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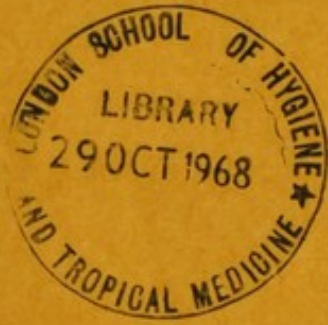
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**BLETCHLEY**

**urban  
district  
council**



**ANNUAL  
REPORT  
1967**

Medical Officer of Health

Chief Public Health Inspector



# **BLETCHLEY**

## **Urban District Council**



# **ANNUAL REPORT**

**OF THE**

**MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH**

**AND OF THE**

**CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR**

**FOR THE YEAR**

**1967**

**Chairman of the Council:**

**Councillor R. H. FISHER, J.P.**

**PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE**

**Chairman:**

**Councillor F. PARKIN.**

**Members:**

**Councillors**

**Mrs. G. E. WOOD,**

**R. G. BREWER,**


**W. CALDWELL,**

**T. C. DICKENS,**

**H. C. R. HEAD,**

**D. LEE,**

**A. G. WILKINSON.**



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PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF

Medical Officer of Health:

P. Lavis, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.,

(The Medical Officer of Health is also M.O.H. for Buckingham M.B., the Urban Districts of Newport Pagnell and Wolverton, the Rural Districts of Buckingham, Newport Pagnell and Winslow, Area M.O. for North Bucks and Divisional M.O. for the North Bucks Division and the Buckingham and Winslow District.)

Deputy Medical Officer of Health:

J. P. Hutchby, M.B., B.Ch., D.P.H.

Chief Public Health Inspector:

A. James, M.A.P.H.I.

Additional Public Health Inspector:

J. R. Bailey, M.A.P.H.I.

Pupil Public Health Inspector:

D. J. Wells.

Rodent Officer:

A. G. Meacham.

Clerical Assistant:

Miss C. Stamp.

Medical Officer of Health

W. Lewis, M.A., D.S.O., D.P.H.

(The Medical Officer of Health is also M.O.H. for Hackney, N.E., the Urban Districts of Islington, Haringey and Tottenham, the Rural Districts of Hackney, Haringey, Islington and Waltham, and M.O. for North London and Divisional M.O. for the North London Division and the Hackney and Islington Divisions.)

Deputy Medical Officer of Health

J. P. Murray, M.B., B.S., D.P.H.

Chief Public Health Inspector

A. Jones, M.A., D.P.H.

Additional Public Health Inspectors

J. E. Bell, M.A., D.P.H.

Public Health Health Inspector

E. J. White

Medical Officer

A. S. Thomas

Clinical Assistant

Miss G. Brown

To The Chairman and Councillors of the  
Urban District of Bletchley

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Vital Statistics

The population continues to expand at a steady rate, both by immigration and by excess of births over deaths.

Infectious Diseases

The major outbreak in 1967 was measles, as expected. With a satisfactory vaccine now available one hopes to see the regular measles epidemics becoming less severe and eventually a rarity.

A potentially dangerous situation arose in June when a child was discovered to be suffering from typhoid in a family, living and managing a food business. The infection had been picked up abroad, so that no local source was suspected. The co-operation of the family, all contacts and constant supervision from the department, ensured no spread of the disease. Because of the delay between arrival in this country, and the department finding the case, no doubt a measure of luck played a part in the absence of further cases. A number of isolated cases of salmonella infection required investigation, but because they were single isolated cases, no sources could be found.

A case of tuberculosis in a child required extensive investigation involving a junior school. The first examination of all concerned brought to light two further cases, subsequent follow-up of these cases led to the probable source and a further case. A second examination of the school revealed one more child who was probably in the incubation period of the disease. I believe the outbreak has now been cleared up. These incidents illustrate the need for constant vigilance against infectious diseases.

Environmental Health

The Council has, in my opinion, taken a wise decision to pursue a policy of smoke control. With the prospect of a new city adjacent to the town, it is important that steps be taken now to prevent unnecessary air pollution.

I am working to ensure that Milton Keynes and its surrounding area will be smoke controlled so that the new city will start a clean city. The problem of brickworks pollution is something requiring further technical knowledge and possibly further legislation. No efforts should be spared in pursuing these ends.

Following a Ministry circular concerning Noise (as a health hazard) advising all local authorities to ensure their staff have undertaken recent training in the subject, your staff have attended the specially organised refresher courses.

## Health Education

Among the main topics publicised this year was Prevention of Cancer. This was linked with the start of L.H.A. cervical cytology clinics in Bletchley, where women in the "high risk" groups are being examined for early signs of cancer of the cervix. General practitioners in Bletchley are regularly undertaking this examination in addition, and the coverage achieved is constantly increasing. There should now be no reason why any women in the "high risk" groups finds difficulty in getting this examination done.

An interesting development being organised by the health visitors is the bringing together of mothers with young children in discussion groups. This should be particularly beneficial to the recently arrived Londoners with emotional problems, needing advice and support. It is too early to assess the results of these groups yet, but one hopes it will be an exercise in preventive medicine with practical results. These groups are of course additional to the normal ante-natal and parentcraft courses run for expectant mothers and fathers by the health visitors.

## Staff

Once again, I must acknowledge the work of Mr. James and Mr. Bailey who have been unstinting in their efforts for the community's benefit. Their capacities are now stretched to the limit and a further inspector is becoming necessary.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

P. LAVIS.



PRINCIPAL CAUSES OF DEATH:

	<u>1966</u>			<u>1967</u>		
	M.	F.	T.	M.	F.	T.
<b>Cancer:</b>						
Stomach	3	0	3	3	1	4
Lungs, Bronchus	5	2	7	11	2	13
Breast	0	2	2	0	2	2
Other	8	10	18	10	14	24
Leukaemia	2	2	4	2	1	3
Vascular lesion of nervous system	3	10	13	5	12	17
Heart Disease	27	19	46	18	13	31
Other circulatory diseases	6	6	12	7	4	11
Pneumonia	12	6	18	7	7	14
Bronchitis	7	2	9	7	2	9
Digestive Diseases	0	1	1	0	1	1
Congenital Malformations	2	0	2	3	0	3
Accidents: Motor Vehicles)	2	1	3	0	1	1
Other )	2	2	4	2	1	3
All other causes	7	9	16	10	7	17
	<u>86</u>	<u>72</u>	<u>158</u>	<u>85</u>	<u>68</u>	<u>153</u>

INFECTIOUS DISEASES:

NOTIFICATIONS:

Dysentery	7	Tuberculosis (respiratory)	6
Scarlet Fever	28	Tuberculosis (other than respiratory)	2
Measles	807	Typhoid	1
Whooping Cough	21	Puerperal Pyrexia	1

## PERSONAL HEALTH SERVICES

- Area Health Office: (Tel: 4701). 224 Queensway.
- Ambulance Service: (Tel: 2565). Administered by Bucks County Council, stationed at Whalley Drive.
- Hospitals: Under the Oxford Regional Hospital Board. Patients treated at Aylesbury, Northampton and Bedford. General Practitioners' Maternity Unit at Whalley Drive. Outpatients facilities for Chest Diseases; Ear, Nose and Throat; Dermatology; Ophthalmology; Paediatrics; Psychiatry; Surgery; Gynaecology; Orthopaedics.
- Public Health Laboratory: Kimbolton Road, Bedford.
- Health Visitors: Area Superintendent - Mrs. D. L. Marett (at Area Health Office).
- District Nurses: }  
Midwives: } Area Superintendent - Mrs. O. Riley (at Area Health Office).
- Social Workers: (Medical, Welfare, Blind, Mental Health).  
Area Officer - Mr. P. K. Smith (at Area Health Office).
- Moral Welfare (for Unmarried Mothers):  
Miss Tregurtha (at Area Health Office).
- Home Help Service: Area Organiser - Mrs. H. R. L. Sephton (at Area Health Office).
- Occupational Therapy Centre: Supervisor - Mrs. Martin (Tel: 2073), 226 Queensway.
- Training Centres: Junior - Queensway - Supervisor Miss Welby. (Tel: 2771).  
Adult - Whaddon Way - Supervisor Mrs. Beryl. (Tel: 2811).
- Residential Accommodation for Elderly:  
The Coppice, Whalley Drive.
- Child Welfare Centres: Whalley Drive (Tel: 3781). Also Methodist Hall, Queensway, Thursday afternoons.
- Dental Clinic: Whalley Drive (Tel: 3784). Treatment is available to school children and expectant mothers.

Child Guidance Clinic: Whalley Drive (Tel: 3783). Psychiatrist Dr. M. Lindsay.

Health Education Officer: Miss P. Haywood (at Area Health Office).

School Health Service: Administered from Area Health Office. This service is responsible for examination of pupils in accordance with the Education Act 1944, ascertainment of handicapped pupils and arranging appropriate treatment. Vaccination and immunisation is also arranged.

Childrens Department: Area Child Care Officer - Miss J. M. Walker (Tel: 4701), 224 Queensway.

Family Planning Clinic: Child Welfare Clinic, Whalley Drive. By appointment (Tel: 2959).

Marriage Guidance Council Appointments for Bletchley area (Tel: Soulbury 252). Interviews held at Whalley Drive Clinic.

## SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT

### WATER SUPPLY

The Bucks Water Board have reported the following information:

- (a) the water supply to the district has been satisfactory in quality and quantity throughout the year.
- (b) twenty-six samples of raw water have been examined bacteriologically. All were free from coliform organisms in 100 mls.  
fifty-eight samples of treated water have been examined, including those from consumers' taps. All were free from coliform organisms in 100 mls.
- (c) no contamination was detected.
- (d) a typical chemical analysis of the treated water was as follows. The water contains virtually no fluoride.

### CHEMICAL EXAMINATION

Parts per million			
Ammonia Nitrogen	Nil	Total Hardness	230
Albuminoid Nitrogen	Nil	Total Solids	300
Nitrite Nitrogen	Nil	Calcium, as Ca	80
Nitrate Nitrogen	0.70	Magnesium, as Mg	8
O <sub>2</sub> absorbed from permanganate	Nil	Sulphate, as SO <sub>4</sub>	44
Free CO <sub>2</sub>	15	Chloride, as Cl	15
Alkalinity as CaCO <sub>3</sub>	185	Iron, as Fe	0.2
Carbonate Hardness	185	Fluoride as F less than	0.1
Non-Carbonate Hardness	45	Residual Chlorine	0.1

### PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Appearance	-	Clear	Colour	-	Less than 5
pH Value	-	7.6	Turbidity	-	Less than 1

### SOURCE

Sandhouse Pumping Station - Treated Water.

Some concern was felt when attention was drawn to the establishment of a gypsy encampment in close proximity to the Sandhouse wells which comprise part of the district's water source.

The Water Board were supported in their efforts to eliminate any possible danger of contamination by informing the Ministry and by requesting the Council of the neighbouring County, wherein the wells are situate, to re-site the encampment as quickly as possible.

The encampment, it transpired, was of only a temporary nature and was later removed from the site.

The Engineer and Surveyor has reported throughout the year on:

#### DRAINAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL

The standard of effluent from the works was affected for a temporary period at the commencement of the year owing to a discharge into the system of industrial waste of which attempts to trace proved negative.

A serious pollution, which occurred at a later date was however, successfully traced to the Railway Depot where action was promised to prevent any reoccurrence.

No. 2 Sludge Concentrator went out of action with worn out filtering mechanism and it was noted that No. 1 was also showing signs of failure. No. 1 had been in use for seven years and No. 2 for four years.

Both were eventually dismantled and overhauled and back in operation by the end of the year, the work however, being prolonged due to certain labour difficulties of the contractor.

Whilst the concentrators were out of action, the works operated reasonably well but some anxiety was felt from time to time regarding the quality of the discharged effluent.

Proposals to provide plant for disposal of both sludge and refuse by a method of composting had to be abandoned when the Ministry concerned expressed the view that such proposals would conflict with facilities expected to be provided as part of the new city design. Consultants engaged by the Council eventually advised the enlargement of the present works, to cater for the urgently needed extension of disposal facilities, by providing treatment through an aeration plant and drainage of the effluent produced onto land. Objections were raised both to the purchase of the additional land required and to the possibility of foul odours, consequently compulsory purchase procedure had to be taken and an enquiry was pending at the end of the year.

Three bursts occurred, due to corrosion, in the ten feet deep pumping main from Selbourne Avenue at the rear of dwellings in Milton Grove and sections of the sewer had to be re-laid.

#### REFUSE DISPOSAL

As the extended life of the Rammamere tip diminished, anxious search for other sites continued. When this tip was finally completed in April, arrangements had been made to convey refuse to the Stoke Goldington tip of Newport Pagnell Rural District Council for three months and this period

was further extended until October when for a short while tipping was allowed at the tip site of Wolverton Urban District Council. In November, as emergency measures came into operation, tipping commenced at the re-opened old site at the Sewage Works.

Meanwhile, negotiations had been carried out throughout the year to obtain the use of part of a clay pit at the Newton Longville works of the London Brick Company, which site was estimated might have a life of about fifteen years. Planning permission was received in October and by the end of the year survey work had been carried out and the construction of an access road commenced.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE  
CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

To the Chairman and Members of the Bletchley Urban District Council.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present the Annual Report on the work of the Public Health Department for 1967.

Because there are so many different aspects of environmental hygiene, it is sometimes difficult, if not impossible, to classify them in any order of priority.

Food Hygiene is one of our responsibilities requiring constant vigilance. This situation is unlikely to alter and there will be a continuing importance attached to food hygiene as long as a variety of foods are consumed. The constituents of diet will alter as developments take place, new marketing techniques will be devised and methods of food preparation both at home and in the restaurant kitchen are likely to alter as alternative processes become available. Some of these may reduce risks of contamination whilst others may require an even greater attention to hygiene. The importance of food hygiene is emphasised by new legislation affecting the year's work, regulations dealing with food stalls and delivery vehicles, regulations on slaughterhouse hygiene, an Act to deal with the humane slaughter of poultry and codes of practice on hygiene in the bakery trade and automatic food vending machines.

The working conditions of those employed in office and shop premises claimed substantial consideration of our time and rightly so, for this is the first legislation to specifically refer to office workers, whilst those in shops could only rely in the past on Acts containing such vague terms as "suitable", "sufficient" or "reasonable".

Every adult breathes about eighteen times a minute, so a newspaper science correspondent reports, exposing throughout the day an area of lung about the size of a tennis court to the intruding air. Can we afford to ignore his plea - "why then do we treat our air like a sewer?" Plans were set afoot to tackle this problem and when the necessary Ministry approval is given we shall find we have set ourselves yet another task - in the field of air pollution.

The following pages will report on our other activities, no more, nor less important than those outlined above.

It has become increasingly apparent that our capacity to cope adequately with the whole range of duties is now more than fully extended. It is of some concern to me to realise that we are not able to tackle in a deserving manner the special problems, the emergencies and the routine inspections that each aspect of the work should command. After working through a particular cycle of visits it is essential that the contact should not be lost if good standards are to be maintained, yet it is with some dismay that we recognise an inevitable delay in returning to that field whilst attention is directed to other activities.

With a fast progressing community and a steady flow of new legislation the immediate future does not look promising for on the horizon there is mounting a back-log of re-visits, additional work in the shape of smoke control areas and pollution measurement and a forecasted new housing drive on unfitness, repair and improvement by grant procedure, all likely to involve extensive survey.

It is heartening, however, to recall that the Council, having considered and recognised the increasing burden, intend to review the staffing position at their next annual review. In the meantime, we shall endeavour to maintain our enthusiastic outlook and play our part with a progressive and forward looking authority.

It is with sorrow that I record the passing of colleague 'Bob' Storey and the Chairman of the Council, Mr. R. H. Fisher, the deaths of whom in the last months of the year stunned both members and officers of the Council.

It is a pleasure to welcome as a new member to the staff Miss C. Stamp who on the resignation of our previous clerical assistant, Miss P. Gillard, joined us in March. Miss Stamp soon proved to be a most able person and is now a valuable and indispensable part of the department.

I am also happy to record the success of Mr. D. J. Wells in passing the Intermediate Examination of the Public Health Inspectors Diploma.

Acknowledgements are extended to Council Members, the Medical Officer of Health, colleagues and staff for their assistance and support during the year under review.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

A. JAMES.

F O O D

MEAT INSPECTION

The throughput at the slaughterhouse again showed an increase on the previous year's figures, being accounted for mainly by the slaughter of sheep for an immigrant section of the community. Prior to obtaining local facilities for religious slaughter, such meat had to be obtained from towns some distance away and as a consequence poultry constituted much of their staple meat diet.

DETAILS OF CARCASSES AND OFFAL INSPECTED AND PARTS CONDEMNED

	Cattle excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs
Number slaughtered	162	1	11	1,260	363
Number inspected	162	1	11	1,260	363
<u>All diseases except Tuberculosis and Cysticerci</u>					
Whole carcasses condemned	-	-	-	6	-
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	66	-	-	204	26
<u>Tuberculosis only</u>					
Whole carcasses condemned	-	-	-	-	-
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	-	-	-	-	1
<u>Cysticercosis</u>					
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	-	-	-	-	-
Carcasses submitted to treatment by refrigeration	-	-	-	-	-
Generalised and totally condemned	-	-	-	-	-

All animals slaughtered were inspected and every carcass adjudged fit for human consumption was stamped in accordance with the Meat Inspection Regulations 1963, inspection charges being made as allowed for in these regulations.

During the year, one hundred and seventy three visits were made including each Saturday morning; detailed inspections were carried out on 1,797 carcasses and offal. The total weight of meat condemned

amounted to nearly sixteen hundredweight. Four licences to slaughter were granted.

## POULTRY INSPECTION

It is intended by the Government to introduce some measure of control over the slaughter and stunning of poultry. A Circular was received outlining the provisions of the Slaughter of Poultry Act 1967, which, when it is brought into force at some future date will deal with the registration of premises where stunning is carried out and the issue of regulations to secure humane conditions and practices.

This will be the first legislation to specifically deal with an industry which has grown from marketing 25-30 million birds a year some twelve years ago, when such items of diet tended more often than not to be purchased for special occasions, to the around 250 million per annum big business of today.

The speed with which the industry has mushroomed has caused a certain amount of breathlessness. The legislators have so far managed two Circulars and a Code of Practice, to the Public Health Inspectors' profession it is another pressing matter to add to an ever increasing work-load and to local authorities, the likelihood of additional staff.

The 1961 Circular gave advice on inspection procedure and the Code dealt with the layout of premises and plant. In 1966, a Circular to local authorities pressed for more attention to be given to poultry processing plants and stressed the need for more frequent visits by inspectors.

With the present staff fully occupied, it has not been a practical proposition to deal with the situation on the lines indicated in the Circulars. We have managed to institute a system of regular bacteriological sampling of chill tank water during which visits, supplemented by others, a general oversight of the working of the plant is observed. However, it is my hope that the importance of the problem will be recognised so enabling a more comprehensive inspection system to operate.

In order to gain experience of methods and practices in establishments other than the local plant, visits were arranged, with the co-operation of the Public Health Departments of Amptill Rural District Council and Wycombe Rural District Council, to poultry processing premises at Flitwick and Princes Risborough where much useful information was obtained.

### Prescribed particulars required by the Ministry of Health:

1)	number of poultry processing premises.	1
2)	number of visits to these premises.	83
3)	total number of birds processed during the year.	2,381,355
4)	types of birds processed.	Broilers (uneviscerated)
5)	percentage of birds rejected as unfit for human consumption.	0.63
6)	weight of poultry condemned.	46,602 lbs.

The latter figures do not include 3,134 birds dead on arrival as the result of four vehicular accidents during the year.

## UNFIT FOOD

Eighty four visits were made for the purpose of examining food, to ascertain its fitness or otherwise for human consumption. In the cases where food was found to be unfit, it was surrendered by the owner and a surrender certificate issued. These foods were disposed of via the refuse tip.

### Total weight of food condemned

	Tons	cwt	lbs
Meat at slaughterhouse		15	105
Meat at retail premises		1	61
Cooked meats and meat products		10	9
Canned meats		2	51
Other canned foods		9	18
Fish (fresh)			21
Fruit and vegetables (fresh)			22
Other foods	8	16	12
Total	10	15	75

The considerable figures denoted for Other Foods include the chickens previously mentioned as being involved in transport mishaps. The moribund carcasses were disposed of by the firm to a by-products plant in a neighbouring county.

## FOOD COMPLAINTS

The number of complaints concerning foreign bodies in food and out of condition food, shows, from various report sources, no sign of decreasing. Taking reports of the legal proceedings coming to its notice regarding all types of cases concerning food, the British Food Journal estimates that 46% were for foreign matter and 27% in respect of mouldy food. Four groups dominate the latter - baked pies and pasties, cakes, bread and raw sausages. Although only those aspects of the food trade's problems that come before the courts are highlighted, the report concludes that it would not be altogether an unfair analogy to compare with the 'tip of the iceberg'.

Though discussions continue about the increased incidence, causes and remedies, little is heard on the justification of prosecutions. Many courts, judging by the light penalties imposed, regard such cases of lesser importance, the main deterrent effect being the adverse publicity.

A reasoned approach, with warning of legal liabilities together with advice, is more likely to meet with positive response. If an offence is repeated, legal proceedings will then probably ensure that the lesson is more fully learned. The Health Committee have also adopted this realistic and commonsense attitude and have not accepted prosecution as of automatic consequence.

Mould growth not only causes many complaints but must result in what can only be estimated as considerable losses. In many cases the fault lies with the retailer who either does not fully control his stock rotation or does not know the safe life of perishable goods.

It was with this knowledge in mind that we drafted out a Guide on the Handling of Meat Products and circularised all food retailers and catering establishments.

#### Table of Complaints

Brown coagulation in lemon juice	Mouldy pastie.
Mouldy cheese.	Mouldy cake.
Green skin on yoghurt.	Wasp in bread.
Unsound fish (unfounded).	Unidentified particles in flour.
Beetle in frozen peas.	Object in milk bottle.
Dirty milk bottle.	Mouldy chocolate cake.
Mouldy sausages (2 cases).	Mouldy bread rolls.
Contaminated bread.	Under processed can of luncheon meat.
Mouldy pork pie (2 cases).	Piece of rubber in can of luncheon meat.
Fermenting can of peaches.	Sour cottage cheese.
Mould bread (2 cases).	Contaminated sprouts.

The lemon juice contained a preservative of which, the manufacturer stated, there would be a loss through the plastic container during the normal life of the product. It was probable that whilst in use the amount of preservative became negligible and mould spores drawn into the container after squeezing had been able to grow uninhibited.

The darkness of the flesh of a piece of dog-fish, retailed under the name of rock-salmon lead the purchaser to some doubt over its freshness but he was informed that it was quite fit to eat.

During the mechanised harvesting of peas a certain amount of foreign matter is picked up. Whilst processing includes various screenings, reliance has to be placed finally on visual inspection and manual removal of items such as husks, caterpillars, flower buds and snails, etc. In our case it was a tiny beetle which turned up in the frozen product.

Two complaints concerning milk bottles resulted in visits to a bottling plant, which strictly speaking is outside of our jurisdiction. A dirty milk bottle was the first and the second contained the end of a bottle filler tube that the dairy, on the discovery that it was missing, had been conducting a frantic search for.

The deterioration of the contents of a can of peaches was caused by an air leak into the can via a puncture so small as to be almost invisible to the naked eye.

Our investigation into complaints concerning mould growths were pursued vigorously both at the retail source and with the producer. With articles such as pork pies and sausages, it was usual to find, especially

during the summer, that the retailer over-estimates the shelf-life and it was our general experience to find that producers also issue Codes on Handling.

The mouldy chocolate cake had an involved history. It transpired the damaged or mishapen cakes, otherwise perfectly consumable, were distributed at a lower price and under a plain wrapper through various channels by a well-known firm. The firm discovered on investigating this complaint that some cakes were passing through the hands of several dealers, unknown to them, before reaching the consumer about two weeks older than the recommended life of the article. With a reputation to preserve action was taken to stop supplies and re-examine the system of the disposal of sub-standard goods.

Our most curious case involved us in a lengthy correspondence and was in respect of a sliced and wrapped loaf of bread brought to us with an unidentifiable strong odour. Immediate investigation at the complainant's home and the retail shop gave no indication as to the cause. The bakery was contacted and the sample we sent to the Public Analyst was reported to be contaminated by a cleansing fluid similar to carbon tetrachloride. The Public Health Inspector for the district where the bakery was situated, whose aid we enlisted, reported finding such a fluid being used to cleanse the heating elements which seal the waxed wrappers. He failed, however, in his attempt to deliberately contaminate a loaf because of the volatile nature of the fluid.

The various investigations caused sixty three visits, much correspondence and several interviews with manufacturers.

## FOOD HYGIENE

Many local government officers feel they have failed in some way if they have to resort to legal proceedings to secure compliance with minimum statutory standards. Public Health Inspectors in particular exercise considerable patience in persuading people that the requirements they describe are not only law, but have been accepted as necessary for the protection of others. It is customary to resort to legal proceeding only in the more serious cases.

The work of obtaining satisfactory standards of cleanliness and the encouragement of hygienic practices by the staff in food businesses depends, to not a small extent on the state of the premises promoting the right atmosphere.

It was the failure to obtain these conditions that led us to report to the Committee one of the larger food retailers. It must be admitted that several schemes of improvement had been mooted, but the most ambitious fell by the wayside during a period of economic squeeze.

The threat of prosecution, however, had some effect and eventually alterations and re-decorations were carried out resulting in a much improved environment.

The need for education in hygienic practices is underlined in an experience related in a professional journal, of an employer who on observing one of his staff returning to serve customers after leaving the lavatory reminded him of the need to wash his hands. "No need", was the reply, "I washed them before I went in." We continued to reinforce education of the food handler by supplying for display, posters on various aspects of good and bad hygiene.

The new control on markets, stalls and delivery vehicles came into operation with the commencement of the year and it was some time before we were reasonably satisfied that the majority of this type of concern had received a visit.

Many traders took the advantage contained in the regulations, of claiming, where circumstances were appropriate, exemption to the provision of sinks for washing equipment or of notifying that their business did not need such provision.

In an itinerant trade such as this, no little difficulty is anticipated in the enforcement of these regulations. It takes time to search the district for these vehicles and some knowing that they are difficult to trace are apt to let things slide and "chance being caught".

Shops are in many cases designed and erected without prior knowledge on the part of the architects as to the going-in trades. Difficulties frequently arise from inadequate refuse storage and with selling space being at a premium, areas given over to such storage are considered uneconomical. It is only when the premises are occupied that the magnitude of the problem is fully appreciated. Such a problem caused us numerous visits to one large retailer, when refuse overflowed to the exterior of the premises. A nearby resident suffered serious inconvenience from blown paper and the police had to be called in to deal with vandals using discarded fruit and vegetables as 'ammunition'.

Contact with the architects was established in the planning stage of the new Abbays Estate shops. Even so, prior to the opening of the shops, an inspection showed some matters not attended to required a site meeting to determine.

Up-to-date equipment and modern layout were the innovations in the new kitchen incorporated in alterations to one of the town's cafes improving not only hygiene but service to its customers.

That dogs are best kept out of food establishments is not doubted, but it is not the subject of any legal requirement. A plea was received from a newly completed shop to display a notice to this effect. This prompted us to obtain the Committee's backing for a general campaign to persuade food shops to display a specially prepared notice, requesting the public to refrain from taking their dogs into shops in the interest of food hygiene and the response from retailers was quite successful.

## Food Hygiene (General) Regulations 1960

### Prescribed details:

(Regulation 16 requires the provision of a wash-hand basin, hot and cold water, soap, towel and nail brush. Regulation 19 refers to the provision of a sink with hot and cold water, soap and clean cloths for use where food and equipment require washing.

- 1) number of premises;
- 2) number known to be fitted to comply with Regulation 16;
- 3) number of premises known to which Regulation 19 applies;
- 4) number known to be fitted to comply with Regulation 19.

Category	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Bakers	2	2	2	2
Butchers	13	12	13	13
Catering estab. (cafes, canteens, etc)	56	55	56	56
Confectioners (cakes, sweets etc)	15	15	6	6
Fish Shops (wet, fried)	7	7	6	6
Food Factories	7	7	3	3
Food Warehouses	5	5	0	0
General Food Shops	40	39	40	39
Greengrocers	8	8	5	5
Licensed Premises	29	26	24	24

### Registration of Premises

Section 16 of the main Act requires premises, other than catering businesses, to be registered for the manufacture, storage or sale of ice-cream and for the preparation or manufacture of sausages or potted, pressed, pickled and preserved foods. The cooking of meat or fish is deemed to be preservation for the purposes of registration.

Inspections were carried out and Certificates of Registration issued in respect of:

the sale of ice-cream	- 2
cooking of hams and manufacture of sausages	- 1
frying of fish and cooking of pies	- 1

In all, four hundred and thirty three visits and inspections were paid to premises and vehicles concerned in the sale or manufacture of food. Seven informal notices were served and thirty two complied with.

## BACTERIOLOGICAL EXAMINATION

The Public Health Laboratory at Bedford examined and reported on the following various samples obtained:

### Ice-Cream

Grade 1 - number of samples	17	Grade 3 - number of samples	7
Grade 2 - number of samples	9	Grade 4 - number of samples	4

### Other Foods

Stuffed pork roll	- 1	-	no food poisoning organisms found
Chopped pork and ham	- 1	-	" " " " "
Haslet	- 1	-	" " " " "
Liver sausage	- 1	-	" " " " "
Black pudding	- 1	-	" " " " "

### Other Substances

Poultry chill tank water	- 81 samples	-	intermitently satisfactory and poor results.
Water - tap	- 10 samples	-	satisfactory.
- swimming pool	- 11 samples	-	satisfactory.

## PUBLIC HEALTH & HOUSING

### GENERAL

Complaints concerning dampness in council houses were again received during the winter portions of the year. Normally these are passed to the appropriate department, but we investigate those addressed to the Medical Officer of Health. Inevitably the cause was condensation, but the visits proved useful from a public relations point of view, some measure of success being obtained in allaying the idea that the dampness was due to building defects and augmenting this with advice on how best to combat the nuisance. Suggestions such as providing sufficient heating and having adequate ventilation when vapour-producing chores are being done should keep a house free of condensation in average circumstances, provided the weather outside is cool or warm and dry. Warm moist conditions unfortunately figure more frequently in the British climate than ridges of dry, high pressure, and of the modern amenities provided by designers, condensation-prone structures should not be one. It may be of some significance, however, that no similar complaints were received concerning private dwellings.

Of the annual smell cases, it was not until considerable investigation and crawling amongst fixtures that one in a chemist's shop was traced to a blocked drain. Failure to identify the cause must be recorded in the other cases.

The exhumation of a body, destined for Italy, called for the attendance of an Inspector at the cemetery during the very early hours of a morning. The usual precautions of spreading lime at the site were taken.

The inevitable delays occasioned by builders in getting to grips with housing repair jobs in the town is something that we have learnt to live with. Owners, quite willing to have remedied the defects which we have notified often seek our assistance in trying to get things moving.

Most of this work was completed informally except in two instances. In one the non-compliance with the Abatement Notice caused us to seek authorisation to take court action to obtain a Nuisance Order, but the necessity of proceedings was overcome by the repairs being carried out. In the second an Abatement Notice had the desired effect.

A classical example of one of the worst cases I have seen of Merulius lacrymans, otherwise known as 'dry rot', was brought to my attention. As the wooden floors of a house occupied by an elderly lady were in an advanced stage of attack by the fungus, immediate action was taken by way of obtaining visual inspection by the Landlord's agent. Hopes of swift activity diminished, however, when the agent failed to obtain immediate consent from the owner, but luckily the work was carried out before any legal action became necessary and before any accident befell the lone occupier.

Of notices served, six were informal and one statutory, completions being obtain on nine informals and two statutory.

#### INFECTIOUS DISEASE

An outbreak of a serious infectious disease or food poisoning attracts attention especially if it is likely to assume some proportion and affect the livelihoods of people. Sometimes there is speculation and hasty opinions ventilated as to adequate safeguards and precautions. Demands for new legislation and restrictions may be made without awareness of existing practices and controls.

Fortunately the case of Typhoid coming to the notice of the Medical Officer of Health did not reach such proportions and received little publicity.

An immigrant man and wife had visited their homeland for a holiday together with their two locally born children. The eldest child of two felt poorly on the return journey and the family doctor called in sent the child into hospital where the disease was confirmed.

Typhoid is principally transmitted via contaminated water and food, the latter often the result of inadequate personal hygiene by a carrier or missed case. The classic instance of a carrier spreading the disease is that of "Typhoid Mary" who in New York had several outbreaks traced to her peristant, though prohibited, habit of obtaining employment in various catering establishments.

Our task was to trace contacts and eliminate carriers. As a food shop was involved, family contacts of the patient were excluded from handling food until repeated negative reports were obtained on tests carried out.

Food poisoning is a term which by common practice has been applied to certain abrupt illnesses, enteric in nature, acquired through the consumption of food and caused by several types of organisms. Outbreaks are recognised by the sudden occurrence of a group of illnesses within a short period amongst individuals who have consumed one or more common foods. Single cases are undoubtedly common and difficult to identify, but even more difficult is the discovery of evidence incriminating a particular food. Salmonella bacteria of which it is said there are approximately nine hundred different types, form one of the more frequent groups causing the illness.

Salmonella typhimurium and Salmonella stanley were the agents identified in the three incidents that were dealt with, and as in each case it was too late to trace the source, the discovery of carriers was concentrated on. In one family, tests showed the mother to be affected as well as her young daughter, while an adult male at another household was the only one affected. Tests carried out on contacts of an infant sufferer, resident at a public house, brought to light an employee similarly affected. Authorisation was obtained to enable the Medical Officer of Health to require this person to discontinue her employment until several tests, subsequent to treatment, proved negative. Compensation for loss of earnings was paid in accordance with the requirements of the Public Health Acts.

An enteric illness, although of short duration, attacked numerous children and staff at one of the primary schools during the first week after the summer break, and despite a large number of tests carried out, the cause remained a mystery.

## HOUSING

Inspections continued to be carried out from time to time on houses where overcrowding notices were in operation and in which such conditions were liable to occur. Changes in ownership caused us to seek approval to re-serve three such notices, but a legal obstacle prevented us from doing so in one case.

The purchase of twenty-five sub-standard and near unfit houses in the Railway Terrace area was completed by the Council and the re-housing of tenants was well under way by the end of the year.

One house in Mount Pleasant, subject of a Closing Order under appeal, was purchased and demolished together with two neighbouring houses under Demolition Orders the effect being the final removal of all traces of habitation in this street. Three houses under Demolition Orders at Simpson were also cleared. Two other houses were the subject of reports for closing action prior to the year ending.

Houses demolished following Demolition Orders	5
Houses demolished previously Closed	1
Houses under Demolition Orders - vacant, demolition pending	4
Houses under Demolition Orders - still occupied	2
Number of Demolition Orders made	0
Number of Closing Orders made	0

#### STANDARD GRANTS

The number of houses improved to the standard of the five basic amenities continued at about the same rate, but all applications received were in respect of owner/occupied property.

	Owner/occupier	Tenanted
1. Number of applications received	16	0
Number of applications approved	14	0
Number of applications refused	1	0
Number of houses improved	17	0
2. Amount paid in grants	£1,964.13s.4d.	
3. Average grant per house	£ 115.11s.7d.	
4. Amenities provided:		
(a) fixed bath in a bathroom	12	(d) internal water closet 12
(b) wash-hand basin	15	(e) food store 8
(c) hot water supply	13	

At the point in time of writing this report the Government are contemplating revision of housing legislation relating to clearance and repairs and also considering a major change in the improvement grant system whereby local authorities may be directed to turn their attention to the raising of standards of amenities in older dwellings by improvement area schemes.

It is understood that the changes are likely to commence with a comprehensive survey relating houses to age expectancies of five, fifteen and twenty-five years. With the present staff, we shall find it difficult to absorb this extra work when it comes about.

Total number of inspections and visits relating to Public Health were four hundred and fourteen, Housing, one hundred and seven and in respect of Standard Grant, eighty eight.

#### A T M O S P H E R I C P O L L U T I O N

Environment is a vague word, it means all things to all men. But to the Health Department it represents something very important - the very quality of civilisation, which, in a technological age, we now have better means to create and safeguard than ever before, but which that very technology sometimes impedes.

The degree of success achieved in the process of environmental improvement will depend as much on the success of measures aimed at purifying and keeping the air clean as on the improvement of the built environment. Urban development, although carried out within the framework of an overall and comprehensive plan, can usually be implemented in stages, whereas smoke knows no boundaries and its elimination can only be achieved by control over wide areas. This calls for the co-operation of not only the public and industry, but of the various public authorities entrusted with the vital role of planning.

Pollution of the atmosphere is a community problem and we are all involved because in one way or another every adult contributes either directly or indirectly to the load. Quicker progress might be made towards having the air clean or kept clean if debates on the matter ceased on the basis of "we" and "they" or "innocent" and "guilty".

The environment of the modern city of the future must not be allowed to be enveloped by the murk and grime produced by its inhabitants. With this in mind plus the concept of "from small beginnings", a report was submitted to the Health Committee proposing the designation of two districts of the town as Smoke Control Areas. One area on the north-western perimeter was to comprise entirely of two new private housing projects, whilst the other area, much larger in size was to include not only the Council's Water Eaton development but also some four hundred existing old and new private houses. A phased programme to incorporate the other sectors of the district was also mooted. It was pointed out, however, that the staff as established at present would be unable to cope with the additional work without augmentation.

The report was accepted and after preparing the required maps and statistics, a submission was made to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government for provisional approval of the scheme.

At the same time the desirability was expressed for a survey of the levels and extent of air pollution and preliminary enquiries were made regarding obtaining and operating measurement apparatus.

## COMPLAINTS

The outstanding complaint without doubt concerned a relatively small industrial incinerator installed at a factory situated in a mainly residential area.

There were many willing hands to stir the ingredients of abuse, threats, accusation, counter-accusation, petitions and approaches to several councillors.

Over a period of approximately four months some eighty five visits were made to the factory, in addition to countless interviews both at the office and in the street plus numerous telephone calls. On some days it was not unusual to have up to six approaches alleging nuisance, yet on the many occasions when a visit was able to be made within a few minutes

of a complaint there appeared little cause for complaint. On only a few occasions was smoke observed to be dark enough to correspond with the legal definition nor was any emissions period found to be in excess of that allowed. A possible nuisance from fly-ash was confirmed and the firm was warned of this.

Many visits were made outside office hours in an attempt to observe the conditions complained of.

The siting of the appliance was changed, twice the chimney height was raised and experiments with filters tried.

I believe it to be to the credit of the department's informal approaches in enlisting co-operation from the factory management that the problem finally ceased on their decision to dismantle the appliance.

In spite of activity at some public meetings and letters in the press, only three complaints came to our notice concerning excessive outfall from the brickworks. Perhaps it is becoming more generally realised that not only is the main works outside our jurisdiction but that powers of control are not vested with the local authority.

Before these complaints were passed to the Alkali Inspector, under whose purview such works fall, it transpired that he had already been in the district at the time and had dealt with the matter.

The reason for unusual acid smut emissions from brickwork chimneys, we were told, are not yet fully understood and along with general pollution the current state of technical knowledge has still not advanced sufficiently to provide a satisfactory solution.

Amongst other complaints, to be recorded, were the burning of old timber at the site of a building being demolished, the burning of trade waste, clearance of stubble by firing during the preparation of Rickly Park, nuisance from a domestic chimney and the discharge of smoke and charred particles of wood waste used as a fuel for steam raising in a boiler plant.

This latter complaint has been a recurring one, for the problem of utilising wood waste as a fuel is not easily solved. Boilers originally designed to burn coal are not easily adaptable to burn wood smokelessly without a good deal of expense, yet there is no denying that a great saving is made on fuel costs. In order that we might be better able to offer advice on the subject, visits were arranged with the co-operation of the Health Department of High Wycombe, to several furniture factories in their area. Information on the various techniques noted was passed to the factory management, who appeared enthusiastic enough to want to go and observe these for themselves.

That "ignorance of the law constitutes no valid defence" is a fact of our lives that, in order to evade justice is occasionally disputed, but is in the main commonly accepted. Whether it is ever likely that a satisfactory substitute to this rule will be found is doubtful and even dangerous where serious offences occur.

With the ever growing mass of legislation that the rule implies one should be familiar with, there is at times some temptation to be sympathetic in cases of minor lapses in required procedures.

There is, however, no excuse for the lack of knowledge of the fundamentals of a law intimately associated with a trade, profession or business.

One would have thought, now that this Act has been with us for a dozen years, that those responsible for installing the various styles of equipment incorporating furnaces would be familiar with the requirements affecting them. Most manufacturers have played their part well in designing plant to burn smokelessly when operated properly, yet although Section Three requires a notification of a proposal to install a furnace, rarely do we receive these voluntarily.

Chimneys can only be controlled by rejecting plans submitted for Building Regulation approval when the height shown does not satisfy the criteria contained in Section Ten of the Act: even then this does not apply in the case of residences, shops or offices. By virtue of not having to submit plans of schools for Building Regulation approval, education authorities also escape control.

As many of the chimneys at schools in the district are rarely or barely visible, presumably for aesthetic reasons, we sought informal co-operation with the County Architects Department, pointing out that the apparent exemption was being over-exercised and that a similar exemption could not be claimed in the matter of notification of boiler plant installation.

I am happy to record that since that time a cordial relationship has been established.

These points were touched on in the Circular accompanying the revised Memorandum, "Chimney Heights", put out by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, wherein it was stated that the Department of Education and Science was commending the new edition to local education authorities 'as a source of guidance which it is normally desirable to follow'.

One of the difficulties with the earlier Memorandum was that whilst it was not too difficult to calculate chimney heights for sizeable installations, it did nothing to assist when considering the smaller ones.

The revised Memorandum, using as the criteria for calculation the amount of sulphur dioxide discharged, now take account of smaller plant emitting from 3lb of SO<sup>2</sup> per hour to large plant emitting 1800 lbs per hour with minimum heights starting at twenty five feet for sites in undeveloped areas to two hundred and sixty feet in urban areas with existing severe background pollution.

Records for activities in this field of environmental health show that one hundred and sixty one inspections, visits and interviews were made, eight notifications of proposals to install furnaces received and nine plans concerning the heights of chimneys were considered and approved after requiring amendments in several cases.

### P E T R O L E U M

Four new licences were issued for the storage of petroleum spirits or mixtures making the total number of premises licenced at the end of the year fifty two and involving a quantity of 219,000 gallons.

One previously detected holed and leaking tank was filled up with sand and cement and of several old tanks where nitrogen pressure tests were required, two withstood the tests and two others failed and were filled in. One disused but otherwise serviceable tank was made safe by filling with water.

Permission was given for the transfer of one licence and the installation of a blending pump at one of the new filling stations was approved.

An approach was made by one of the major oil companies to obtain the Council's approval for the installation of Latched Automatic Cut-Out Nozzles attached to pump hoses.

One of the conditions of all licences is that there must be no stop on a nozzle whereby the operating lever could be kept in a discharging position thereby obviating manual control. The need for this safeguard is to prevent spillage of petrol either by car tank overfilling or by poor handling, by giving immediate control on release of the lever.

There are now several Latched Nozzles designed, allegedly, to cut off the flow automatically when the tank is full. In addition the nozzle can be put into a tank and left without falling out, but should the vehicle drive off a release valve separates the nozzle and hose and cuts off the flow, also if the nozzle is dropped on the ground the latched lever knocks off.

The Home Office, in an amendment to the Model Code, recommended acceptance of these devices provided they could comply with the several safety factors, but on reading various reports, tests carried out have in some instances proved unsatisfactory.

As an application would have to be made by a Licencee for relaxation of the particular licensing condition, the Council were recommended to await such an application and require a demonstration of the nozzle to be installed.

There has been much movement of recent years by the petrol companies to enter the field of self-service. There are two innovations currently in vogue, the post-payment self-service station and the unattended self-service station using either coin operated or note-acceptor pumps.

The original concept envisaged by the latter was that there was a need to cater for the motorist who ran out of petrol when filling stations were normally closed. This is now developing into pressure for approval of 24 hour operations arguing that the public is demanding it and that lesser staff is needed but no doubt it is with a view to increased petrol sales also.

Many of the current licensing conditions would have to be relaxed at such sites and there has been much wariness and suspicion by Petroleum Officers all over the country and in many cases outright rejection by local licensing authorities of an innovation that appears contrary to all existing standards and codes of practice.

The Association for Petroleum Acts Administration, of which the Council is a member, has issued special conditions for these installations, to assist members who may be considering applications.

The Association puts out a quarterly publication - "The Bulletin", to keep Petroleum Officers up-to-date on various aspects of their job and often reports appear on accidents involving petroleum. I make no apologies for repeating one of these reports to illustrate the hazards involved.

"A woman had been cleaning paint brushes with petrol, which she poured down the lavatory. When her husband came home from work he went up to the little room and while sitting there dropped a cigarette end into the pan.

The blast blew him into the air. Two ambulance men picked him off the floor and carried him downstairs on a stretcher, but when he told them what had happened, the rear stretcher bearer, overcome with laughter, dropped his end and the casualty fell out breaking his arm".

Enforcement of the licensing conditions involved us in three hundred and thirty two visits and inspections; five informal notices were served and eleven complied with.

## F A C T O R I E S

A factory under the Act may be roughly defined as premises where persons are employed in manual labour and in which articles for sale are made, altered, repaired, adapted, cleaned or washed etc.

Premises, which to the layman may appear to be factories, such as those where research is carried out are not legally factories, yet a part of a small butchers shop where sausages are manufactured would fall within the scope of the Act.

Factories are also classified as powered or non-powered premises and the duties of a local authority vary accordingly in each category.

The following tables in the prescribed form show - an increase in powered factories, but little change in the total - a decrease in the number of inspections able to be carried out - that thirty eight outworkers were confined to two trades, the making of wearing apparel and the making of brushes.

### PRESCRIBED PARTICULARS ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE FACTORIES ACT 1961

#### PART I OF THE ACT

#### 1. INSPECTION for the purpose of the provisions as to health

Premises	Number on Register	Inspections	Written Notices	Occupiers Prosecuted
(i) Factories in which Sections 1,2,3,4, & 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	13	7	-	-
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	121	45	3	-
(iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding Outworkers' premises)	10	8	-	-
Total	144	60	3	-

2. Cases in which DEFECTS were found

	Number of cases in which defects were found				Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted
	Referred				
	Found	Remedied	To H.M Insp.	By H.M. Insp.	
Want of cleanliness (S.1)	-	-	-	-	-
Overcrowding (S.2)	-	-	-	-	-
Unreasonable Temperature (S.3)	-	-	-	-	-
Inadequate Ventilation (S.4)	-	-	-	-	-
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6)	-	-	-	-	-
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)					
(a) Insufficient	-	1	-	-	-
(b) Unsuitable or defective	3	4	-	-	-
(c) Not separate for sexes	-	-	-	-	-
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Outwork)	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

PART VIII OF THE ACT OUTWORK

(Sections 133 and 134)

Nature of work	Section 133			Section 134		
	No. of outworkers in August list required by Section 133(1)(c)	No. of cases of default in sending lists to the Council	No. of prosecutions for failure to supply lists	No. of instances of works in un-wholesome premises	Notices Served	Prosecutions
<u>WEARING apparel</u>						
Making etc:	28	-	-	-	-	-
Cleaning and Washing:	-	-	-	-	-	-
Brushmaking	10	-	-	-	-	-

## WORKING CONDITIONS IN OFFICES & SHOPS

In 1946 the Gowers Committee was set up to investigate among other things the working conditions in employment outside of industry and their findings were reported in 1949.

Although some measure of protection existed for shop workers in the Shops Acts, extending health and welfare legislation into new fields had many fits and starts.

Consideration was given to implementing the Report in 1952; the Home Office in 1953 circulated proposals for legislation based on the Report, pledges were given in 1955; a private members' bill became the Offices Act 1960 and then finally the present Act was given the Royal Assent in 1963.

Thus came the first piece of legislation dealing with conditions in non-industrial employment in a comprehensive and detailed manner, the workers having to wait some 160 years to achieve a similar measure of protection to that of the industrial worker.

The Act came into force during 1964 making "fresh provision for securing the health, safety and welfare of persons employed to work in office, shop and certain railway premises". Local authorities are responsible for enforcing the general provisions in most offices and shops whilst the H.M. Inspector of Factories deals with railway premises and offices of local authorities and at factories. The fire provisions are enforced by local Fire Authorities.

I am able to record that all premises registered had by the end of the year under review received a general inspection.

As was expected a large number of follow-up visits had to be made in addition to progressing through the list of premises requiring their first full inspection. Many re-visits still remain outstanding and if we are not to lose sight of the good progress so far made the cycle will have to be recommenced together with consequent re-visits.

Normally, when short comings were found, notices specifying the provisions required were sent to the person or firm concerned. The continuation of this informal approach has encourage employers to co-operate in remedying many contraventions without the need to resort to legal proceedings.

A good deal of time is taken up after the service of preliminary notices by the need to discuss the requirements of the Act with employers and to explain why alterations are necessary. Sometimes this has resulted in prompting delayed improvements being brought forward and in many cases plans have needed to be submitted.

Threats of legal proceedings were, however, made at one large food shop where contraventions also involved food hygiene. Details of this incident has been reported in that section previously.

Structural alterations needed at certain Council-owned shops were put in hand.

The modern trend for shop fronts to be without air inlets, which in the absence of other windows precludes the admittance of air except by means of open entrance doors, caused us some concern prior to the opening of a new shopping centre, but when pointed out the omissions were rectified.

There was often a need to convince occupiers of the necessity to improve their standards of lighting and some were reluctant to carry out alterations in case further changes were required to meet new statutory standards. In one instance we were actually asked to guarantee that we would not require further improvements if work should be carried out and this was even before the electrical contractor had made any proposals as to what installation was going to be made. Needless to say a sharp refusal of such guarantee was returned.

A common contravention is the absence of an intervening ventilated space between sanitary facilities and workplaces. Where it is not reasonably practicable to provide this because of the restricted nature of the premises, the mechanical extraction of air is accepted.

It is often found in shops that water closet compartments are used for storage of goods. The lack of storage space is not confined to older premises either, for quite often shop premises are erected by developers with no particular provisions in mind for any specific trade and all too often there is insufficient space for accommodation of stock and refuse.

Absence of adequate first-aid provisions is common. Where a first-aid box is provided it is often found that the contents are below the required minimum. An attempt was made to meet this problem by issuing a list, to be kept in the box, of all the items needed.

Failure to obtain and display the Abstract of the Act still proves to be the main contravention. As complaints were made of the difficulty in obtaining these from booksellers we attempted to overcome the problem by purchasing a supply and re-selling to individuals requiring them.

It was decided, consequent to advice from the Ministry, that in future we should not accept as drinking water points, taps at wash-hand basins situated in water closet compartments. Besides the danger of the tap becoming contaminated on hand contact, aerosol contamination on flushing the water closet also makes the situation undesirable.

REGISTRATIONS AND GENERAL INSPECTIONS

Class of premises	Number of premises registered during the year.	Number of registered premises at end of year.	Number of registered premises receiving a general inspection during the year.
Offices	9	78	44
Retail shops	8	135	47
Wholesale shops, warehouses	2	7	3
Catering establishments open to public, canteens	1	14	2
Fuel storage depots	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>97</b>

Total number of visits of all kinds by Inspectors to Registered Premises: three hundred and seventy nine.

ANALYSIS OF RECORDED PARTICULARS OF PERSONS EMPLOYED IN REGISTERED PREMISES BY WORKPLACE

Class of Workplace	Number of persons employed
Offices	621
Retail shops	770
Wholesale department, warehouses	61
Catering establishments open to public	112
Canteens	13
Fuel storage depots	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,579</b>

TOTAL MALES 646

TOTAL FEMALES 933

## ACCIDENTS

It is inconceivable that of 235 registered premises only one accident occurred and it is significant that the sole notification for the year came from one of a small group of employers who since the inception of the Act have been alone in submitting required notifications.

It has been said that an accident is normally an unsafe act associated with unsafe conditions. Can it be that all of the offices and shops in the district are extremely safe places staffed by extremely accident-conscious people? I doubt it.

An accident must be reported if there is loss of life, or disablement for more than three days. Notification is designed to enable local authorities to detect breaches of the Act and to enable the officers to advise on measures to prevent a recurrence.

## ANALYSIS OF CONTRAVENTIONS

Section	Number of Contraventions found		Section	Number of Contraventions found	
4	Cleanliness	3	14	Seats (Sedentary Workers)	0
5	Overcrowding	0	15	Eating facilities	0
6	Temperature	16	16	Floors, passage & stairs	2
7	Ventilation	0	17	Fencing exposed parts machinery	3
8	Lighting	9	18	Protection of young persons from dangerous machinery	0
9	Sanitary conveniences	10	19	Training of young persons working at dangerous machinery	0
10	Washing facilities	9	23	Prohibition of heavy work	0
11	Supply of drinking water	1	24	First aid general provision	12
12	Clothing Accommodation	4	50	Posting of abstracts of the Act	21
13	Sitting facilities	1	TOTAL		91

Thirty three informal notices were served in respect of the above contraventions.

## PEST CONTROL

The control of pests, comprising the eradication or prevention of the infestation of premises, is so directly a matter of hygiene and sanitation that the duties and administration of the law relating to it fall naturally to the Public Health Department. By co-operation and advice, rather than by taking legal proceedings, valuable assistance can be rendered to owners and occupiers of property.

It is becoming a little alarming to note, however, the growth of an attitude that we are somehow at fault if an infestation occurs, or that we have some supernatural powers which can be invoked to make "the nasty little things" disappear if not almost at once, at least within a very short while.

In these cases, an explanation that the law places the onus of responsibility for taking action on owners or occupiers, that nature plays its part and that magic wands are not included in our equipment, gives little satisfaction to anxiety-prone recipients of environmental intruders.

### INSECTS

All animals have associated with them insects which are either parasitic or dependant in one way or another as scavengers or for shelter. Man is no exception, having insects which suck his blood, infest his clothes, his home or his food and his domestic animals. In addition many insects live on the fringe of man's environment, adapting themselves to a far wider range of habitats than any other group of animals.

Happily 'social pests', sometimes associated with disease spread, such as lice and bed bugs, have been on the decline, but on occasions turn up in homes due to some inexplicable cause. Insects which cause damage or are just a plain nuisance appear to show no signs of decrease despite the evolution of numerous insecticides. Even some of the very substances used to protect us from these pests are increasingly becoming a health hazard of international importance.

Of the 'social pests' only one case of bed bugs was reported and two treatments of the house were necessary before clearance of the infestation could be felt to be reasonably assured.

Several cases of Book Lice were reported and attended to with no small difficulty. The word lice is usually associated with insects having a parasitic habit and if the housewife hears the insects infesting her home so described she often gets very worried. Yet there are several orders of the insect called lice, even green fly and black fly are sometimes called Plant Lice because they are directly parasitic on plants.

The Book Louse is not parasitic. It is a very small insect with a soft body living on fungi growing on such materials as books, woodwork, paper, plaster and decaying farinaceous foods left about for pets.

Though quite harmless their presence can be a nuisance and alarming to some people.

Other insects dealt with were ants, black beetles, earwigs and cluster flies.

Twelve wasps nests were destroyed and in one particular period of three days two appeals for assistance were received concerning swarming bees. Although we were unable to tackle these complaints ourselves, after a rapid enquiry for local bee-keepers, we were fortunate in being able to call on the assistance of the Secretary of the Local Bee-Keepers Society, who spent some considerable time in removing the swarms from the gardens invaded. Usually the bees are harmless if not disturbed and contact with the above Secretary is recommended to persons troubled by a settling swarm.

Ninety nine visits were made to investigate complaints and carry out treatment for infestations.

## RODENTS

The rat most commonly met with in this country is the Brown rat (*Rattus norvegicus*) known as the common, field or sewer rat. This rat is larger and much more prevalent than the black rat (*Rattus rattus*) which it is considered to have partially or completely ousted, though the latter, of significance as a plague carrier, is still prevalent in ports.

The necessity for constant activity for rat destruction is emphasised by their remarkable fecundity. It has been estimated that allowing for mortality from various causes, a pair of rats can produce a progeny of about one hundred and thirty per annum and the maximum number of offspring could result in over a thousand during this time.

The record for rat repression in the district has been good and is likely to be even better now that we have a full time Rodent Officer.

March saw the cessation of the North Bucks Area Rodent Scheme comprising of Bletchley and the two Newport Pagnell authorities. It was not for any lack of efficiency that the Council decided to withdraw from the scheme, but feelings of inequality of financial contribution. As the other two authorities also decided not to carry on, assets were shared and one of the two Rodent Officers was taken into the Council's employment. The vans in use were badly in need of replacement so that one of our first tasks was to obtain a new vehicle. Existing contractual work was continued, but although charges were felt to be badly in need of review, it was decided that an opportunity to offer new contracts should be taken after a suitable settling down period.

Only one bad infestation had to be dealt with when complaints from nearby domestic property led an investigation to abandoned farm buildings.

That the previous owner's efforts to keep down the rat population were ineffectual was significant from the state of the premises and the prolonged treatment needed to bring the infestation under control.

Regular visits were paid to the refuse tip at Rammamere both before and after tipping ceased and also at the sewage disposal works and other Council properties.

Survey and treatment of the sewerage system was carried out twice during the year, each involving some one hundred and twenty strategic inspection chambers. Only four 'takes' of baits laid were recorded in the second survey and these were followed up.

Supplemental to the Rodent Officer's work, signs of rats or mice are watched for by inspectors during routine visits to food premises.

Summary of investigations and re-visits for the purposes of treating infestations (not including sewer surveys).

	Type of property		
	Non-Agricultural	Agricultural	Total
Total number of properties inspected as a result of notification	734	3	737
Total number of properties inspected in the course of survey under the Act	1,823	31	1,854
Re-visits	-	-	479

## DUTIES UNDER OTHER LEGISLATION

### NOISE CONTROL

Noise has been described as 'the wrong sound in the wrong place at the wrong time' and six such complaints were received, five calling for further investigation.

One concerned early morning disturbance of sleep by the loading of milk bottle crates at a distribution depot, accompanied by the excessive volume of a transistor radio and another similar complaint proved to be a recurrence of a complaint received the previous year. Two complaints concerned industrial premises: in one, an overloud intercommunication system and the other, caused by compressor equipment noise affecting office workers in an adjoining factory.

Some sixteen visits were paid to a domestic dwelling, all in off-duty periods, to ascertain the extent of the noise engendered from the house next door by the playing of various musical instruments. The complaint concerned excessive use and practice of an organ, piano, record player but mainly of a trumpet. Although there appeared little doubt that the noise was causing great concern to the unhappy listeners, substantiation of a nuisance was difficult owing to erratic performances. The Committee, receiving sympathetically a report on the matter, could only recommend the issue of a warning to the perpetrator.

A Ministry Circular was received calling the attention of local authorities to the need to control industrial noise where there was likelihood of nuisance and also to see that officers dealing with such problems had some suitable training. An opportunity was taken by the Council to send staff on a course on Noise Control, but this turned out to mainly consist of noise measurement for which expensive equipment is necessary.

### EXAMINATION OF PLANS

Although, except in respect of chimney heights under the Clean Air legislation, we have no power to disapprove plans, nevertheless the opportunity afforded for correcting mistakes and omissions, which would otherwise cause subsequent contravention of the various Acts that we enforce, forms a valuable bulwark to our work.

Preventing discrepancies occurring in new buildings not only helps to lessen offences and consequently our own work load, but also cuts down any extra expense or disturbance that an owner or occupier might have had to face if the building were erected otherwise than according to the law's requirements.

Record must be made of the continued excellent liason with the Building Inspector during which opportunity was given to examine some forty five plans concerning the administration of the:

- Factories Act 1960.
- Food Hygiene (General) Regulations 1960.
- Offices, Shops & Railway Premises Act 1963.
- Clean Air Act 1956.
- Standard Grants.
- Petroleum (Consolidation) Act 1928.

**PET ANIMALS ACT 1951**

Inspection of premises for suitable conditions in which to keep pet animals was made in respect of one application for the renewal of a Pet Shop Licence.

**SCRAP METAL DEALERS ACT 1960**

Registration was made in respect of an application by one itinerant collector resident in the district.

Re-visits	1,854	479
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