population.

In the **Rayleigh** Urban District 90 premises were treated during the year. No major infestations were found, but minor infestations occur and re-occur from time to time. A contributing factor for this is the farming activities carried on in the rural parts of the District.

Vermin

No cases were reported in the **Benfleet** Urban District during the year. Only one case at **Canvey Island** required treatment by the Local Authority. One verminous dwelling was disinfested at **Rayleigh** during the year.

Close liaison is maintained with the County Welfare Department where "problem families" and aged persons in need of care and attention often call for assistance in this respect.

Pet Animals Act, 1951

The **Benfleet** Council issued three licences in respect of the keeping of tortoises, chickens up to the age of one month, and birds. Three visits were made to pet shops during the year and conditions were found to be satisfactory.

There are no premises at **Canvey Island** registered for this purpose.

Two licences were issued during the year for the keeping of pets for sale in the **Rayleigh** Urban District.

Storage of Petroleum

Routine inspections in each of the three Districts were made during the year in respect of applications to store petroleum spirit. The number of licences issued during 1955 were as follows—**Benfleet** 47, **Canvey Island** 11 and **Rayleigh** 20.

In addition, the **Benfleet** U.D.C. issued one licence for the storage of carbide of calcium.

At **Canvey Island** two of the licences issued involve the bulk storage installations of the London and Coastal Oil Wharves Ltd. and the Regent Oil Company Ltd. These Depots are fed from ocean going tankers which are unloaded at the special pipe-line jetties constructed in deep water at Hole Haven. Additional storage tanks at both these Depots were constructed during the year. Care has been taken during inspections to ensure that precautions against fire at these large undertakings are adequate. The licence of the London and Coastal Oil Wharves Ltd. covers the storage of 120,000 tons of petroleum products, and that for the Regent Oil Company Ltd. for 18,128,000 gallons.

Public Conveniences

In the **Benfleet** Urban District there are four public conveniences owned and maintained by the Local Authority. One is situated at Rushbottom Lane, Great Tarpots; one at Rectory Road, Hadleigh (where a useful bus shelter is also provided); one at Victoria House Corner, Hadleigh and one at School Lane, South Benfleet. Also, during the year toilet facilities were provided at the Council's Cemetery at South Benfleet.

At **Canvey Island** there are five public conveniences provided and maintained by the Local Authority. These are suitably situated as follows :—Long Road ; High Street ; Seaview Road (Promenade East) ; Labworth (Promenade Central) ; and Thorney Bay (Promenade West).

The **Rayleigh** Urban District Council provides a public convenience in the centre of the main shopping area.

Markets

The only market in the three Districts is situate in Rayleigh and is privately owned. Business is held every Wednesday morning and the goods sold include foodstuffs and general items.

Infectious Diseases

In the **Benfleet** Urban District the Sanitary Inspectors made 27 visits to premises following the notification of infectious diseases. Also, 96 visits were made to the contacts of such diseases. Disinfection was carried out at five dwellings.

Canvey Island Council's Sanitary Inspectors made 253 visits during the year in connection with cases and contacts of infectious disease. A large number of these visits were associated with investigations and follow up of contacts during the seasonal incidence of Poliomyelitis. Disinfection was carried out as found necessary.

The Sanitary Inspector for the **Rayleigh** Urban District made 13 visits during the year for the purpose of investigating the circumstances associated with the occurrence of infectious diseases and of contacts living locally of cases occurring in other areas. Disinfection was carried out where necessary.

General

The Sanitary Inspectors of the **Benfleet** Urban District Council made a total of 3,289 visits during the year. These are classified as follows :—

General Sanitation	..	..	..	1,293
Food and Food Premises	..	..	..	1,176
Housing	..	..	..	697
Infectious Diseases	..	..	..	123

92 Informal Notices and 15 Statutory Notices were served. There were 35 Notices outstanding at the commencement of the year. During the year, 93 Notices were complied with, leaving 34 not complied with at 31st December, 1955. Legal proceedings were taken on one occasion and a Nuisance Order was made. A total of 121 complaints was received.

At **Canvey Island** the Sanitary Inspector's Department made 4,774 visits during the year, an increase of 1,241 visits over those carried out the previous year. The growth of the District year by year is reflected in this figure as also does the increasing pressure of work falling to the Inspectors whose number has not been increased since the War. The Council's drive to provide main drainage to as many

properties as possible is revealed in the 1,657 inspections made for this purpose. The legacy of dampness from salt impregnated buildings following the sea flooding of 1953 continues to give concern and necessitated 209 inspections to affected properties during the year. The total visits and inspections are summarised as follows :—

Aged persons	77
Atmospheric pollution	87
Camping sites and moveable dwellings	106
Factories	23
Flood damaged properties	209
Flooding	27
Food inspections	116
Housing—Housing Act	230
Housing—Public Health Act	531
Housing Survey	155
Infectious Disease and Disinfection	264
Insect control and vermin	192
Local drainage and conservancy systems	112
Nuisances	272
Petroleum	15
Public cleansing	431
Rodent control	46
Sewer connections	1,657
Water supply	163
Waterways pollution	61

A total of 291 complaints were received during the year and over 50% were in respect of atmospheric pollution, flooding and brown-tail moth infestation. Housing defects accounted for about 35%, and the remaining 15% in respect of water supplies, food and general nuisances.

35 Informal Notices were served during the year. At the 31st December, 1955 a total of 36 Notices had been complied with (including a number from the previous year), and 20 were remaining outstanding, although the work in respect of these was in hand. Informal Notices served in respect of flood damaged properties in Rainbow Avenue were complied with. Three Statutory Notices were served and one was complied with. The necessary work in respect of the other two had been put in hand by the end of the year.

In the **Rayleigh** Urban District the Sanitary Inspector's Department received 159 complaints during 1955 and in connection with these and general routine work, 1,310 visits and inspections were made. Such visits were associated with the detection and abatement of nuisances, the repair and improvement of dwelling-houses, the abatement of overcrowding, the rehousing of persons inadequately housed, the storage of petroleum, the keeping of animals, the eradication of rats and mice, the administration of the Factories Acts, Shops Act, Milk and Dairies Regulations, the inspection of food and food premises, enquiries into cases of infectious diseases and food poisoning, water supply surveys, moveable dwellings, refuse collection and the collection of salvage, and improvement grants, etc.

During the year it was found necessary to serve 54 Informal Notices and in eight instances these were succeeded by Statutory Notices. 39 Notices were complied with during 1955. Works were also completed during the year in respect of 18 instances where the service of Notices was found not to be necessary. The following is a summary of all the completed works referred to :—

Houses repaired	14
Ditches cleared	4
Drains cleared after blockage	18
Water supplies re-connected	2
Houseboats removed	3
Drains repaired	8
Food premises improved	8

SCHOOL LAVATORIES

There is an urgent need for new conveniences with modern washing facilities at the Rayleigh Primary School. The existing lavatories, built over 50 years ago, were designed for less than half the present school population. In addition to being inadequate, sub-standard and badly sited, they are not covered in, and during cold spells most of the flushing equipment is frozen and out of action. The Local Education Authority have plans for improving the situation in their 1957/58 programme.

HOUSING

Benfleet U.D.

During the year 67 complaints regarding housing defects were received and 60 Notices were served. At 31st December, 1955 29 Notices were outstanding.

Demolition Order procedure under Section 11 of the Housing Act, 1936 was taken in respect of ten houses and five Orders were made. Five undertakings were accepted and one Closing Order was made.

There were 430 applications for Council Houses on the waiting list at the end of the year, including 122 applicants for Old People's Bungalows. During the year 68 Council Houses and Bungalows were completed. A further 541 dwellings were erected by private builders.

No Improvement Grants were made.

At 31st December, 1955, there were 203 permanently occupied caravans on the Council's Residential Caravan Park in Hart Road, Thundersley. All available pitches were occupied and a further 30 applicants were on the waiting list for pitches as and when they become vacant.

Canvey Island U.D.

During the year a total of 761 inspections and re-visits were necessary in respect of housing defects. Of these, 531 were made under the provisions of the Public Health Act, 1936, and 230 under the Housing Acts.

45 complaints of housing defects were received and action was necessary in 30 of these cases. In all cases of defects warranting official action, work was in hand at the close of the year except in four instances, but in two of these the property became vacant and the work is to be carried out before re-occupation.

Salt water impregnation of structures continues to be a major cause of complaint, but where the special treatment of wall linings is carried out as advised, no secondary complaints have been received. Where minor defects to properties existed before the 1953 flooding, the salt water impregnation has been claimed in numerous instances to have accelerated and extended the damage, creating major defects. Many such cases have had to be investigated and appropriate action taken.

Two Demolition Orders made prior to 1955 were complied with during that year. Of two further Demolition Orders, made in 1953, one was suspended by a Court ruling that the property could be used as office accommodation, but by the end of the year of this Report, still remained closed. In respect of the other, an undertaking was accepted to render the property fit for habitation. This was complied with early in 1955. During 1955 one property, which had been considered for demolition, was rendered fit, and one Closing Order was made in respect of another property. An undertaking was also accepted for a summer bungalow not to be used for human habitation.

The Council revised its Points Scheme during the year, with the consequent revision of the register of persons in need of housing accommodation. At the 31st December, 1955 there were 198 applications on this Register. 32 Council Houses were built and occupied during the year and a further 34 private houses were built.

The two ex-War Department camps remain in use for housing purposes, but as Council houses become available, the number of tenants is lessening. It is intended that a part of the larger camp, after alterations and modifications, will be used to re-house old people.

Rayleigh U.D.

14 houses were repaired or improved during the year following the service of Notices. One Demolition Order was made, but at the end of the year the property concerned had not been demolished.

No Council Houses were erected during 1955, but 565 houses and bungalows were built by private enterprise.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

Milk

In the **Benfleet** Urban District the following licences were issued under the provisions of the Milk (Special Designations) Regulations, 1949 :—

	Pasteurised	Sterilized	Tuberculin Tested
Dealer's Licences ..	15	43	5
Supplementary Licences	4	5	4

The Benfleet District also had 43 registrations at 31st December, 1955 under the provisions of the Milk and Dairies Regulations, 1949 in respect of persons carrying on the trade of distributor.

During the year 47 visits were made to milk shops in the Benfleet Urban District and the following samples were taken :—

Pasteurised Milk	..	..	..	..	6
Sterilized Milk	..	..	..	..	6
Tuberculin Tested Milk	..	..	..	..	4
Tuberculin Tested (Pasteurised) Milk	..	..	..	..	1

All 17 samples proved to be satisfactory upon examination.

In the **Canvey Island** Urban District the following licences were issued for the sale of designated milk under the Milk (Special Designations) Regulations, 1949 :—

	Pasteurised	Sterilized	Tuberculin Tested
Dealer's Licences	.. 17	.. 26	.. 1
Supplementary Licences	2	3	2

The following licences were issued in the **Rayleigh** Urban District under the provisions of the Milk (Special Designations) Regulations, 1949 :—

	Pasteurised	Sterilized	Tuberculin Tested
Dealer's Licences	.. 4	.. 14	.. 1
Supplementary Licences	1	1	1

No samples were taken during the year.

Meat Inspection

The Sanitary Inspectors of the **Benfleet** Urban District Council paid 612 visits to the Slaughterhouse at Cross Farm, Hadleigh during the course of the year, and the carcasses and organs of 8,732 food animals were examined, as set out on following page :—

CARCASES AND OFFAL INSPECTED AND CONDEMNED IN WHOLE OR IN PART

	Cattle, excluding Cows		Cows		Calves		Sheep and Lambs		Pigs	
Number killed ..	1,551	..	321	..	887	..	3,564	..	2,409	..
Number inspected	1,551	..	321	..	887	..	3,564	..	2,409	..
<i>All diseases except Tuberculosis and Cysticerci :</i>										
Whole carcasses condemned ..	—	..	13	..	3	..	1	..	27	..
Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned	202	..	82	..	4	..	175	..	109	..
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than Tuberculosis and Cysticerci ..	13.01	..	29.59	..	0.78	..	4.9	..	5.6	..
<i>Tuberculosis only :</i>										
Whole carcasses condemned ..	4	..	3	..	4	..	—	..	2	..
Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned	86	..	50	..	1	..	—	..	52	..
Percentage of the number inspected affected with Tuberculosis ..	5.8	..	16.5	..	0.56	..	—	..	2.24	..
<i>Cysticercosis :</i>										
Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned	40	..	6	..	—	..	—	..	—	..
Carcases sub- mitted to treat- ment by refrig- eration	40	..	6	..	—	..	—	..	—	..
Generalised and totally condemned	—	..	—	..	—	..	—	..	—	..

No horse slaughtering took place during the year.

During the year, specimens from one cow and two pigs were submitted for bacteriological examination to the Public Health Laboratory, Westcliff-on-Sea. Also, one specimen was submitted to the Pathologist, Southend-on-Sea General Hospital. The Inspectors wish to express their appreciation for the ready assistance they received in this respect.

During the year, the improvement in the hygienic handling and transport of meat from the Slaughterhouse was maintained. The bulk of the meat consigned from the premises is conveyed in vehicles in which the meat is suspended and not stacked on the floor.

All slaughtering took place at the Slaughterhouse at Cross Farm, Benfleet Road, Hadleigh, which is managed as a private company.

There are no slaughterhouses in the **Canvey Island** Urban District, but routine inspections are frequently carried out at butchers' premises and special attention is paid to meat distribution and the vehicles used for that purpose.

There is one private slaughterhouse within the **Rayleigh** Urban District situate at Webster's, High Street, Rayleigh. Assistance in meat inspection is given by Inspectors from the County Borough of Southend-on-Sea as that area absorbs the majority of the meat distributed. During the year 8,568 food animals were slaughtered and examined at the Rayleigh Slaughterhouse, as summarised below:—

CARCASES AND OFFAL INSPECTED AND CONDEMNED IN WHOLE OR IN PART

	Cattle, excluding Cows		Cows		Calves		Sheep and Lambs		Pigs	
Number killed ..	758	..	233	..	724	..	1,224	..	5,629	..
Number inspected	758	..	233	..	724	..	1,224	..	5,629	..

*All diseases except
Tuberculosis and
Cysticerci :*

Whole carcasses condemned ..	—	..	—	..	3	..	1	..	7	..
Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned	142	..	32	..	1	..	33	..	95	..
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than Tuberculosis and Cysticerci ..	18.7	..	13.7	..	0.55	..	0.27	..	1.8	..

Tuberculosis only :

Whole carcasses condemned ..	2	..	1	..	—	..	—	..	2
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ..	74	..	45	..	—	..	—	..	59
Percentage of the number inspected affected with Tuberculosis ..	10.0	..	19.7	..	—	..	—	..	1.08

Cysticercosis :

Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ..	5	..	2	..	—	..	—	..	—
Carcases submitted to treatment by refrigeration ..	5	..	2	..	—	..	—	..	—
Generalised and totally condemned ..	—	..	—	..	—	..	—	..	—

There are no horse slaughtering premises within the Rayleigh Urban District.

Food Inspection

In the **Benfleet** Urban District 456 visits were made to the various food premises in connection with the requirements of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938 and Byelaws made under Section 15 of that Act. There were 190 food shops in the District at 31st December, 1955, summarised as follows :—

Cafés ..	36
Bakers ..	3
Butchers ..	17
Fishmongers ..	10
General Provisions ..	74
Greengrocers ..	15
Others, including Confectioners and Stalls ..	35

36 of the General Provisions shops are registered for the sale of milk, and also two other shops.

During the year the following foods were surrendered by food traders as being unfit for human consumption :—

Milk, 64 tins ; cream, 3 tins ; canned meat, 28 tins ; minced turkey, 4 jars ; prawns, 56 lbs. ; canned fish, 11 tins and jars ; vegetable foods, 37 tins and jars ; fruit and preserves, 22 tins and jars ; soups, 2 tins ; cooked ham, 6 tins ; meat, 397½ lbs. ; cheese spread, 1 box ; other foods, 2 tins.

Nine samples of food were submitted for bacteriological examination during the year, all of which were satisfactory, no pathogens being isolated. No special examination of any large stock or consignment was found necessary during the year.

In connection with the Clean Food Campaign, routine visits are carried out at all food premises at least twice yearly. The visits are not made at regular intervals, nor are the occupiers advised as to the date of visits. Reliance is placed upon personal contact to advise and encourage food handlers in matters of food hygiene. At present the greatest obstacle to be overcome by the personnel of food preparing establishments are unsuitable premises and the lack of working area in kitchens.

All unsound meat from Cross Farm Slaughterhouse is dyed before disposal. Local Authorities of the areas to which such meat is taken are notified. Other unsound foods are buried in the Council's refuse tip.

SCHOOL CANTEENS. The three School Canteens within the Benfleet Urban District were maintained in a very clean and satisfactory condition during the year.

STREET TRADING. There was very little street trading carried on in the Urban District other than house-to-house sale of greengrocery. Thirteen food hawkers and/or their storage premises were registered under the provisions of the Essex County Council Act of 1952. These provisions, together with the Byelaws made under Section 15 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938 should result in an improvement in food handling in the open air.

MANUFACTURED MEAT PRODUCTS. At the end of the year there were 22 butchers' and grocers' premises and one factory in the Benfleet Urban District which were registered under the provisions of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938 for the manufacture of preserved foods, etc. 39 visits were made to such premises during the year.

SHELLFISH. During the year three samples of cockles were submitted to the Public Health Laboratory for bacteriological examination with satisfactory results (Grade II).

ICE CREAM. There were 87 premises registered for the storage and sale of ice cream at the 31st December, 1955, in accordance with the provisions of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938, summarised as follows—

Cafés	..	..	..	..	..	23
Confectioners shops	..	..	..	..	..	24
General Provisions shops	..	..	..	..	..	31
Miscellaneous shops	..	..	..	..	..	9

All the premises receive their supplies in bulk from outside the District. The Sanitary Inspectors submitted 15 samples for bacteriological examination during the year, and the results obtained showed

that 11 were placed in Grade I and 4 in Grade II. Results showing Grades I and II are considered to be satisfactory. Also, one sample of water ice and four samples of milk lollies were submitted for examination and all proved to be satisfactory. Copies of Laboratory reports were sent in all cases to the Local Authorities in whose areas the ice cream was manufactured.

At **Canvey Island** 116 inspections were carried out during the year to food premises generally and no informal action was necessary. Minor requirements relating to cleanliness, ventilation, storage and handling of food were complied with, although these were largely associated with the great pressure of business during the peak holiday periods. During the summer season numerous visits, not previously arranged, were paid to cafés, ice cream premises and fish restaurants, apart from the routine inspections already mentioned.

The following food was examined and surrendered as unfit for human consumption. Surrender and disposal of such food is arranged by the Local Authority.

One hind quarter of beef ; 116 lbs of fresh meat ; 175 lbs. fish ; 112½ lbs. of miscellaneous food, including dried fruit ; 94 tins of various foods.

There is a total of 117 food premises on Canvey Island, summarised as follows :—

Butchers	11
Cafés	41
Fishmongers	5
Greengrocers	12
Grocers and Bakers	33
Others	15

A total of 58 premises are registered under Section 14 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938, as follows :—Manufacturer of Ice Cream 1, Sale of Ice Cream 48, and Manufacturers of Sausages, etc. 9.

SCHOOL CANTEENS. There are two School Canteens at Canvey Island. Both are up-to-date and well equipped to serve the present needs of the two Primary and one Secondary Schools.

SHELLFISH. There are no approved sterilising plants for shellfish on Canvey Island. Supplies chiefly come from Leigh-on-Sea and Southend-on-Sea. Regulations prohibit the collection for sale of shellfish from the foreshore areas of the Island. Vigilance on this commodity is necessary during the summer season when the area is invaded by thousands of holiday-makers.

ICE CREAM. The very hot summer of 1955, extending over a much longer period than is usual to our uncertain climate, was undoubtedly responsible for a record in ice cream sales, and it is gratifying

to note that there is no recorded incidence of illness due to the consumption of ice cream during the year. At 31st December, 1955 there were 48 business premises registered for the sale of ice cream. There are two registered manufacturers of ice cream at Canvey Island which meets a considerable proportion of local demand, both on and off Canvey Island. Otherwise supplies come from the nationally known ice cream firms. A total of 16 samples of ice cream were submitted for bacteriological examination during the year. Results obtained showed that 13 were placed in Grade I, two in Grade II and one in Grade III. Those in Grades I and II are considered to be satisfactory and those in Grades III and IV as unsatisfactory. Investigations were made at the premises of the one unsatisfactory sample and a subsequent sample examined was found to be satisfactory.

CHINESE EGG ALBUMEN. Advice was received during the year that certain consignments of this albumen, which is used in bakery confectionery, was bacteriologically unfit and supplies already distributed in the area should be investigated. One bakery at Canvey Island was found to have a small supply in hand and its use was accordingly withdrawn. Samples were submitted for bacteriological examination with a negative result. No further supplies were received by the bakery involved and the further use of this particular egg albumen was discontinued.

In the **Rayleigh** Urban District 155 visits were made to food premises by the Sanitary Inspector during the year, in connection with the requirements of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938. The standard of food shops, restaurants and cafés within the District is generally high and there is a general desire among proprietors to make their premises more wholesome and attractive.

During the visits to premises where food is prepared it is the practice of the inspectorial staff to discuss the processes with the proprietors and the employees, and it is thought that in these discussions much is learned by all concerned to further the progress of the clean food campaign.

There are 80 premises in the District where food is prepared or sold for human consumption, summarised as follows :—

Bakers	3
Butchers	9
Cafés and Restaurants	10
Fishmongers	3
Greengrocers	8
Grocers	26
Others]	21

There are seven premises registered for the manufacture of meat products and two for fish frying.

The following foodstuffs weighing approximately 2,330 lbs. were voluntarily surrendered by shopkeepers during the year and condemned as being unfit for human consumption, as follows :—

Canned meat, 1,286 lbs. ; fresh meat 197 lbs. ; bacon, 70 lbs. ; fish, 84 lbs. ; sausages, 140 lbs. ; miscellaneous canned foods, 553 lbs.

SCHOOL CANTEENS. There are two canteens at maintained schools in the Rayleigh area. These canteens are now providing over twice the number of meals for which they were originally designed and the need for new premises is urgent. The canteen services are under review by the Education Authority.

ICE CREAM. There are no manufacturers of Ice Cream in the Rayleigh Urban District, but 36 premises are registered for the sale thereof. Ice Cream is also sold in five cafés and the Cinema, but these are exempt from registration. No samples of Ice Cream were taken during the year.

INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES

There were no serious outbreaks of infectious diseases in these areas during 1955.

The usual biennial cycle which accompanies the incidence of Measles was doubtless associated with the 403 notified cases which occurred during the year, but in comparison with previous "Up" years, this incidence was not excessive.

For unexplainable reasons there was an increase in Acute Pneumonia notifications in South Benfleet and Canvey Island.

The incidence of Poliomyelitis was more widespread in 1955, and for the Country as a whole, was the third highest since the War, although mortality was less than those years of more normal incidence. The very hot summer was possibly associated with the increased number of cases.

In most other diseases, the number of cases brought to notice by formal notification were very few indeed.

MEASLES

Notifications						Deaths	
England & Wales			Benfleet	Canvey Is.	Rayleigh	England & Wales	Benfleet, Canvey Island & Rayleigh
1946	..	159,878	13	66	31	203	—
1947	..	393,738	254	31	34	645	—
1948	..	399,358	38	137	68	327	—
1949	..	385,849	266	61	60	308	1
1950	..	367,603	22	18	14	221	—
1951	..	616,077	578	97	251	317	—
1952	..	389,505	67	32	7	141	—
1953	..	544,959	222	227	84	244	1
1954	..	146,970	61	8	4	50	—
1955	..	693,741	109	159	135	176	—

Mortality from Measles in England and Wales fell from 0.28% in 1941 (1,145 deaths) to 0.025% in 1955 (176 deaths), or from 280 to 25 deaths in every 100,000 cases notified. This is a great improvement during the period.

The biennial epidemicity of this disease is particularly noticeable in respect of the incidence in the Benfleet Urban District, the "Up" years being obviously 1947, 1949, 1951, 1953 and 1955. On the same parallel it will be interesting to observe that mortality in England and Wales follows a similar trend, with the same years carrying a higher mortality. However, in each two year period there is a definite step downwards in the number of fatal cases, e.g. 645, 308, 317, 244 and 176 for the years mentioned, and 327, 221, 141, and 50 for the "Low" years from 1948 onwards.

Out of a total of 3,154 notified cases of Measles in the three Urban Districts during the ten year period it is worthy of emphasis that only two proved fatal.

WHOOPIING COUGH

Notifications						Deaths	
England & Wales			Benfleet	Canvey Is.	Rayleigh	England & Wales	Benfleet, Canvey Is. & Rayleigh
1946	..	92,910	20	—	27	806	—
1947	..	92,639	87	2	15	905	—
1948	..	146,387	69	1	25	748	—
1949	..	102,805	49	2	7	527	—
1950	..	157,726	90	17	56	393	—
1951	..	169,343	77	13	35	457	—
1952	..	114,850	35	19	25	184	—
1953	..	157,829	71	21	17	243	—
1954	..	105,901	13	30	5	139	—
1955	..	79,092	6	22	33	88	—

It is encouraging to observe that for England and Wales the year 1955 showed the lowest incidence of notified cases of Whooping Cough, and the lowest number of deaths, over the past ten years.

In his annual report for 1954, the Chief Medical Officer to the Ministry of Health referred to the danger to the very young of this infection and stated that 68.3% of Whooping Cough deaths during that year were among children under the age of 12 months. This high proportion of deaths occurred among only 8.97% of the total number of cases for that age group, or one death for every 100 cases among those under one year of age. By comparison, there were only ten deaths among 43,658 cases among children over five years of age. Over two thirds of the infant deaths occurred during the first six months of life.

Parents are urged to call in medical help without delay when there is belief that Whooping Cough has been contracted by a member of the family, and especially is this important where babies and infants are concerned. It cannot be too strongly emphasised that prevention is better than cure and by all means parents should keep babies away from all possible sources of infection when Whooping Cough is prevalent in an area.

The complete absence of Whooping Cough deaths in these three Districts over the ten year period should be observed with satisfaction.

POLIOMYELITIS

Confirmed Cases					Deaths		
England & Wales		Benfleet	Canvey Is.	Rayleigh	England & Wales	Benfleet, Canvey Is. & Rayleigh	
1946	..	672	1	—	—	128	—
1947	..	7,791	2	—	—	707	1
1948	..	1,859	—	—	1	241	—
1949	..	5,969	1	2	2	657	—
1950	..	7,753	1	4	—	755	—
1951	..	2,613	1	1	—	215	—
1952	..	3,902	3	1	2	275	1
1953	..	4,542	11	—	1	320	—
1954	..	1,955	—	3	—	112	—
1955	..	6,331	7	9	2	241	1

The preceding table includes all ascertained confirmed cases of Poliomyelitis arising in the Urban Districts, whether or not they were notified to adjoining Local Authorities on account of diagnosis in hospital in adjoining areas.

Whilst the year under review had the third highest total of confirmed notified cases of Poliomyelitis during the period, it will be noticed that the number of deaths is about a third of the other two peak years, e.g. 1947 and 1950.

Of the 18 local cases occurring during 1955, eleven were non-paralytic and comparatively mild. Two of the paralytic cases were serious, one of which proved fatal. This involved a woman of 34 years of age who was on holiday at Thundersley from her home in Romford, where it would appear infection was contracted. Onset was very sudden and death followed the day after admission to hospital. The other serious case concerns a man aged 29 years from Canvey Island who has severe respiratory and limb paralysis and is still in hospital (Sept. '56). Three of the cases from Canvey Island were holiday-makers, coming from Wapping, London; Cranleigh, Surrey and Beckenham, Kent.

The table shows a case fatality of 5.5% (three deaths among 55 cases) for the three Urban Districts, whereas for England and Wales the comparative figure is 8.4%.

The tracing and supervision of a large number of contacts, both of local confirmed cases and of cases arising in other areas immediately following a holiday in this area, also of local contacts of unassociated cases reported from other areas, made heavy demands upon the Public Health staff. Furthermore, a number of suspected cases were reported, calling for the exercise of wise discretion in the imposition of preventive measures pending definite information as to diagnosis.

SCARLET FEVER

Notifications						Deaths	
England & Wales			Benfleet	Canvey Is.	Rayleigh	England & Wales	Benfleet, Canvey Is. & Rayleigh
1946	..	56,697	14	1	6	43	—
1947	..	58,042	16	1	4	42	—
1948	..	74,826	18	—	11	36	—
1949	..	70,649	52	1	5	20	—
1950	..	65,883	15	1	10	93	—
1951	..	48,735	7	2	1	66	—
1952	..	67,251	53	36	21	64	—
1953	..	61,170	25	8	—	61	—
1954	..	42,393	24	8	18	52	—
1955	..	32,591	9	1	—	45	—

Prior to 1950 the deaths shown were strictly on account of Scarlet Fever as such, but after that year, deaths from Streptococcal Sore Throat (the same germ as causes Scarlet Fever) are included, hence the greater numbers from that year onwards.

It is interesting to notice that incidence and mortality—both only a trifle of what they were in the nineteenth century—are still on the decline. Local incidence was exceptionally low in 1955 and no deaths have occurred in the Benfleet, Canvey Island and Rayleigh Urban Districts during the past ten years among the 368 notified cases.

NON-NOTIFIABLE DISEASES

The following cases were brought to notice by School Returns on absences caused through illness—

	Benfleet	Canvey Island	Rayleigh
Chicken Pox	102	64	—
German Measles	1	—	—
Mumps	99	33	—

The incidence of Chicken Pox occurred chiefly between March and May. The cases of Mumps were reported mostly in the months of January and February, and in respect of the Benfleet Urban District, all parishes were affected.

FOOD POISONING

The incidence of confirmed cases of Food Poisoning during 1955 throughout England and Wales was about 40% greater than that for 1954, although it is likely that the very warm summer, rendering the handling and preparation of food a more difficult task, was largely responsible for this rise in established food borne illness. Over 12,700 confirmed cases were notified throughout the Country in 1955.

Only scattered cases of Food Poisoning or alimentary upset, not always established to be in association with food consumed, were either notified or brought to the notice of the Department during the year. The tables at the end of this Report show only three notified cases. Two of these people were ill after eating meat pies and the illness of the third was possibly attributable to fried duck eggs.

Two children and a female aged 17 years were found to be suffering from Salmonella Infection although no conclusive association with food could be established. A further three residents contracted Salmonella Infection whilst receiving hospital treatment for other illnesses.

Complaints were received from another area that illness had been caused as a result of eating meat pies allegedly manufactured in this area, but after a thorough investigation at the factory concerned, there was no ground for complaint and laboratory reports on samples examined were satisfactory.

One of the Schools of the Essex Education Committee in the Benfleet Urban District reported that a number of children had been absent—a few at a time over a period—from a condition which could be associated with Food Poisoning. School meals and School Canteen Staff were suspected, but after careful investigation, no evidence was forthcoming to suggest that food provided by the school authorities was involved. The incidence of sickness faded out without any specific preventive action being taken.

CANCER

Extensive medical research by the Medical Research Council of the Ministry of Health, and also by various interested voluntary bodies, continues, in a sustained endeavour to reduce the annual death roll of this disease. Indeed, it is hoped that progress similar to that being made in respect of the prevention of Tuberculosis, may yet be experienced in the prevention of Cancer.

Unfortunately, from statistics the trend appears to be still in the wrong direction, and each year the total mortality from cancer increases, chiefly in association with respiratory organs of the body. Looking at the national figures we find that the total cancer deaths (89,115) represent an increase of 1,167 over the previous year. Of this increase it will be observed that 939 additional deaths occurred from lung cancer during the year, thus leaving the very minimal number of 228 for the increased mortality for all other sites. In relation to the whole Country the increase of cancer deaths, of all sites apart from lung and bronchus, is very small indeed (0.03%). Nevertheless, it is a matter of great regret, and also of great challenge to all engaged in the promotion of the health of the people, that almost 90,000 people in England and Wales die from Cancer every year.

Lung cancer continues to create considerable public concern and in the past two or three years much has been written in the medical and lay press regarding the accepted increased risk of contracting the disease by heavy cigarette smoking. Other possible contributing factors in urban areas are exhaust fumes from motor vehicles and general atmospheric pollution. For the second year running Lung Cancer deaths in these areas have, in proportion, been higher than the Country as a whole. The percentage of deaths from Cancer of the Lung and Bronchus in England and Wales in 1954 and 1955 in relation to the total number of cancer deaths was 18.5 and 19.4. In these three areas combined, the corresponding percentages were 26.6 and 24.0.

The table showing the local position in regard to cancer mortality over the past 10 years reveals that 891 residents of the three areas have died from the disease in that period, with almost half (414 or 46.5%) being over 70 years of age. As is to be expected, the risk of cancer increases with age and the highest number of persons over 70 years of age dying from cancer was in 1953 (52.6%). The lowest year for this age group was 1950 with 38.6%. 1955, the year of this report, had the highest number of cancer deaths (104). The year with the lowest (78) was 1946. Throughout the whole of the ten year period there was a total of 20 persons under the age of 40 years who died from Cancer. This represented 2.2%.

CANCER DEATHS UNDER 50 YEARS OF AGE—1955

Benfleet	Canvey Island	Rayleigh
Female (42yrs.) Breast	Female (22yrs.) Adren-	Male (38yrs.)
Male (46yrs.) Pancreas	als	Kidneys
Female (49yrs.) Stom-	Male (42yrs.) Lungs	Male (35yrs.) Tongue
ach	Male (46yrs.) Oesophagus	
	Male (42yrs.) Bronchus	

CANCER DEATHS IN ENGLAND AND WALES

(Combined figures for Benfleet, Canvey Island and Rayleigh shown in brackets)

		Lungs & Bronchus		All Other Sites		Totals
1951	..	M 11,166 (13)	..	M 32,482 (34)	..	M 43,648 (47)
		F 2,081 (3)	..	F 38,424 (40)	..	F 40,505 (43)
1952	..	M 11,981 (9)	..	M 32,347 (29)	..	M 44,328 (38)
		F 2,237 (2)	..	F 39,035 (40)	..	F 41,272 (42)
1953	..	M 12,881 (10)	..	M 31,938 (42)	..	M 44,814 (52)
		F 2,251 (4)	..	F 38,734 (39)	..	F 40,991 (43)
1954	..	M 13,996 (24)	..	M 32,186 (40)	..	M 46,182 (64)
		F 2,336 (1)	..	F 39,430 (29)	..	F 41,766 (30)
1955	..	M 14,820 (20)	..	M 32,116 (30)	..	M 46,936 (50)
		F 2,451 (5)	..	F 39,728 (49)	..	F 42,179 (54)

CANCER DEATHS, ACCORDING TO AGE, 1946-1955

Benfleet, Canvey Island and Rayleigh U.Ds.

		Under 20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-70	Over 70	Totals
1946	B	1	—	—	3	5	15	19	43
	C	1	—	—	1	6	6	6	20
	R	—	—	—	1	1	3	10	15
1947	B	1	—	—	2	4	18	20	45
	C	—	—	2	1	5	8	15	31
	R	—	—	—	2	—	7	13	22
1948	B	—	—	—	2	6	17	23	48
	C	—	—	—	6	1	6	8	21
	R	—	—	—	2	3	6	5	16
1949	B	—	—	2	1	10	10	23	46
	C	—	—	—	—	2	7	8	17
	R	—	—	—	1	2	3	10	16
1950	B	—	—	1	2	5	10	16	34
	C	—	—	1	4	4	14	10	33
	R	—	—	3	—	3	7	8	21
1951	B	—	—	1	5	7	14	16	43
	C	—	—	—	1	8	5	15	29
	R	—	—	—	1	7	4	6	18
1952	B	—	—	—	2	7	8	20	37
	C	—	—	—	2	2	13	10	27
	R	—	—	—	1	2	4	9	16
1953	B	—	—	—	4	5	9	24	42
	C	—	—	—	2	5	7	10	24
	R	—	—	—	1	2	10	16	29
1954	B	1	—	—	2	7	9	27	46
	C	—	—	1	1	2	10	12	26
	R	—	—	—	2	4	6	10	22
1955	B	1	—	—	3	6	10	23	43
	C	—	2	—	3	8	11	11	35
	R	—	—	2	—	3	10	11	26
Totals	B	4	—	4	26	62	120	211	427
	C	1	2	4	21	43	87	105	263
	R	—	—	5	11	27	60	98	201

CANCER DEATHS ACCORDING TO SITE OF DISEASE, 1955

	Benfleet	Canvey Island	Rayleigh
Stomach	4	2	6
Lungs and Bronchus	9	11	5
Breast	7	2	1
Uterus	4	5	—
All other sites ..	19	15	14
Totals	43	35	26

TUBERCULOSIS

I will endeavour to enlarge on my opening remarks with respect to the continuing improvement in the incidence and mortality of Tuberculosis.

The problem of Tuberculosis is world-wide and the position in backward areas is far more serious than in Britain. In India, for instance, there are about 2½ million open infective cases and each year the disease kills about 500,000 people. In South Africa 20,000 people die annually from Tuberculosis among a population of 11½ million. In Australia, where compulsory X-ray of chest is now legal, the mortality of Tuberculosis was halved in the four years 1949-53. Canada has made great strides in its Anti-Tuberculosis Campaign and over 3,000,000 people are examined by Mass X-ray each year.

In Great Britain there are over 300,000 cases of Tuberculosis known to the health authorities and new cases are being added at the rate of more than 100 a day—in 1954 there were 44,065 new confirmed cases notified and in 1955 the figure had fallen to 39,354. Of these 56% were men, although for Non-pulmonary Tuberculosis (included in the total) there was a greater proportion of women. A large number of new cases are discovered by Mass Radiography—invented by Manoel de Abreu de Janeiro in 1936—and about 3 million people are so examined each year. Every 1,000 people X-rayed produce about 3 new cases with active lung Tuberculosis. However, despite the great assistance provided by modern methods for discovering hitherto unknown cases, the incompleteness of detection is indicated by the fact that in 1955 23% of all Tuberculosis deaths in England and Wales were of persons who had not been notified as having the disease. Usually such persons are among those who will not voluntarily submit themselves to examination by a Mass X-ray Unit, and in consequence remain undetected, untreated and a great source of infection to the Community. Modern methods of treatment—the result of intensive research over the past 40 years—are playing an important part in lowering mortality and speeding recovery. The National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis, working in close co-operation with Local Health Authorities throughout the Country, is doing much for the welfare of sufferers from Tuberculosis, as well as organising a sustained comprehensive front against the disease.

During 1955 the 6,492 deaths from Tuberculosis in England and Wales represented 1.25% of the total deaths for that year. This was a very great improvement on the position ten years ago when 4.9% (23,949) of all deaths were accounted for by Tuberculosis. There were 1,405 fewer deaths from Tuberculosis in 1955 than the previous year, representing an improvement of 17.8%.

Locally, the position was very satisfactory, with the lowest combined Tuberculosis death rate on record. There were no deaths from Tuberculosis at all at Canvey Island and Rayleigh, and Benfleet had only two fatal cases, which apart from the year 1952, was the lowest recorded for that area. It is believed that 1955 is the first year that Canvey Island and Rayleigh have been free from deaths due to Tuberculosis. It will be noticed from the Table on Page 44 that incidence is much greater in males than females. In England and Wales this fact is even more noticeable, and in 1955 70% of all deaths from Tuberculosis throughout the Country were males. There were 63 new entries to the Tuberculosis Registers of the three Districts during the year; nearly half of these being cases which moved into the area from other districts. Of those removed from the Registers, 16 persons recovered and nine removed out of the area, leaving a net increase of 36 additional names on the three Registers for the year, 15 males and 21 females.

The fact that 160 persons are shown as having recovered from Tuberculosis during the past ten years and that mortality has fallen from 26 in 1948 to 2 in 1955, are surely healthy pointers to the conquest of the disease. However, on the other hand, it should be noted that there are 306 registered sufferers from Tuberculosis among our 45,000 population and 135 local lives have been lost through the disease in the past ten years. Thus there is still a challenge for unrelenting effort in regard to the control and suppression of this age-old scourge of humanity.

SUMMARY OF REGISTERED CASES OF TUBERCULOSIS AT 31st DECEMBER, 1955

	Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary		15 years & under	Age Group			T'tl
	M	F	M	F		16-35	36-55	56 & Over	
<i>Benfleet U.D.</i>	70	53	5	12	12	65	45	18	140
<i>Canvey Island U.D.</i>	39	37	5	6	3	48	22	14	87
<i>Rayleigh U.D.</i>	36	31	5	7	10	35	24	10	79
Totals	145	121	15	25	25	148	91	42	306

TUBERCULOSIS INCIDENCE IN THE BENFLEET, CANVEY ISLAND AND RAYLEIGH URBAN DISTRICTS DURING THE TEN YEARS 1946 TO 1955

		New Cases		Other additions to Registers		Total cases added to Registers	Deaths from Tuberculosis		Re-covered		Other removals from Registers		Total removals from Registers
		(M)	(F)	(M)	(F)		(M)	(F)	(M)	(F)	(M)	(F)	
1946	B	20	10	9	2	41	5	1	—	—	1	2	9
	C	8	6	6	2	22	4	4	—	—	—	—	8
	R	5	6	1	—	12	2	3	—	1	1	—	7
1947	B	11	10	4	12	37	6	2	1	2	9	13	33
	C	8	2	9	9	28	2	3	1	1	1	7	15
	R	6	5	4	3	18	4	2	1	3	3	5	18
1948	B	9	14	9	5	37	9	7	1	1	8	4	30
	C	4	5	1	6	16	6	2	1	1	4	5	19
	R	3	—	1	—	4	—	2	—	—	1	3	6
1949	B	8	4	4	3	19	8	3	3	1	12	10	37
	C	2	7	7	5	21	3	1	1	2	9	7	23
	R	5	3	3	2	13	4	1	1	2	1	2	11
1950	B	11	11	6	2	30	1	4	6	2	3	3	19
	C	4	7	3	3	17	1	2	—	5	3	1	12
	R	5	2	2	2	11	3	2	2	1	2	—	10
1951	B	11	3	8	4	26	7	1	8	8	7	4	35
	C	8	5	5	3	21	1	3	2	3	5	2	16
	R	11	5	3	2	21	2	—	2	2	2	6	14
1952	B	7	5	5	2	19	2	—	8	6	5	4	25
	C	5	2	5	4	16	1	1	6	4	4	1	17
	R	4	7	3	1	15	—	1	—	1	1	2	5
1953	B	8	6	6	7	27	1	4	8	7	3	4	27
	C	4	1	3	1	9	4	—	3	3	5	3	18
	R	4	3	3	2	12	3	—	1	4	1	1	10
1954	B	8	8	6	6	28	—	3	5	3	5	8	24
	C	2	10	8	6	26	1	—	4	5	8	4	22
	R	7	1	3	2	13	1	—	7	4	9	5	26
1955	B	9	7	8	8	32	2	—	4	1	1	—	8
	C	10	3	1	—	14	—	—	6	3	2	2	13
	R	4	1	2	10	17	—	—	2	—	2	2	6
Totals	B	102	78	65	51	296	41	25	44	31	54	52	247
	C	55	48	48	39	190	23	16	24	27	41	32	163
	R	54	33	25	24	136	19	11	16	18	23	26	113

NOTES ON THE ABOVE TABLE

1. Adequate records are not available for removals from the Tuberculosis Registers for the year 1946 (apart from deaths from Tuberculosis) and it is likely that the numbers were higher than those shown.

2. During the period a number of persons suffering from Tuberculosis died from other conditions, e.g. accident, suicide, cancer, coronary disease or other disease of specific classification, although in some, Tuberculosis was a contributory factor. There were 7 in Benfleet U.D., 6 in Canvey Island and 6 in Rayleigh. These are included in the figures under "Other Removals" in the table.

ACCIDENTS

The statistics provided by the Registrar General reveal that in England and Wales there were 4,922 deaths from motor vehicle accidents during 1955. This represented an increase of 7.25% on the figures of fatal road accidents for 1954 and averages at 410 road fatalities for every month of the year. Of other accidents, there were 5,319 deaths from falls, 817 from burns, 1,173 from poisons, 847 "Other Transport" accidents, and 3,083 from all other accidents. In all, the total number of deaths in England and Wales from accidents of all causes was 16,161, representing an increase of 616 or 3.8% on the previous year's figures.

In Essex, according to statistics issued by the Chief Constable, road fatalities numbered 93 as compared with 101 in 1954. However, to offset this improvement there was an increase of 221 in the number of people seriously injured (2,244) and 635 among those slightly injured (4,117). Non-built up areas accounted for 56.4% of the fatalities (57) and 51.8% of those seriously injured (1,153). The peak times for fatal accidents were 6-7 p.m., 11-12 noon and 10-11 p.m., in that order. Of the 13,755 road accidents which occurred in the County during the year, 2,537 occurred on Saturdays. Peak months were December, August and July.

As may be expected, speed, carelessness and errors of judgment were again the chief causes of accidents. Improper overtaking caused 985 accidents, misjudging clearance, distance or speed caused 956, and turning right without due care 767. Of motor cycle accidents, 170 were caused by lack of attention to driving, 163 by loss of control and 151 by improper overtaking. 150 accidents involved motor assisted pedal cyclists. Pedal cyclists were concerned with 739 accidents, and pedestrians, because of careless crossing of roads or crossing under cover of stationary vehicles, were responsible for 690 accidents. Animals mostly stray dogs, caused 1,401 accidents. Skidding on dry roads involved 464 accidents and on wet roads, 839. 872 accidents were caused by snowy or icy roads. Inefficient brakes or steering, defective tyres and other mechanical defects caused 333 accidents and 193 were due to fog, mist or sun glare. Of the total number of accidents occurring on Essex roads during the year 8,563 were attributed to drivers, 1,472 to motor cyclists, 1,465 to pedal cyclists and 874 to pedestrians.

Unfortunately, in the Benfleet, Canvey Island and Rayleigh areas there was a considerable increase during the year of the number of accidents and the number of persons killed or injured. The table summarising the accidents, fatalities and injuries sustained on local roads over the past nine years gives a clear indication of the increasing danger on the highways and the need for greater care by all road users and pedestrians.

SUMMARY OF PERSONS KILLED OR INJURED IN ROAD ACCIDENTS DURING 1955

(Details supplied by Chief Constable of Essex)

Group of Road User	Killed	Seriously Injured	Slightly Injured
<i>Benfleet U.D.</i>			
Pedestrians under 15 years ..	—	11	8
Pedal Cyclists under 15 years	—	7	9
Pillion Passengers under 15 years	—	—	—
Sidecar Passengers under 15 years	—	—	—
Other persons under 15 years	—	2	5
Pedestrians 15 years and over	2	3	8
Pedal Cyclists 15 years and over	—	13	12
Pillion Passengers 15 years and over	—	2	3
Sidecar Passengers 15 years and over	—	—	2
Other persons 15 years and over	1	4	18
Motor Cyclists	1	7	16
Drivers of Motor & Horse Drawn vehicles	—	8	15
Totals	4	57	96

<i>Canvey Island U.D.</i>			
Pedestrians under 15 years ..	—	2	5
Pedal Cyclists under 15 years	—	2	11
Pillion Passengers under 15 years	—	—	1
Sidecar Passengers under 15 years	—	—	1
Other persons under 15 years	—	—	1
Pedestrians 15 years and over	—	1	6
Pedal Cyclists 15 years and over	—	3	9
Pillion Passengers 15 years and over	—	—	1
Sidecar Passengers 15 years and over	—	—	1
Other persons 15 years and over	—	3	8
Motor Cyclists	—	1	5
Drivers of Motor & Horse Drawn vehicles	—	1	2
Totals	—	13	51

<i>Rayleigh U.D.</i>			
Pedestrians under 15 years ..	—	3	3
Pedal Cyclists under 15 years	—	1	3
Pillion Passengers under 15 years	—	—	—
Sidecar Passengers under 15 years	—	—	2
Other persons under 15 years	—	1	4
Pedestrians 15 years and over	1	1	4
Pedal Cyclists 15 years and over	1	7	17
Pillion Passengers 15 years and over	—	3	5
Sidecar Passengers 15 years and over	—	3	1
Other persons 15 years and over	2	7	19
Motor Cyclists	—	12	14
Drivers of Motor & Horse Drawn vehicles	—	3	6
Totals	4	41	78

SUMMARY OF ROAD ACCIDENTS OCCURRING IN THE BENFLEET, CANVEY ISLAND AND RAYLEIGH URBAN DISTRICTS, 1947—1955

		Killed	Seriously Injured	Slightly Injured	Total Casualties	Total Accidents
1947	B	1	32	63	96	*
	C	1	6	24	31	*
	R	—	16	40	56	*
1948	B	—	30	77	107	170
	C	3	7	20	30	69
	R	—	23	61	84	141
1949	B	3	25	79	107	206
	C	1	8	30	39	73
	R	2	19	37	58	128
1950	B	2	42	52	96	233
	C	—	21	30	51	110
	R	2	20	65	87	183
1951	B	3	33	87	123	243
	C	1	19	29	49	117
	R	1	30	71	102	188
1952	B	1	39	90	130	272
	C	1	10	38	49	101
	R	2	27	51	80	156
1953	B	1	37	101	139	289
	C	1	5	55	61	137
	R	1	41	58	100	169
1954	B	—	44	64	108	305
	C	—	4	33	37	123
	R	2	34	66	102	213
1955	B	4	57	96	157	361
	C	—	13	50	63	125
	R	4	41	78	123	260

*Figures not available.

WELFARE OF THE AGED

The Chief Statistician of the General Register Office (B. Benjamin, B.Sc., F.I.A.) has recorded some very interesting remarks (Ministry of Health Monthly Bulletin for December, 1954) on the subject, and his stated purpose was to introduce a few hard facts in the hope of stemming the current torrent of loose talk about old age. He shows that in 1841 4.4% of the total population of England and Wales (then under 16 million) were over 65 years of age. 60 years later in 1901 the percentage was still only 4.7, but by 1951 it had increased to 10.9.

The main argument for this change of population structure is stated to be (1) decline in fertility and (2) the great improvement in mortality, particularly among infants and children. In the five years from 1901 there were 4,693,000 live births in England and Wales.

In the years 1931-35, the average was only 3,023,000, yet in the 30 years the population had increased (and therefore a larger number of reproductive women) from 32½ to 40 million. Turning to mortality, and based upon the pattern for 1901-1910, only 68 of every 100 baby boys then born would survive to 40 years of age. By 1931, mortality had so improved that 81 would survive, and in 1953 the expected number was 93. Looking at mortality from the upper limit of the life span, of 100 men aged 65 years in 1901, only 27 could expect to live on until they were 80, but in 1953 the number expected to survive to the latter age was still only 33. The survival of women to the same advanced age increased from 33 to 49 during the comparative periods. Therefore, says the Chief Statistician, although mortality has improved at older ages, that improvement has not been on the same scale as at the younger ages, and maintains that an ageing population has not arisen because old people themselves are living longer. Rather, I would say myself that it is because there are more people to get old. In other words, the lives saved at infancy and during early life through the advancement of medical science and the improvement of social conditions generally, must die sometime. Thus a far greater proportion of people are dying when it is time to die—at and beyond the three score years and ten—and not prematurely.

On a similar basis as the 1951 Census, it is estimated that at mid 1955 there were 6,967 or 15.5% residents in these three areas aged 65 years or over (Benfleet 3,438, Canvey Island 1,806, Rayleigh 1,723). The County Welfare Officer informs me that at the 31st December, 1955 there were 47 aged persons from these Districts (18 men and 29 women) accommodated in hostels provided by the Essex County Council and that a further 31 aged persons were being cared for by voluntary organisations.

During 1955, the Essex County Council approved a scheme to erect two hostels per year during the six years 1956-61, each accommodating between 40 and 60 aged persons, although it is not known to what extent Government restrictions will curtail this programme. Of course, this scheme was to cover the whole of the Administrative County and it is believed that the Metropolitan Area was high on the priority list for the new accommodation.

A fresh approach to the problem of meeting the needs of the aged has met with success at Exeter and Plymouth. The new scheme was to board out old people in suitable private homes on a payment basis. In Exeter about 30 private homes have been found for lonely old people and where necessary National Assistance grants have been made to help meet the charges for accommodation. The Scheme is being practically helped and carefully followed by the National Corporation for the Care of Old People in the hope that other areas will be encouraged to give the idea a trial.

Although events after 31st December, 1955 are outside the scope of this Report, there have been various forward moves during 1956 in this matter. The Essex County Council Hostel at Grosvenor House,

Westcliff-on-Sea is now fully adapted and has accommodation for 60 persons (20 men and 40 women). Trust Bungalows have been provided in Rayleigh, and with the help of a local resident, the Rayleigh U.D.C. have purchased a property to be used as accommodation for old people.

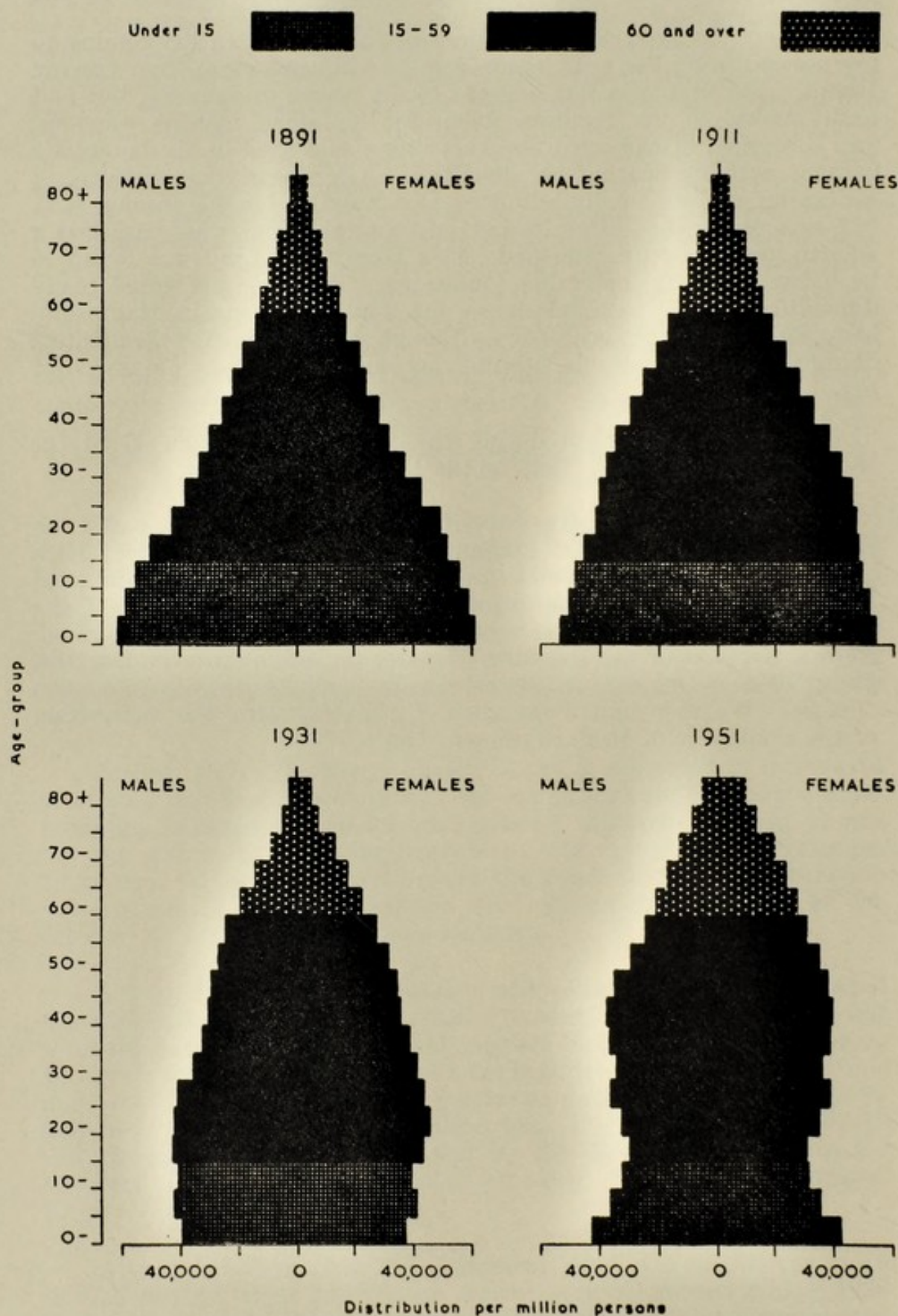
Among the aged persons in need of care and attention coming to my notice during the year, there were two difficult cases from Canvey Island. The first case was brought to my notice in January, but had been known to the Sanitary Inspector for some months previous, and concerned a man aged 86 years living in a shed in his daughter's garden, without heating or amenities. After nearly six months of endeavour, he was finally admitted to a hospital for the chronic sick, but even so, he died after 18 days in hospital. The other case was a woman aged 88 years who had had a large family and was found to be living alone in deplorable conditions. This case presented many difficulties, chiefly with relatives—one daughter living in Hampshire being left to take responsibility—although it was only with the greatest of difficulty that suitable hospital accommodation was obtained for her.

No action was taken during the year under Section 47 of the National Assistance Act, 1948 or the 1951 Amending Act.

The preceding remarks about population structure based on statistics analysed by Mr. Benjamin of the General Register Office are, perhaps, made clearer by the following Population Pyramids of England and Wales for the years 1891, 1911, 1931 and 1951. These pyramids and explanatory figures are reproduced from Quarterly Return No. 430 of the Registrar General for the quarter ended 30th June, 1956 in respect of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Infectious Diseases, Weather and Population Estimates, with the permission of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.

Population pyramids, England and Wales, 1891-1951

Sex and Age distribution per million persons



FLOOD DAMAGED ROADS—CANVEY ISLAND

Reconstruction continued during the year on roads badly damaged, both during, and immediately after, the 1953 Flood Disaster, and the curbing and clinkering of some 60 roads has been carried out. Of the original list prepared of flood damaged roads, three are still under reconstruction and work on a further six has yet to be commenced. During 1955, application was made to the Lord Mayor's Flood and Tempest Fund for a further 4,900 yards, affecting 24 roads, to be included in the reconstruction scheme. It is anticipated that these reconstructed roads will be surfaced dressed with tarmacadam at a later date.

RAINFALL

Details of the rainfall during the year have been provided by the Southend Waterworks Company in respect of the Thundersley Reservoir and by the Engineer and Surveyor of the Canvey Island Urban District Council in respect of that area.

The Thundersley record shows that a total of 21.51 inches of rain fell during the year. The wettest months were May and October with 4.23 inches and 3.68 inches respectively. The driest months were April, with 0.17 inches, and August, with 0.75 inches.

At Canvey Island, the total rainfall for the year was 19.63 inches. Again, May and October were the wettest months with 4.03 and 3.50 inches respectively. Also, April was the driest month with 0.16 inches of rain, and the second driest month was July when 0.53 inches of rain fell on the Island.

COMPARATIVE TABLE OF CERTAIN INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Infectious Disease	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955
<i>Benfleet U.D.</i>					
Acute Pneumonia ..	4	5	10	26	23
Food Poisoning ..	—	2	—	4	1
Infectious Hepatitis ..	30	6	—	2	1
Measles ..	578	67	222	61	109
Poliomyelitis ..	1	3	10	—	7
Scarlet Fever ..	7	53	25	24	9
Whooping Cough ..	77	35	71	13	6
<i>Canvey Island U.D.</i>					
Acute Pneumonia ..	1	—	3	14	52
Food Poisoning ..	—	1	—	—	1
Infectious Hepatitis ..	—	—	—	—	—
Measles ..	97	32	227	8	159
Poliomyelitis ..	1	1	—	3	9
Scarlet Fever ..	2	36	8	8	1
Whooping Cough ..	13	19	21	30	22
<i>Rayleigh U.D.</i>					
Acute Pneumonia ..	7	—	4	14	4
Food Poisoning ..	—	8	1	1	1
Infectious Hepatitis ..	—	6	6	6	—
Measles ..	251	7	84	4	135
Poliomyelitis ..	—	2	1	—	1
Scarlet Fever ..	1	21	—	18	—
Whooping Cough ..	35	25	17	5	33

Note : Diphtheria—No cases have occurred locally since 1948.

Smallpox—No cases have occurred locally since 1930.

Cerebro-spinal Meningitis—The last cases occurred in Benfleet and Canvey Island in 1950 and in Rayleigh in 1951.

CERTAIN CAUSES OF DEATH IN ENGLAND AND WALES DURING THE LAST FIVE YEARS

Disease or Cause	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955
Cancer (Lung & Bronchus)	13,247	14,218	15,133	16,332	17,271
Cancer (all other Sites) ..	70,906	71,382	70,672	71,616	71,844
Coronary Disease ..	58,309	61,429	61,751	66,601	70,596
Diphtheria ..	34	32	23	9	13
Dysentery (all forms) ..	74	36	36	38	40
Infectious Encephalitis..	118	105	134	88	87
Influenza ..	16,123	1,750	6,465	1,811	2,983
Measles ..	317	141	244	50	176
Meningococcal Infection	299	290	291	259	205
Motor Vehicle Accidents	4,510	4,117	4,375	4,588	4,922
Poliomyelitis ..	215	275	320	112	241
Streptococcal Infections	65	64	61	52	45
Tuberculosis (all forms)	13,800	10,585	8,902	7,898	6,492
Venereal Diseases ..	1,771	1,619	1,445	1,420	1,385
Whooping Cough ..	457	184	243	139	88

CLASSIFIED SUMMARY OF ALL INFECTIOUS DISEASES (INCLUDING TUBERCULOSIS)
NOTIFIED DURING THE YEAR 1955

BENFLEET URBAN DISTRICT

Notifiable Disease	Cases included in Weekly Returns													Distribution			Sex			
	At ages													Deaths	Admitted to Hospital	S. Benfleet		Thundersley		
	At all ages	0 to 1	1 to 2	2 to 3	3 to 4	4 to 5	5 to 10	10 to 15	15 to 20	20 to 35	35 to 45	45 to 65	65 and over							
Acute Pneumonia	23	1	—	1	1	2	4	1	1	2	2	4	4	2	—	4	18	1	10	13
Dysentery	(1)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(1)	—	—	—	—	—	—	(1)	—	—	(1)
Erysipelas	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	1	1
Food Poisoning	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
Infectious Hepatitis	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—
Measles	109	3	5	12	9	15	61	3	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	19	59	31	57	52
Poliomyelitis	7	—	—	1	2	—	1	1	—	2	—	—	—	6	1	2	—	5	3	4
Puerperal Pyrexia	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	1	—	—	—	—	1	3	—	—	4
Scarlet Fever	9	—	—	—	—	1	7	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	6	2	7
Tuberculosis	16	—	—	1	—	—	2	—	2	5	2	3	1	9	—	5	8	3	9	7
Whooping Cough	6	1	1	2	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	2	3	3	3

N.B.—The figures in parenthesis indicate the number of cases in which the diagnosis was corrected.

*Does not include new cases discovered at death, inward transfers from other areas or cases brought to notice by means other than by formal notification.

CLASSIFIED SUMMARY OF ALL INFECTIOUS DISEASES (INCLUDING TUBERCULOSIS)
NOTIFIED DURING THE YEAR 1955

CANVEY ISLAND URBAN DISTRICT

Notifiable Disease	Cases included in Weekly Returns													Admitted to Hospital	Deaths	M. .F	Sex
	At Ages																
	At all ages	0 to 1	1 to 2	2 to 3	3 to 4	4 to 5	5 to 10	10 to 15	15 to 20	20 to 35	35 to 45	45 to 65	65 to over				
Acute Pneumonia	52	4	2	4	3	3	11	6	—	3	1	6	9	—	—	30	22
Food Poisoning	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	1	—
Measles	159	5	16	18	15	17	83	3	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	84	75
Poliomyelitis	10	—	—	—	—	—	2	4	—	3	(1)	—	—	10	—	7	3
	(1)													(1)		(1)	
Scarlet Fever	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—
Tuberculosis	13	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	8	—	—	4	7	—	10	3
Whooping Cough	22	3	1	2	2	7	7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	12	10

N.B.—The figures in parenthesis indicate the number of cases in which the diagnosis was corrected.

*Does not include new cases discovered at death, inward transfers from other areas or cases brought to notice by means other than by formal notification.

CLASSIFIED SUMMARY OF ALL INFECTIOUS DISEASES (INCLUDING TUBERCULOSIS)
NOTIFIED DURING THE YEAR 1955

RAYLEIGH URBAN DISTRICT

Notifiable Disease	Cases included in Weekly Returns													Admitted to Hospital	Deaths	Sex	
	At Ages																
	At all ages	0 to 1	1 to 2	2 to 3	3 to 4	4 to 5	5 to 10	10 to 15	15 to 20	20 to 35	35 to 45	45 to 65	65 to and over				
Acute Pneumonia	1	2	1	—	2	—	2	2
Erysipelas	—	—	2	3	—	—	2	3
Food Poisoning	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Measles	1	1	—	—	—	—	73	62
Poliomyelitis	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
*Tuberculosis	1	2	1	1	—	2	—	4
Whooping Cough	—	—	—	—	1	—	19	14

*Does not include new cases discovered at death, inward transfers from other areas or cases brought to notice by means other than by formal notification.

INDEX

	Page
Accidents	45
Acreage	4
Ambulance Service	12
Atmospheric Pollution	20
Births and Birth Rates	5, 11
Cancer	39
Caravans	19
Committees	3
Condemned Food	28-34
Deaths and Death Rates	5, 6, 9, 10, 11
Diphtheria	52
Drainage and Sewerage	17
Factories	18
Flood Damaged Roads	51
Food Inspection	30
Food Poisoning	38
General Medical Services	14
Hospitals	14
Houseboats	20
Housing	25
Ice Cream	31, 32, 34
Infant Mortality	5, 7, 11
Infectious Diseases	23, 35
Inhabited Houses	4
Inspections and Visits	23
Laboratory Service	12
Local Health Authority Services	13
Markets	23
Measles	35
Meat Inspection	27
Medical Practitioners	14
Milk	26
Moveable Dwellings	19
Non-notifiable Diseases	38
Pet Animals	22
Petroleum Storage	22
Poliomyelitis	36
Population	8
Public Cleansing	18
Public Conveniences	22
Rainfall	51
Rateable Value	4
Rats and Mice	21
Scarlet Fever	37
School Lavatories	25
Social Conditions	12
Staff	4
Stillbirths	7
Street Trading	31
Tuberculosis	42
Vermin	22
Vital Statistics	5, 11
Water Supply	16
Welfare of the Aged	47
Whooping Cough	36



