

[Report 1938] / Medical Officer of Health, Brackley Borough.

Contributors

Brackley (England). Borough Council.

Publication/Creation

1938

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BOROUGH OF BRACKLEY



Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the year ending December, 1938

Madam Mayor, Aldermen, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present to you the Report of your Medical Officer of Health combined with that of your Sanitary Inspector for the year 1938; the report is drawn up in conformity with the instructions of the Ministry of Health as contained in Circular 1728 of 25.10.1938. I desire to record my thanks to members of the Council and to the Staff for the kindly help given to me on my assumption of duties in September 1938.

Public Health Officers.

Medical Officer of Health—J. A. A. Duncan, L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S. (Edin.),
L.R.F.P.S. (Glasgow), D.P.H. (Lond.).
Sanitary Inspector—C. G. Williams, M.R.S.I.

Your Medical Officer holds a full time public health appointment as a District Medical Officer of Health and Assistant Medical Officer to the Northamptonshire County Council, his sphere of activities extending to the Rural Districts of Brackley and Brixworth, while in virtue of his appointment under the County Council he is responsible for the examination of all elementary school children in those areas, and in addition he conducts Child Welfare Clinics at Brackley, Moulton, Brixworth and Welford.

Dr. Ivor Jones, your former Medical Officer, left Northamptonshire in August 1938 to take up the duties of County Medical Officer of Montgomeryshire; Dr. Duncan assumed his duties in September of the same year.

Your former Sanitary Inspector, Mr. A. A. Green, was retired on superannuation in June 1938 after many years of successful service, his vacancy being filled by the appointment of Mr. C. G. Williams, M.R.S.I., who assumed duties on 1st July, 1938.

Mr. Williams, in addition to carrying out Sanitary duties, is also your Surveyor, Farm Manager, and Collector of Rates, and continued in those offices until the close of the year under review.

Statistics and Social Conditions.

Area (in acres)	1,685
*Population	2,338
Number of inhabited houses (end of 1938)	740
Rateable Value (1.4.1938)	£11,425
Sum represented by a penny rate	£44

* Represents the Registrar-General's estimate of population at mid-1938.

It is not to be expected that the ancient Borough of Brackley should have experienced any great change in its general conditions or that its various institutions should have in any way departed from their normal wont. The teaching establishments as represented by Winchester House, a preparatory boarding school for boys; Magdalen College, a secondary school for boys; Brackley High School, a secondary school for girls; Brackley Church of England Schools, a mixed school for infants and young children; and Brackley Council School, a mixed school for senior elementary children; have carried on successfully and free from any serious trouble in respect of health.

The health of the community has continued at a high level and has been free of any marked incidence of infectious disease. There has been a steady demand for labour in the district with a consequent maintenance of purchasing power, and a comparative absence of those diseases attributable to a low dietary standard.

Vital Statistics.

	Total	Male	Female	Rate per 1,000—	
				Brackley	England & Wales
Live Births :	38	18	20	11.9	15.1
Legitimate	38	18	20		
Illegitimate	nil	nil	nil		
Still Births :					
Legitimate	2	2	nil		
Illegitimate	nil	nil	nil		
Deaths (from all causes)	31	15	16	13.2	11.6

Deaths from puerperal causes	...	...	nil
Deaths of Infants under 1 year of age	...	...	nil
Deaths from Measles	...	...	nil
Deaths from Diarrhoea, under 2 years of age	...	...	nil
Deaths from Whooping Cough	...	...	nil
Deaths from Diphtheria	...	...	nil
Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	...	...	6
Deaths from Pneumonia (all forms)	...	...	1

The registered causes of death were :

	Males	Females	Total
Cancer	3	3	6
Cerebral Haemorrhage	1	3	4
Heart Disease	3	4	7
Other Circulatory Disease	1	0	1
Pneumonia (all forms)	0	1	1
Other Digestive Disease	0	1	1
Other defined Diseases	3	0	3
Other violence	1	1	2
Influenza	0	1	1
Senility	3	2	5
All causes	15	16	31

It is not possible to deduce much from such small figures, but it is worthy of note that as compared with 1937 there has been an increase of only two deaths and an increase of 15 births in a population which, in gross figures, has been estimated by eighty-one people.

The death-rate as above quoted for Brackley is, however, subject to modification by applying to it an "area comparability factor" as estimated by the Registrar-General to adjust the crude figures in accordance with the difference in age and sex distribution of Brackley residents as compared with that generally appertaining in England as a whole. In this manner the corrected death-rate for Brackley is as follows :

Brackley	9.2
England and Wales	11.6

General Health Services.

(a) **Laboratory Facilities.** The pathological department of the Northampton General Hospital continues to offer facilities for the examination of swabs from suspected cases of Diphtheria, while specimens of sputum are examined free of charge by the County Tuberculosis Officer.

Bacteriological examination of water samples is carried out at a nominal charge by the County Health Department.

(b) **Ambulance Facilities.** During the year the Borough of Brackley became a participant in the Daventry Joint Hospital Board Scheme and the Board's Ambulance is available for the transport of patients to the Staverton Hospital. A nurse accompanies the ambulance.

(c) **Clinics and Treatment Centres.** Your Medical Officer in his capacity as Assistant County Medical Officer regularly holds an Infant Welfare Clinic every second Thursday of the month ; at these clinics talks and demonstrations on Health matters are given, and it is satisfactory to record an increasing attendance during the year.

The Manfield Orthopaedic Hospital continues to hold clinics in Brackley and treats all children sent from the Centre, while also dental treatment, and where necessary operational treatment for enlarged tonsils and adenoids, are available through arrangement with the County Health Dept.

Sanitary Circumstances.

1. (i) **Water Supplies.** The Council's well has continued to yield satisfactorily throughout the year. It was, however, found necessary to carry out extensive repairs to the pumping plant, and during these operations the public were advised to boil all drinking water. The general notice advising this measure was withdrawn only when two successive samples of water taken at weekly intervals after work on the pumping plant had ceased, demonstrated that no infection or pollution of the water had taken place.

The extension of Brackley on ground at a level too high to be adequately serviced by the present reservoir will in all probability necessitate the provision of an auxiliary high level service tank.

(ii) **Drainage and Sewerage.** The new disposal works have continued to function satisfactorily throughout the year, and no further comment is necessary.

2. **Rivers and Streams.** No complaints have been received, and the satisfactory working of the new sewage plant should prevent any nuisance occurring.

3. (ii) **Public Cleansing.** As in former years, refuse is collected weekly and is dumped at a disposal tip situated off Turweston Road ; the tip though uncovered except at infrequent periods is sufficiently removed from residences to prevent nuisance.

(iii) **Sanitary Inspection.** The retirement of your Sanitary Inspector, Mr. Green, after many years of meritorious service, and the dislocation of normal routine occasioned by the crisis of September with its consequent speeding-up of Air Raid Precautions measures, served in some measure to curtail the amount of normal inspection which should have been made; the statistical figures are given under "Housing."

While it is probably impossible for the Borough of Brackley to provide a full time Sanitary Inspector, it is equally true that in the combination of multifarious duties in one officer, the sanitary duties are usually the first to suffer under the pressure of overwork, or from the natural inclination to put off the less congenial tasks to the last.

(iv) **Shops and Offices.** No action was taken during the year.

(v) **Camping Sites.** There are none in the Borough.

(vi) **Smoke Abatement.** No action was necessary.

(vii) **Swimming Baths and Pools.** The open-air swimming bath used by the public during the summer months has been carefully maintained and by daily treatment of the water obtained from the Borough supply, reasonable standards have been attained.

(viii) **Bed Bugs.** One case of infestation was reported in a non-Council house. The house was freed by the use of Zaldecido made by Messrs. Newton Chambers, the work being carried out by the Council's Inspector.

4. **Schools.** The sanitary condition and water supply of the teaching institutions mentioned in the early part of this Report, are satisfactory.

Housing.

1. Inspection of Dwelling-houses during the year :

(1) (a) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	34
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose	81
(2) (a) Number of dwelling-houses included under sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925 and 1932	20
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose	36
(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation ...	3
(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	16

2. Remedy of Defects during the year without service of formal Notices :

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers ...	9
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3. Action under Statutory Powers during the year :

(a).—Proceedings under sections 9, 10 and 16 of the Housing Act, 1936 :	
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	19
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices :	
(a) By owners	—
(b) By Local Authority in default of owners	—
(b).—Proceedings under Public Health Acts :	
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	13
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices :	
(a) By owners	13
(b) By Local Authority in default of owners	—
(c).—Proceedings under sections 11 and 13 of the Housing Act, 1936 :	
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	—
(2) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders	2

(d).—Proceedings under section 12 of the Housing Act, 1936 :

- (1) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made —
- (2) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit —

4. **Housing Act, 1936.—Part IV.—Overcrowding :**

- (a).— (i) Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year ... 10
 (ii) Number of families dwelling therein 12
 (iii) Number of persons dwelling therein 57
- (b).—Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year ... —
- (c).— (i) Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year ... 10
 (ii) Number of persons concerned in such cases... .. 57
- (d).—Particulars of any cases in which dwelling-houses have again become overcrowded after the Local Authority have taken steps for the abatement of overcrowding —
- (e).—Any other particulars with respect to overcrowding conditions upon which the Medical Officer of Health may consider it desirable to report —

Inspection and Supervision of Food.

(a) **Milk Supply.** Dairies have been inspected periodically, and under instructions from the County Medical Officer samples of milk were taken and submitted for bacteriological test ; the results compared favourably with those of 1937 as the following figures demonstrate :

	1937	1938
Good	6	17
Moderate	2	1
Bad	6	3
Total	14	21

(b) **Meat and Other Foods.** As the subjoined table demonstrates, it would not seem that much action under this section has taken place during the year.

Carcases Inspected and Condemned.

	Cattle, ex- cluding Cows.	Cows.	Calves.	Sheep and Lambs.	Pigs.
Number killed (if known) ... not known	not known	not known	not known	not known	not known
Number inspected	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil
All diseases except Tuberculosis.					
Whole carcases condemned ...	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ...	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis ...	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil
Tuberculosis only.					
Whole carcases condemned ...	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ...	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil

Infectious Diseases.

Apart from one case of Erysipelas no case of infectious, or otherwise notifiable, disease occurred.

Tuberculosis.

No case of Tuberculosis occurred during the period under review.

A. W. Duncan

July 1939.