

**[Report 1961] / Medical Officer of Health, Bideford R.D.C.**

**Contributors**

Bideford (England). Rural District Council.

**Publication/Creation**

1961

**Persistent URL**

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/a8rt72bj>

**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](mailto:library@wellcomecollection.org)  
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

Library.

BIDEFORD RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

-- oOo --

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

and

SURVEYOR, ENGINEER AND PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

for the year

1961

-- oOo --



Medical Officer of Health:

N. Bowring Betts, F.R.C.S.

Surveyor, Engineer and Public Health Inspector:

L. J. Dunn, A.M.S.E., A.M.I.P.H.E., A.I.A.S., M.R.S.H.

-- oOo --

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA

Area (Acres) .. .. .	55,770
Population (Estimated) .. .. .	5,010
Number of separately rated hereditaments as at 1st. April, 1962 .. .. .	1,934
Rateable Value (as at 1/4/62). .. .. .	£34,175
Sum represented by a Penny Rate (as at 31/3/62) .. .. .	£132/9/6.755

The chief occupations of the inhabitants of the District are directly or indirectly associated with agriculture. The District is a very popular holiday centre and many hotels, boarding houses and farms specialise in seasonal catering.

1961.

---

ANNUAL REPORT

of the Medical Officer of Health for the  
Bideford Rural District

---

Telephone: BRADWORTHY 215.

Cleverdon House,  
Bradworthy.

September, 1962.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I beg to submit to you my Report dealing with the Public Health and general conditions of the district during the year 1961.

Your obedient Servant,

N. Bowring Betts,

Medical Officer of Health.

- - - oOo - - -

VITAL STATISTICS

BIRTHS	1961
Live Births.. .. .	74
Live Birth rate per 1,000 population.. .. .	14.7
Still-Births. .. .	4
Still-Births rate per 1,000 live and still-births .. .. .	51.3
Total live and still-births. .. .	78
Infant deaths .. .. .	3
Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births - total	40.5
" " " " " " " -legitimate	41.6
" " " " " " " illegitimate	0
Neo Natal mortality rate (deaths under 4 weeks per 1,000 total live births) .. .. .	27.0
Early Neo Natal mortality rate - Deaths under 1 week per 1,000 total live births .. .. .	27.0
Prenatal mortality rate (still births and others under 1 week combined per 1,000 total live and still births) .. .. .	76.9
Maternal mortality rate per 1,000 live and still births .. .. .	0

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA  
HOSPITALS.

1. TUBERCULOSIS

There are no hospitals for the reception of tuberculous patients in this district. Advanced cases are usually treated at Hawley Sanatorium, Barnstaple or Hawkmoor Chest Hospital, Bovey Tracey.

2. ISOLATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Any cases of infectious diseases which cannot be isolated or properly cared for at home, are conveyed to the Kingsloy Hospital, which comprises 30 beds, 4 cots and 8 observation cubicles. One case was admitted from the district during 1961.

3. POLIOMYELITIS VACCINATION.

Many children in the district have received injections against Poliomyelitis. This has been carried out by the School Medical Officers and the family doctors. Persons up to the age of 40 years are eligible for vaccination.

4. GENERAL.

The Bideford and District Hospital serves the district extremely well for General Medical and Surgical treatment. The hospital contains about 51 beds. Hospital facilities are also available at the North Devon Infirmary, Barnstaple, and the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, Exeter.

5. MATERNITY CASES

Maternity cases may be admitted to the North Devon Infirmary, Barnstaple and also, by arrangement with the Devon County Council, to the Grenville Nursing Home, Bideford.

6. DISTRICT NURSING.

This service has been carried out under great difficulties owing to the shortage of nurses in the district.

7. LABORATORY FACILITIES.

Bacteriological examinations are undertaken by the Public Health Laboratory Service. Chemical analyses are carried out by Public Analysts Messrs. Tickle & Reynolds, of Queen Street, Exeter.

8. DISINFECTION OF INFECTED BEDDING AND CLOTHING.

By arrangement with the Bideford and District Joint Isolation Hospital Board, any infected bedding and clothing can be disinfected in the steam disinfecting apparatus at the Isolation Hospital.

9. AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

There is a St. John Ambulance stationed at Bideford which serves the rural district. There is also a separate ambulance stationed at the Isolation Hospital, which is used for the conveyance of patients suffering from any of the notifiable infectious diseases.

10. ANTE-NATAL CLINICS.

An ante-natal clinic is held at Bideford.

11. CHILD WELFARE CLINICS.

There are Child Welfare Clinics held at Hartland and Bideford.

12. VENEREAL DISEASE.

A clinic for venereal disease is held at the North Devon Infirmary twice weekly.

13. ORTHOPAEDIC CLINIC.

A Clinic is held twice a month at Barnstaple and Bideford Hospital.

14. BIRTH CONTROL CLINIC.

A Clinic is held once a month at the North Devon Dispensary, Barnstaple.

PREVALENCE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES  
NOTIFICATIONS

Diseases	Total Number of cases notified	Cases Admitted to Hospital	Total deaths
Scarlet Fever.. ..	2	1	0
Diphtheria .. ..	0	0	0
Puerperal Pyrexia ..	0	0	0
Pneumonia .. ..	0	0	0
Dysentery .. ..	0	0	0
Erysipelas .. ..	0	0	0
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	0	0	0
Anterior Poliomyelitis and Polioencephalitis	0	0	0
Measles .. ..	33	0	0
Whooping Cough. ..	0	0	0
Acute Encephalitis			
Lethargica.. ..	0	0	0
Cerebro Spinal Meningitis.. ..	0	0	0

AGE INCIDENCE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

	Measles		Scarlet Fever	
	M	F	M	F
Under 1 year	0	0	0	0
1 "	0	1	0	0
2 years	2	0	0	0
3 "	2	4	0	0
4 "	0	1	0	0
5-9 "	9	8	1	0
10-14 "	2	4	0	1
15-24 "	0	0	0	0
25 & over	0	0	0	0
Unknown	0	0	0	0
	—	—	—	—
Total	15	18	1	1
	—	—	—	—

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION

This is now combined with whooping cough vaccine and Tetanus Toxoid for children under 5 years of age. Older children are given a combination of Diphtheria vaccine and Tetanus Toxoid.

TUBERCULOSIS

The number of cases of Tuberculosis remaining on the register was as follows:-

						31st. Dec. 1961.
(a)	Pulmonary...	Males ...	...	...	...	10
		Females...	...	...	...	9
(b)	Non Pulmonary ...	Males ...	...	...	...	5
		Females...	...	...	...	3
		Total				27

Total Cases on the Register, December 31st., 1961	..	..	27
" " " " " " " " 1960	..	..	28
" " " " " " " " 1959	..	..	28
" " " " " " " " 1958	..	..	27
" " " " " " " " 1957	..	..	27
" " " " " " " " 1956	..	..	24
" " " " " " " " 1955	..	..	24
" " " " " " " " 1954	..	..	23
" " " " " " " " 1953	..	..	27
" " " " " " " " 1952	..	..	26
" " " " " " " " 1951	..	..	24
" " " " " " " " 1950	..	..	23

1. NEW CASES.

During the year 0 cases were notified in accordance with the Regulations.

TUBERCULOSIS  
(Contd.)

The following are the notifications for the preceding twelve years:-

				Pulmonary	Non-Pulmonary	Total
1960	..	..	..	0	0	0
1959	..	..	..	1	0	1
1958	..	..	..	1	1	2
1957	..	..	..	2	3	5
1956	..	..	..	1	0	1
1955	..	..	..	2	1	3
1954	..	..	..	2	1	3
1953	..	..	..	0	1	1
1952	..	..	..	1	0	1
1951	..	..	..	1	0	1
1950	..	..	..	2	0	2
1949	..	..	..	1	1	2

MORTALITY FROM TUBERCULOSIS

TOTAL DEATHS, 1961 - 0.

CAUSES OF DEATH DURING THE YEAR UNDER REVIEW

CAUSES OF DEATH

1961

	M	F
Tuberculosis, Respiratory ... ..	0	0
Other Tuberculosis Diseases... ..	0	0
Syphilitic disease.. ... ..	0	0
Diphtheria ... ..	0	0
Whooping Cough. ... ..	0	0
Meningococcal Infections. ... ..	0	0
Acute Poliomyelitis. ... ..	0	0
Measles... ..	0	0
Other Infective and Parasitic diseases..	0	0
Malignant Neoplasm Stomach ... ..	1	0
Malignant Neoplasm Lung, Bronchus..	1.	1
Malignant Neoplasm Breast ... ..	0	3
Malignant Neoplasm Uterus ... ..	0	0
Other Malignant and Lymphatic Neoplasm..	1	4
Leukaemia, Aleukaemia ... ..	0	0
Dibetes... ..	0	2
Vascular Lesions of Nervous System. ...	2	1
Coronary Disease, Angina. ... ..	4	4
Hypertension with Heart Disease ... ..	1	2
Other Heart Disease ... ..	5	6
Other Circulatory Disease ... ..	2	2
Influenza ... ..	0	0
Pneumonia ... ..	1	0
Bronchitis ... ..	2	1
Other diseases of Respiratory System ...	0	0
Ulcer of Stomach and Duodenum. ... ..	0	0
Gastritis, Enteritis and Diarrhoea, ...	1	0
Nephritis and Nephrosis.. ... ..	2	0
Hyperplasia of Prostate.. ... ..	0	0
Pregnancy, Childbirth, Abortion....	0	0
Congenital Malformations. ... ..	0	1
Other Defined and Ill-Defined diseases..	2	5
Motor Vehicle accidents.. ... ..	0	0
All other accidents ... ..	0	0
Suicide.. ... ..	0	0
Homicide and Operations of War ... ..	0	0
	—	—
Total - All Causes.. ... ..	25	32
	—	—



ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE SURVEYOR, ENGINEER AND PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR  
FOR THE BIDEFORD RURAL DISTRICT

Grenville House,  
The Quay,  
Bideford.

September, 1962.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE  
BIDEFORD RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I beg to present my Annual Report for the year 1961, dealing with the various matters which come within the purview of this Department.

I am, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,  
Your obedient Servant,

L. J. DUNN.

Surveyor.

HOUSING

No new houses were erected by the Council during the year under review.

The following table enumerates the number of houses owned by the Council in the various Parishes and whether pre-war, war-time or post-war houses:-

Pre-war Houses.

Abbotsham	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Alwington	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4
Buckland Brewer	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Clovelly	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Hartland	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4
Littleham	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Monkleigh	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Parkham	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4
Woolsery	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2

Total 22

War-time Houses.

In 1944 the Council built four houses:-

Natcott, Hartland..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Crosspark, Woolsery	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2

4

### Post-War Houses.

Abbotsham	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	6
Alwington	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	6
Buckland Brewer	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	12
Bulkworthy	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Clovelly	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	8
East Putford	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Hartland	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	32
Littleham	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4
Monkleigh	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	12
Parkham	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	6
Welcombe	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Total..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	<u>92</u>

Although the Council own sites which are in all respects suitable for Council house development at Woolsey, Horns Cross, Parkham, Monkleigh and Newton St. Petrock and consideration was given during the year to erecting more Council Houses, the high rate of interest on monies borrowed from the Public Works Loan Board precludes development taking place since the rents charged would be more than could be afforded by persons for whom they were intended, unless each individual house was heavily subsidized from the general rate.

House building costs continue to rise, and whilst it would be highly desirable to build some smaller bungalows for older people and newly married couples this appears unlikely to take place in the immediate future unless circumstances greatly alter in the monetary field.

Seven new dwellinghouses were erected by private enterprise, one by means of conversion, and five were under construction at the end of the year.

The population for the district remains very steady and no industries have been introduced into the district, and consequently there is no very urgent need for new houses except to replace some of those in the district which are very old and nearing the end of their useful life.

The Council's main concern in the field of housing has been to improve the older houses and give them a new lease of life, details of which are given below.

### HOUSING GRANTS.

During the year Standard Grants were approved in respect of 50 properties and £3,761 was paid out on completed works in respect of such grants.

The number of Discretionary Grants approved during the year fell to three but at the same time more money was paid out during the year, namely: £3,157 on works completed on previously approved grants.

It is acknowledged that these grants are giving that little incentive required to property owners to improve their properties without which undoubtedly more houses would fall into disrepair, and the grants have been approved on houses in the Villages and in the more remote parts of the district where the needs of the agricultural community require the individual farmworkers cottages to maintain the efficiency of the industry.

## HOUSING ACT, 1957.

During the year one house was closed as being unfit for human habitation and apart from this no Statutory Notices were served in respect of any property requiring extensive repairs.

There are no common lodging houses in the district.

### WATER SUPPLIES

Main piped water supply is now available in 13 of the 14 Parishes in the district and the statutory water undertakers are the North Devon Water Board.

The district is well covered, with the exception of the Parish of Welcombe, by water mains and during the year under review there have been various extensions of branch mains in the following locations:-

Rosedown and Natcott, Hartland.

Bell Hill, Hartland.

Goldworthy, Parkham.

Stockbridge Hill, Membury Cross and Venn, East Putford.

Stroxworthy and Ashmansworthy, Woolsery.

The situation with regard to domestic water supplies in various Parishes is detailed hereunder:-

<u>Parish</u>	<u>No. of domestic properties supplied.</u>	<u>Total number of dwellinghouses.</u>
ABBOTSHAM	85	100
ALWINGTON	55	93
BUCKLAND BREWER	85	164
BULKWORTHY	15	22
CLOVELLY	159	181
EAST PUTFORD	11	37
HARTLAND	254 (includes 25 houses on standpipe supplies)	463
LANDCROSS	21	22
LITTLEHAM	48	87
MONKLEIGH	92	113
NEWTON ST. PETROCK	26	52
PARKHAM	85	205
WOOLSERY	102	176

Based on an average of three persons per dwellinghouse, which is the approximate average figure for the whole district, 3,144 persons now have mains water supply, and this is an increase of 14% on the previous year.

At the time of writing the report the Water Board are in the process of building a service reservoir at Welcombe Cross, primarily to serve the Rural District of Stratton in the Cornwall County, but it is hoped, and thought, that within the next few years a supply of water will be available in the Welcombe Parish which is urgently required.

No complaints whatsoever have been received with regard to the quality of the mains water supply, which comes from various sources at Dartmoor, Exmoor and Molbury.

The mains supply is adequate for domestic purposes although the demand is increasing every year, and the demand is also increasing for agricultural and horticultural purposes and this has had to be restricted in times of drought. The Water Board are, however, actively engaged in acquiring other sources of supply to fulfil future needs.

Approximately two-fifths of the population in the district are without the benefits of main water supply and have to rely on private water supplies, but during the past 15 years a considerable number of grants have been given by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food towards the cost of providing supplies to farms which has met a big need, but it seems likely that a considerable number of individual farms and properties in the more remote parts of the district will have to rely on their individual supplies in future.

During the year under review 10 water samples were taken from various private supplies and of these, two were very good, three showed a moderate degree of contamination but the supply fell within the normal range for satisfactory wells, and the remainder were grossly polluted.

Where supplies are found to be polluted, advice is always given as to how the degree of pollution may be reduced or eliminated entirely but with the normal shallow wells in use in the district it is difficult, if not impossible, in the majority of cases to entirely prevent pollution gaining access to the well.

#### SEWERAGE

The majority of the villages and hamlets in the district have been or are planned shortly to possess a modern sewerage and sewage disposal scheme, a programme, planned in 1948 when it became apparent that this service was urgently required in the villages and hamlets and would become increasingly essential with the advent of main water, which as detailed earlier in the report, now being available in all the Parishes of the Rural District with the exception of one.

During the year under review the Hartland Sewerage and Sewage Disposal Scheme was completed which is by far the largest and most complicated scheme the Council have, or will have, to undertake, at a cost of approximately £45,000, and a list of the modern schemes now in operation is detailed hereunder:-

Buckland Brewer	-	completed in 1952.
Higher Clovelly	-	completed in 1959.
Lower Clovelly	-	New tidal tank provided in 1950.
Hartland	-	completed in 1961.
Horns Cross	-	completed in 1948.
Monkloigh	-	completed in 1957.
Parkhem	-	completed in 1954.
Saltrons	-	completed in 1955.
Stoke	-	completed in 1960.

The next scheme to be undertaken is that for the Village of Littleham at a cost of approximately £20,000 and subsequently Ford, Fairy Cross and Woodtown in the Parish of Alwington. Thereafter Bucks Mills and Bucks Cross in the Parish of Woolsery figure in the planned programme of new schemes where no sewerage schemes exists at present.

The Villages of Abbotsham and Woolsery possess very old systems of sewers which evolved as such over a period of years, having been laid down as highway drains and which are always causing trouble and these systems must be replaced by modern sewers with modern works in due course. This is especially important in the Village of Abbotsham where, due to its proximity to Bidford, development will undoubtedly take place within the foreseeable future to a considerable extent but this cannot be allowed until adequate sewers are available to serve the development, otherwise a more serious public health nuisance would occur than that which now exists.

Provision of this service throughout the district has been extremely expensive but due to the substantial grants which are received towards the cost of these works, the local rate levied for the year 1962/63 is only just over half the arithmetical average rate for rural districts in the County and is the second lowest.

#### PUBLIC CLEANSING

The contract system of refuse collection throughout the whole district continues in the same form as in the previous year but it is a greatly improved service from that of three years ago.

The service covers all the Parishes in the district and all the properties, with the exception of the outlying dwellings, and the frequency of the collection is fortnightly in the summer and four-weekly in the winter over the majority of the district, but in Hartland Town a weekly collection is maintained and in Lower Clovelly Village twice weekly collections.

Occasionally, requests are received for an increase in the frequency of collection and these usually come from people recently moved in the district from Urban Districts, used to weekly or twice-weekly collections of refuse.

In a truly rural district such as this, obviously such frequent collections are not necessary except in the built-up areas but it is hoped that the frequency of the collection over the majority of the district will be increased in the near future and those few outlying properties not yet receiving the service, being included for the first time.

The success following the provision of litter bins along the main roads in the district has been such that it has been extended and arrangements for the emptying of these bins has worked well and there is now a great improvement with regard to the litter problem than was the case some years ago but it is regrettable that not everyone is litter conscious.

#### PUBLIC SWIMMING FACILITIES.

Open sea bathing is available at many points along the picturesque coastline of the district which is being increasingly frequented by holidaymakers and the oil pollution of the beaches does seem to be on the decrease in-so-far as the district is concerned, which is a very happy state of affairs.

There are no public swimming baths in the district.

## FOOD AND DRUGS.

The Annual Report by the Medical Officer of Health to the Ministry of Health on the number of cases of food poisoning during the year was again "nil".

## FOOD PREMISES.

Two additional ice-cream licences were issued by the Council for the sale of pre-packed ice-cream only and no contraventions of the regulations relating to food premises were found.

At the beginning of the year the responsibility for licencing under the Milk and Dairies Regulations passed to the Devon County Council.

## SLAUGHTERHOUSES.

The two private slaughterhouses which existed in the district for the past few years have not been used at all during the year under review and April 1st. was set by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food as the date when the new regulations relating to slaughterhouses should apply to the district but the operators decided not to modernize their premises to comply with the regulations and they have, therefore, ceased to function.

All meat for the district is now obtained from centralized slaughterhouses at Bideford and elsewhere as has been the case for the majority of butchers in the district since 1940 and the Council, at a meeting with other interested bodies, expressed satisfaction with those centralized arrangements which have worked without any known adverse comment and I am convinced that this is a very desirable arrangement working to the general satisfaction of the district.

## PLANS

Hereunder are details of Plans submitted to the Council for consideration under the Building Byelaws and Town and Country Planning Act, 1947.

### BUILDING BYELAWS.

Number approved .. .. . 54

### TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT, 1947.

Number approved .. .. . 90

Number refused .. .. . 27

The figures detailed above indicate an increase of approximately 30% in the number of plans submitted for approval for various works during the year.

## CARAVAN AND CAMPING SITES.

The new Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act came into operation during the year and steps were taken to ensure that the recognised licenced caravan and camping sites in the district are now provided with essential amenities of a satisfactory water supply, water closets, means for the disposal of refuse and in the sites of a more permanent nature, facilities for personal washing.

The accommodation for numbers offered on these licensed sites is more than adequate to meet the present needs of the district, although holidays of this type are increasing every year. In consultation with the County Planning Department, sites are being grouped in various parts of the district rather than permit indiscriminate development of this nature along the coastline which has been scheduled as one of outstanding natural beauty.

Whilst the new Act did much to improve conditions, a loophole still exists in legislation in the use of land for camping and caravanning for considerable periods during the summer at the height of the season, without the Local Authority able to exercise any control over it and this is, in the opinion of those concerned with this development, a weak link in the chain of improved circumstances. Especially is this the case, where, as in this district, adequate accommodation is available for all holiday-makers of this type where the licensed holders provide accommodation for their needs.

FACTORIES ACTS, 1937 and 1948.

Prescribed particulars on the administration  
of the Factories Act, 1947

1. INSPECTIONS for purposes of provisions as to health.

Premises (1)	Number on Reg- ister (3)	Number of		
		Inspec- tions (4)	Writ- ten Notices (5)	Occupiers Prosecuted (6)
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities.	1	3	-	-
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	8	17	-	-
(iii) Other Premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out-workers' premises)	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	9	20	-	-

2. CASES IN WHICH DEFECTS WERE FOUND - NIL

OUTWORK

(Sections 110 and 111)

Nature of Work  (1)	Section 110			Section 111		
	No. of out-workers in August list required by Section 110(1)(c) (2)	No. of cases of default in sending lists to the Council (3)	No. of prosecutions for failure to supply lists (4)	No. of instances of work in unwholesome premises (5)	Notices served (6)	Prosecutions (7)
Wearing apparel } Making etc., Clean- ing and Washing	9					



