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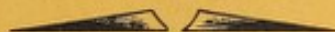
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Rural District of Bridgwater



ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR ENDED

31st DECEMBER, 1972



BRIDGWATER RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE (DECEMBER 1972)

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PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF 1972

Medical Officer of Health

R. H. WATSON, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., M.F.C.M.

Medical Officer in Department (Somerset C.C.)

A. M. ATKINSON, M.B., Ch.B., D.Obst., R.C.O.G.


Chief Public Health Inspector:

D. E. COLDHAM, A.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I.

Additional Public Health Inspectors:

D. J. EMM, M.A.P.H.I.

D. K. LANE, M.A.P.H.I., M.R.S.H.



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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR 1972

The Health Clinic,
Mount Street,
BRIDGWATER,
Somerset,
TA6 3ER

Tel: Bridgwater 55671

October, 1973

To: The Chairman and Members of the
Bridgwater Rural District Council.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting to you the Annual Report on the health of the District and the work of the Public Health Department during the year 1972. The report is drawn up in accordance with Department of Health and Social Security instructions and is set out in the manner of previous reports, so that comparison with former years can easily be made.

The health of the Rural District has been good during the year. Very few infectious diseases were notified and the vital statistics continue to be satisfactory, and to compare favourably with those for the country as a whole.

As this is the last Annual Report which I will be making to the Council, bearing in mind the changes which will take place next April, I would like to take this opportunity of thanking the Members of the Council and the other Chief Officers for all the help and co-operation which I have received during the years that I have had the honour to serve the Council as Medical Officer of Health.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

R. H. WATSON

SUMMARY OF STATISTICS

GENERAL STATISTICS

Area (acres)	85,000
Population (Census 1971)	27,469
Population (Registrar General's estimate 1972)	28,190
No. of inhabited houses on 31st December, 1972	9,300
Rateable value on 31st December, 1972	£780,841
Sum represented by 1p. rate on 31st December, 1972	£7393.03

Extracts from VITAL STATISTICS for the year 1972

<u>Live Births</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Legitimate	203	188	391
Illegitimate	<u>14</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>24</u>
	217	198	415
Live Birth Rate per 1,000 population			14.72
Illegitimate live births per cent of total live births			5.78
Stillbirths			8
Stillbirth rate per 1,000 total live and still births			18.91
Total live and still births			423
Infant Deaths (deaths of infants under one year of age)			6
Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 live births - total			14.46
Neo-natal Mortality Rate (deaths under 4 weeks per 1,000 total live births)			14.46
Early Neo-natal Mortality Rate (deaths under 1 week per 1,000 total live births)			12.05
Perinatal Mortality Rate (stillbirths and deaths under 1 week combined per 1,000 total live and still births)			30.73
Maternal Mortality (including abortion)			Nil
Maternal Mortality Rate per 1,000 live and still births			Nil
<u>Deaths</u>			
Total number of deaths			277
Death rate per 1,000 population			9.83

Births

After allowing for inward and outward transfers the Registrar General's figures show that there were 415 births (217 boys and 198 girls) in the Rural District during 1972 being 5 less than in 1971. Of these births 24 were illegitimate. This is 5.78% of the total live births, as compared with 5.24% in 1971.

The birth rate of any area is dependant upon the composition of its population. Obviously a population with a high proportion of persons of child bearing age will have more births per 1,000 of the population than an area with an unduly large number of people in the older age groups. To enable the birth rates of different areas to be compared, the Registrar General provides a comparability factor for each Local Authority area. This standardises the birth rate of each area and makes comparison valid. The birth rate for the Rural District adjusted in this manner is increased from 14.72 to 15.75 per 1,000 of the population. The birth rate for England and Wales was 14.80.

Birth rates for the Rural District and for England and Wales for the past five years were as follows:-

	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972
Crude Birth Rate	18.61	16.78	16.65	15.21	14.72
Standardised Birth Rate	19.54	17.62	17.48	15.97	15.75
England and Wales	16.90	16.30	16.00	16.00	14.80

Deaths

The number of deaths registered in the Rural District during 1972 was 140. Of these 18 were deaths of non-residents and were transferred to the district in which the persons ordinarily resided. There were on the other hand 155 deaths of Rural District residents registered outside the District, (113 at Taunton hospitals and 42 elsewhere). The total corrected number of deaths assigned to the District was 277 (133 males and 144 females). This was 18 more than in the previous year and gave a crude death rate of 9.83 per 1,000 of the population.

The crude death rate cannot be used to compare the mortality with that of other districts, as the populations of all areas are not similarly constituted as regards age and sex distribution. The Registrar General therefore supplies a comparability factor and the crude death rate multiplied by this figure can then be compared with that for the country as a whole or for any other local area similarly adjusted. The standardised death rate so obtained was 10.32 per 1,000 of the population, and this is compared with 12.10 for England and Wales

Death rates for the District and for England and Wales for the past five years were as follows:-

	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972
Crude Death Rate	10.82	11.57	10.34	9.38	9.83
Standardised Death Rate	10.71	11.34	10.24	9.29	10.32
England and Wales	11.90	11.90	11.70	11.60	12.10

Of 277 deaths, 207 occurred in people over the age of 65 years. 62 occurred in people in the productive age groups 15 to 64 years, and the following table gives the details of these latter deaths:-

	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	Total
Other infective and parasitic diseases	-	-	-	-	1	1
Malignant neoplasm, intestine	-	-	-	1	1	2
Malignant neoplasm, lung, bronchus	-	-	-	1	1	2
Malignant neoplasm, breast	-	-	-	2	-	2
Malignant neoplasm, uterus	-	-	1	-	-	1
Leukaemia	-	-	1	-	-	1
Other malignant neoplasms	-	1	-	3	2	6
Benign and unspecified neoplasms	-	-	-	1	-	1
Diabetes Mellitus	1	-	-	-	-	1
Chronic rheumatic heart disease	-	-	-	1	-	1
Hypertensive disease	-	-	2	-	1	3
Ischaemic heart disease	-	-	3	2	10	15
Other forms of heart disease	-	-	-	-	3	3
Cerebrovascular disease	-	-	1	1	4	6
Influenza	-	-	1	-	1	2
Pneumonia	-	-	-	-	1	1
Bronchitis and emphysema	-	-	-	-	1	1
Asthma	-	-	-	1	-	1
Other endocrine etc. diseases	1	-	-	-	-	1

	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	Total
Mental disorders	-	-	-	-	1	1
Other diseases of circulatory system	-	-	1	-	4	5
Other diseases, genito-urinary system	-	-	-	-	1	1
Diseases of musculo-skeletal system	-	-	-	-	1	1
Motor vehicle accidents	2	-	-	-	-	2
All other accidents	1	-	-	-	-	1
Totals	5	1	10	13	33	62

Cancer Mortality

The number of deaths from cancer was 46 (males 23 and females 23). They constitute 16.61% of the total deaths during the year.

The following table shows the localisation of the disease in the 46 cases:-

	Number of Deaths			
	Male	Female	Total 1972	1971
Buccal cavity etc.,	-	-	-	1
Oesophagus	-	-	-	1
Stomach	1	-	1	1
Intestine	3	4	7	11
Lung, Bronchus	9	3	12	17
Breast	-	5	5	5
Uterus	-	1	1	2
Prostate	2	-	2	3
Leukaemia	-	1	1	1
Other malignant neoplasms	8	9	17	10
Total	23	23	46	52

Cancer of the Uterus

In previous reports reference was made to the need to introduce a scheme to provide for the examination of route tests (cervical smears) with a view to preventing cancer of the womb. Facilities

for examination of the smears are now available and the County Council have provided a service whereby the tests are taken by family doctors and are examined at Musgrove Park Hospital.

Cancer of the Lungs

The ages at which death occurred in the last five years combined is detailed in the following table:-

Year	Under 15	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	Over 65	Total
1968				1	-	3	10	14
1969				-	1	1	4	6
1970				-	1	4	11	16
1971				-	2	7	8	17
1972				-	1	1	10	12
				1	5	16	43	65

Infantile Mortality

6 infants under one year of age died during the year. This gives an infant mortality rate of 14.46 per 1,000 of all live births, while the corresponding rate for England and Wales was 17.00.

Deaths from Heart Disease

Of the 277 deaths, heart disease caused roughly 1 in every 3 (males 43, females 46). It represented 32.13% of the total deaths from all causes and was equivalent to a death rate of 3.16 per 1,000 of the population.

Other Deaths

Road accidents accounted for 5 deaths.

"Cause of Death (all ages)"	M	F	TOTAL
All Causes	133	144	277
Enteritis and other diarrhoeal diseases	1	-	1
Other infective and parasitic diseases	1	1	2
Malignant neoplasm, stomach	1	-	1
Malignant neoplasm, intestine	3	4	7
Malignant neoplasm, lung, bronchus	9	3	12
Malignant neoplasm, breast	-	5	5
Malignant neoplasm, uterus	-	1	1
Malignant neoplasm, prostate	2	-	2
Leukaemia	-	1	1
Other malignant neoplasms	8	9	17
Benign and unspecified neoplasms	-	1	1
Diabetes Mellitus	-	3	3
Chronic rheumatic heart disease	-	3	3
Hypertensive disease	3	5	8
Ischaemic heart disease	39	32	71
Other forms of heart disease	4	11	15
Cerebrovascular disease	15	20	35
Influenza	2	2	4
Pneumonia	11	9	20
Bronchitis and emphysema	6	1	7
Asthma	-	1	1
Peptic ulcer	-	1	1
Appendicitis	1	-	1
Intestinal obstruction and hernia	2	-	2
Nephritis and nephrosis	1	1	2
Birth injury, difficult labour etc.	1	2	3
Other causes of perinatal mortality	1	1	2
Other endocrine etc., diseases	-	1	1
Mental disorders	-	1	1
Other diseases of nervous system	1	1	2
Other diseases of circulatory system	10	15	25
Other diseases of respiratory system	3	-	3
Other diseases of digestive system	2	2	4
Other diseases, genito-urinary system	2	1	3

"Cause of Death (all ages)"	M	F	TOTAL
All Causes	133	144	277
Diseases of musculo-skeletal system	-	2	2
Motor vehicle accidents	2	3	5
All other accidents	-	1	1
Suicide and self-inflicted injuries	2	-	2

Population

The Registrar General's estimate of the population of the Rural District in mid 1972 was 28,190 and this indicates an increase of 570 on the estimated population at the same time of the previous year. The natural increase in the population, that is the excess of births over deaths, was 138.

Year	Estimated Population	Increase	Natural Increase
1962	22,500	550	158
1963	23,040	540	168
1964	23,770	730	199
1965	24,200	430	204
1966	24,590	390	209
1967	24,900	310	191
1968	25,410	510	198
1969	25,680	270	134
1970	25,820	140	163
1971 (Census)	27,469	1,649	161
1972	28,190	721	138

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS AND CONTAGIOUS DISEASES

The following table sets out the cases of notifiable infectious diseases which were notified in the Rural District during 1972. The table is drawn up after making the necessary amendments to the original notifications by either the practitioners or the Medical Officer at the Isolation Hospital.

Disease	Cases notified	
	1972	1971
Scarlet Fever	9	5
Whooping Cough	5	31
Measles	57	22
Infective Jaundice	4	1
Food Poisoning	6	1
Tuberculosis	-	3
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	-	1
Total	81	64

Measles

57 cases were notified during the year. Immunisation against measles is now part of the County Council immunisation computer programme and it is hoped that a satisfactory proportion of susceptible children will be protected and that the epidemics which at one time occurred regularly every other year will be a thing of the past.

Acute Poliomyelitis (Infantile Paralysis)

No cases were notified.

Tuberculosis

No new cases of tuberculosis were notified during the year.

The very low incidence of deaths due to tuberculosis was maintained and reflects the efficacy of modern treatment. All new cases are thoroughly investigated and all known close contacts are invited to attend the Chest Clinic for investigation.

B.C.G. Vaccination

In order to raise the immunity of school leavers to tuberculosis, vaccination with B.C.G. vaccine was offered to children between the ages of 13 and 14 years attending schools in the area. 888 received the preliminary skin or Heaf Test, to determine whether they had in fact already experienced some infection with tuberculosis. Of these 808 were negative and were vaccinated with B.C.G. vaccine.

Food Poisoning

Six cases of food poisoning were notified involving four separate incidents. One incident involved a husband and wife who worked in a food establishment. It is probable that the infection was due to a virus and no secondary cases occurred. Another incident involved a husband who was employed at a waterworks and a wife who was manageress of a works canteen. In this case the infection was caused by one of the common food poisoning organisms. No secondary cases occurred.

Immunisation and Vaccination

Immunisation and vaccination against diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, poliomyelitis, smallpox and measles are now entirely carried out by general practitioners under the County Council scheme utilising a computer to deal with the administrative aspects. This scheme is working satisfactorily and it will certainly result in raising still further the general level of immunisation of the community.

German Measles (Rubella)

This disease is important because if an expectant mother is infected during the first three months of pregnancy the baby may be affected by severe congenital abnormalities. The County Council have introduced a scheme offering vaccination against Rubella to girls aged 11-13 inclusive.

GENERAL HEALTH SERVICE

Laboratory Facilities

Pathological specimens are sent to the Laboratory at Musgrove Park Hospital, which forms part of the Public Health Laboratory Service. Results of investigations are available with the minimum of delay and there is good liaison between the laboratory personnel and the field workers in the Public Health Department.

Examinations carried out during the year included:-

Water Samples	46
Other feeds	52
Drain swabs	49
Rectal swabs	30
Surface swabs	114

Hospitals

Hospitals in the area are administered by the South Western Regional Hospital Board through the West Somerset Hospital Management Committee.

The hospitals are:-

Bridgwater General Hospital	44 beds
Mary Stanley Nursing Home	19 beds
Northgate Hospital	54 beds

Cases of infectious diseases needing treatment, or isolation, are admitted to Taunton Isolation Hospital.

The adaptation of Bridgwater Hospital to cater for short stay surgical cases has been completed. Patients requiring relatively minor operative procedures are treated and then discharged to the care of their family doctors and practice nurses after 48 hours. This scheme has functioned remarkable smoothly, and has significantly reduced the waiting list in the Mid-Somerset Clinical Area.

The proposed District General Hospital at Lyngford was placed in the 1975 building programme prepared by the South Western Regional Hospital Board but at the time of writing this report information has been received that the project has been put back to 1976 and that the number of beds in the First Phase of the new hospital has been significantly reduced. The effect of this could well be that first class hospital services will not be available in Somerset for many years to come.

The Special Clinic, for the investigation and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases is now held at the Bridgwater General Hospital. Cases attending the clinic for the first time during 1972 were as follows:-

	<u>1971</u>	<u>1972</u>
Gonorrhoea	14	16
Other conditions requiring treatment	42	46
Other conditions not requiring treatment	30	24

Ante-Natal Clinics

No Local Authority Ante-Natal Clinics are held in the area, supervision being conducted by General Practitioners and Midwives.

Infant Welfare

Infant Welfare Clinics, for which the County Council are responsible, are held at Cannington, East Huntspill, Edington, Nether Stowey, North Petherton, Pawlett, Puriton, Spaxton, West Huntspill, Westonzoyland, and Woolavington.

National Assistance Act, 1948 - Section 47

A number of cases were assisted through informal action, but in one instance it was necessary to obtain an Order for the removal of an elderly lady to a County Council Home. She settled down quickly in the Home where she is now very happy and is not willing to leave.

Welfare of Old People

The Rural District Council assist the W.V.S. in providing Meals on Wheels for old people, and this worthwhile service is greatly appreciated by the recipients. An average of 91 meals per week are distributed.

Sewerage and Sewage Disposal

Nether Stowey and Fiddington have been provided with a sewerage and sewage disposal scheme at a cost of £147,000.

The Councils' proposals to serve the northern part of the District by means of two trunk sewers serving all villages on the northern and southern parts of the Polden Hills and to combine treatment of sewage with that from Bridgwater Borough and Burnham-on-Sea at two major treatment works before discharge to the River Parrett are well advanced and work will soon commence. This, combined with proposals for other villages, will ensure that by April next year all villages which could reasonably be provided with modern sewage treatment arrangements will in fact be so served or will be included in schemes which are well advanced.

Water Supplies

Routine sampling of water supplies in distribution was continued and results generally were highly satisfactory.

Results of bacteriological tests generally can be summarised as follows:-

Supply	Number of Examinations	Report	
		Satisfactory	Not Satisfactory
Ashford	24	24	-
Doddington	4	4	-
Over Stowey	2	2	-
Clatworthy	8	7	1
Fiddington	3	2	1
Heathcombe	5	5	-

Chemical analysis of Fiddington, Over Stowey, Ashford and Heathcombe supplies was continued as a matter of routine. Reports were as follows:-

Fiddington Water Supply

Physical Characters

Parts per million

Clear and bright.
Hazen Units less than 5.

Sediment	Nil
Reaction	Very slightly alkaline
pH	7.1
Total Solids	365.0
Total Alkalinity (as CaCO ₃)	215.0
Carbonate Hardness " "	250.0
Non-carbonate " "	60.0
Total Hardness " "	310.0
Chloride (as Cl)	21.0
Ammoniacal Nitrogen (as N)	Nil
Albuminoid " "	0.006
Nitrate " "	6.2
Nitrite " "	Nil
Oxygen absorbed from Permanganate in 4 hours at 27° C.	0.10
Free Carbon Dioxide	13.0
Iron	Nil
Copper, Lead and Zinc	Nil

This is a very hard water, of satisfactory chemical purity.

Over Stowey Water Supply

Physical Characters

Parts per million

Clear and bright.
Hazen Units less than 5.

Sediment	Nil
Reaction	Slightly alkaline
pH	7.55
Total Solids	65.0
Total Alkalinity (as CaCO ₃)	15.0
Carbonate Hardness " "	-
Non-carbonate " "	-
Total Hardness	30.0
Chloride (as Cl)	14.0
Ammoniacal Nitrogen (as N)	0.002
Albuminoid " "	0.012
Nitrate " "	1.9
Nitrite " "	Nil
Oxygen absorbed from Permanganate in 4 hours at 27° C.	0.35
Free Carbon Dioxide	1.5
Iron, Copper, Lead and Zinc	Nil

This is a very soft water of satisfactory chemical purity

Ashford Water Supply

	<u>Parts per million</u>
Physicial Characters	Clear and bright Hazen Units less than 5.
Sediment	Nil
Reaction	Very slightly alkaline
pH	7.5
Total Solids	190.0
Total Alkalinity (as CaCO_3)	120.0
Carbonate Hardness " "	120.0
Non-carbonate " " "	35.0
Total Hardness " "	155.0
Chloride (as Cl)	17.0
Ammoniacal Nitrogen (as N)	0.008
Albuminoid " "	0.052
Nitrate " "	3.3
Nitrite " "	Nil
Oxygen absorbed from Permanganate in 4 hours at 27° C.	0.50
Free Carbon Dioxide	4.0
Iron, Copper, Lead and Zinc	Nil

This is a moderately hard water of satisfactory chemical purity.

Heathcombe Water Supply

	<u>Parts per million</u>
Physicial Characters	Clear and bright Hazen Units less than 5.
Sediment	Trace
Reaction	Very slightly alkaline
pH	7.5
Total Solids	170.0
Total Alkalinity (as CaCO_3)	105.0
Carbonate Hardness " "	105.0
Non-carbonate " " "	25.0
Total Hardness " "	130.0
Chloride (as Cl)	19.0
Ammoniacal Nitrogen (as N)	Nil
Albuminoid " "	0.004
Nitrate " "	3.4
Nitrite " "	Nil
Oxygen absorbed from Permanganate in 4 hours at 27° C.	Nil
Free Carbon Dioxide	2.0
Iron, Lead and Zinc	Nil
Copper	0.07

This is a fairly soft water of satisfactory chemical purity.

Housing

The number of post-war houses built in the Rural District up to 31st December, 1972, was as follows:-

- (a) Erected by Local Authority 1,377
- (b) Erected by Private Enterprise 3,456

During 1972 the Council built 16 houses and 354 were provided by private firms. These figures compare with 48 and 170 respectively in the previous year.

At the end of the year there were approximately 570 applications for Council houses as compared with 546 in the previous year.

Wardens Schemes for old people are now operating most successfully in the following villages: West Huntspill 15 (units), North Petherton 45, Woolavington 33, Nether Stowey 12, Puriton 8, Ashcott 8, and Cannington 37. Old Person's dwellings are also provided in the following villages: East Huntspill 6, Over Stowey 6, Shapwick 4, and Spaxton 4.

Improvement Grants

Owners of many properties have been informed of the benefits of these grants and have been urged to bring their properties up to modern standards.

The following table summaries the action taken:-

Discretionary Grants

Received		Approved	
Applications	No. of Dwellings	Applications	No. of Dwellings
103	103	103	108

Standard Grants

Received	Approved
27	27

Sanitary Inspection of the Area

The records given in the Chief Public Health Inspector's Report show the number of insanitary conditions dealt with.

FOR 1972

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I beg to submit my Annual Report for the year ended 31st December, 1972.

STAFF

The staff of the Department remained unchanged and consists of Chief Public Health Inspector, two Additional Public Health Inspectors and female clerk-typist.

COMPLAINTS OF NUISANCE

215 complaints were received - all were abated by informal action.

As in previous years, by far the greater number of complaints arose from the indiscriminate disposal of farm effluents and wastes on open land and the pollution of associated water courses. It is a point of general concern that the increasing use of modern farming techniques cannot be left free to introduce new processes without some protection for the community. The dramatic increase in cost of animal feeding compounds has encouraged plant manufacturers to develop sophisticated techniques for treating animal wastes and recover the high protein potential which would normally be wasted. Work commenced during the year on a poultry manure drying plant at an intensive poultry unit in the District and it is hoped this will be in full production early in 1973.

A considerable number of the complaints concerned pollution from domestic septic tank effluent discharges. In a District with low lying areas and a high water table abatement of such nuisances is often extremely difficult and costly and until such time as the regional sewerage scheme is completed, it is unlikely there will be any appreciable improvement in the situation.

Other complaints made were of dust emission, accumulation of an obnoxious nature, calf rearing, "zero-grazing" etc.

The fines for offences under the "nuisances" section of the Public Health Act 1936, may be minimal compared with profits made and Public Health Planning - which should mean close liaison between Public Health Inspectors and planning officers - can do much to avoid undue nuisance. The inevitable result of complaints regarding farming methods is a battle between public health officials and "big Business" who claim in dubious self defence that their methods are modern and in accordance with good practice.

WATER SUPPLY

Samples for bacteriological examination and chemical analysis were submitted regularly from the six sources of supply.

All results were satisfactory and no difficulties were experienced apart from the presence of rusty particles in some mains serving the Polden Hill villages. Investigations showed that the pipes concerned were probably untreated and that some deterioration of the interior surface had taken place.

/Concern was felt

Concern was felt regarding some private supplies which proved inadequate or unwholesome. Close liaison and co-operation is maintained with the Somerset Water Board to reduce the number relying on wells and other sources but the necessary mechanics required to serve certain areas with main supplies is so costly as to make it uneconomic.

HOUSING

The demolition of houses which are at the end of their useful lives must go hand in hand with the preservation of those that are worth improving. Slum clearance will continue to be the primary weapon against bad housing but indiscriminate demolition destroys settled communities and can so easily create detrimental visual impact and an incongruous mixture of old and new.

A large proportion of the nation's houses are situated in rural areas and these properties vary widely in their standard of construction, repair and amenity level. Whilst the present standard of fitness is fair in its application factors concerning the environment could be taken into account. When judged objectively rural houses have many deficiencies with their lack of amenities and damp-proofing, stone and brick floors, small windows, low ceilings and poor staircases. The improvement of these properties and their retention as part of the environment receive our first attentions.

13 houses were represented as unfit for human habitation and incapable of being rendered fit at reasonable cost. 4 Demolition Orders were made and 6 Closing Orders and 2 undertakings to carry out works were accepted. 10 houses were reconditioned, 3 subject to an undertaking to make fit, 3 subject to a Demolition Order and 4 subject to Closing Orders. 5 families were rehoused by the Council and 2 families were rehoused privately.

118 houses were repaired and improved, all as a result of informal action.

Home improvement is assuming an ever important role in the national programme. Since the introduction of increased improvement grants, provision for general improvement areas and environmental facelifts - the number of grants approved has gone forward at an ever quickening pace.

Ever increasing land prices and mortgage rates of interest have put more pressure on the market for houses capable of improvement but with disastrous results on the house owner because of the acute shortage of builders willing to carry out such works and leave the more lucrative market of new house building.

286 visits of inspection were made for purposes of ascertaining grant aid but it is again discouraging to report that owner/occupiers formed 95% of the applicants. In spite of the attractions of increased rents landlords still seem somewhat reluctant to avail themselves of grant aid preferring to sell the property on its vacation.

Routine surveys were carried out in several parishes to ascertain the true figure of unfit houses and it is estimated that some 250 properties will require formal action during the next five years. During the survey account was taken of possible general improvement areas but due to the extremely diverse nature of house and street design in the villages it is felt that little advantage can be taken of this.

OVERCROWDING

3 cases of statutory overcrowding were abated during the year. 1 case of overcrowding on the 'bedroom standard' was recorded. 1 case of statutory overcrowding remains.

OFFICES, SHOPS AND RAILWAY PREMISES ACT, 1963

Under the Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act 6 registrations were cancelled and 6 new premises were registered. The number of persons employed was 370 comprising 204 males and 166 females.

Constant and regular inspections are the criteria in ensuring that standards do not lapse but it is encouraging to report that with the exception of very minor points conditions required by the Act are being maintained. Most contraventions are recorded at times of abnormal stress or work load and contraventions such as passages blocked with packing cases, electric light bulbs not replaced immediately are noted.

It was not necessary to resort to statutory action all contraventions being complied ^{with} after informal notice. Both employer and employee appreciate that good conditions are conducive to an efficient business and often considerable improvement can be achieved at very little expense.

BAKEHOUSES

All 7 bakehouses in the District were visited regularly and with the exception of one premises no action was necessary.

The "family" baker is finding it increasingly difficult to combat the inroads of the large baking combines and under such pressure tries to increase production with no increase in staff with the resultant drop in hygienic standards.

With the exception of one premises standards are good and informal action was all that was necessary. Considerable improvement was obtained in the one case but it is anticipated that the business will cease to operate very shortly.

FOOD HYGIENE

The preparation, processing and distribution of food have become most complicated and the technical developments in food processing and packaging have combined to cause an increased possibility of error.

Demands for high standards of hygiene can only come from a community understanding of basic facts of hygiene. The positive approach to food hygiene is more necessary than ever before and a great responsibility rests on food handlers.

Much has been written on the education of food handlers but there is still failure in the present generation to use the information given to them on hygienic practices.

Date marking of food and the introduction of methods acceptable to the public and trade alike has caused a great deal of controversy and already some major food stores and chains are date-marking some perishable foods. Informative labelling is needed which will tell the housewife how long particular foods can be stored at home without deterioration, also once the package has been opened how long the remainder can be safely stored.

/Regular routine visits

FOOD HYGIENE (Cont'd)

Regular routine visits were made to all the food premises and every opportunity taken to encourage rising standards. Education, example and awareness are the ingredients of good hygienic practices but however diligent our efforts we must rely heavily on the housewife to notify any cases coming to her notice where standards leave something to be desired.

MOBILE FOOD SHOPS

The number of mobile shops and retail vans continues to increase annually causing a growing problem for the health department to "pin-down" the operator to enable an inspection of the vehicle to be made. The retail round is extremely variable, it is often carried on late into the evening and the multiplicity of foods carried causes numerous problems. Hygiene standards easily slip and any facilities available are readily abused.

The vehicles of large food chains are of high quality and standard, it is the new operator launching into business for the first time that causes most concern, they plead ignorance of the law and lack of capital to execute the necessary work to the vehicle.

37 inspections were made under the Food Hygiene (Markets and Stalls and Delivery Vehicles) Regulations 1966 but it was not necessary to take formal action where contraventions were noted.

SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL KITCHENS

In accordance with previously agreed procedures close co-operation was continued with the Somerset Education Authority and regular inspections were made of all school canteens, sanitary conveniences and classrooms.

This system of inspection provides a most useful monitor for the County Council and our combined efforts have resulted in many improvements to the mutual benefit of both Authorities.

39 inspections were made during the year.

LICENCED PREMISES

The number of licenced premises continued to show a slight decrease over previous years, the total in the district being 66.

18 were found to need repair, improvement or redecoration and it is pleasing to report that the full co-operation of the Brewers is evident, albeit that their economic situation with regard to major improvements is somewhat precarious.

Public demand for snacks and meals at licenced premises does not diminish and licencees tend to branch out from sandwiches to three and four course meals. Advantageous as this practice is, it causes concern in the department as the family's private kitchen is often used to prepare such meals and it is difficult to properly supervise and ensure that hygienic methods are used.

FACTORIES ACT

The following particulars indicate the action taken under Part 1 of the Factories Act, 1961:-

	Number on Register	Insp	Number of written Notices	Occupiers Prosecuted
Factories in which Section 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authority				
Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by Local Authority	65	77		
Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding Outworkers premises).	3	6		
Total	68	83		

	No. of cases in which defects were found				No. of cases in which prosecutions were instituted
	Found	Remedied	Referred		
			to H.M insp	by H.M Insp	
Want of cleanliness					
Overcrowding(S.2)					
Unreasonable temperature (S.3)					
Inadequate ventilation (S.4)					
Ineffective drainage to floor (S.6)					
Sanitary conveniences (S.7)					
(a) Insufficient					
(b) Unsuitable or defective	5	4			
(c) Not separate for sexes					
Other offences against the Act(not including offences relating to Outwork).					
Total	5	4			

MEAT AND OTHER FOODS

Regular inspection involving daily visits were made to the four licenced slaughterhouses within the district. Generally standards of hygiene were good but one slaughterhouse was licenced on a 3 monthly basis to enable the occupier to formulate his intention to improve or close the slaughterhouse.

The number of animals slaughtered was 6,530 a slight reduction on 1971 but the quality of meat was very high.

The Operators of slaughterhouses in the district are now catering for the home bulk freezer market and it has been necessary to make arrangements in co-operation with them, that meat for this purpose shall not be prepared or processed at all whilst slaughtering is in progress because of the possibility of bacterial cross-contamination, and that all preparation shall take place in an approved area and with equipment used solely for that purpose.

10½ tons of meat was rejected as unfit for human consumption. No case of tuberculosis was found in bovines but 3 cases was noted in pigs. No cases of cysticercosis were recorded. The increase in meat condemned as unfit is partially due to the practice of bringing cows to the slaughterhouse, because of the financial gain if the carcass is accepted for human consumption as against knacker meat prices. If passed for consumption the gain is considerable but if condemned as unfit little is lost.

Animals inspected were as follows:-

Beasts	1,041
Cows	149
Calves	1,559
Sheep	2,264
Pigs	1,517

Condemned Meat

Carcass Meat (lb)

Offal (lb)

Beasts	2,365	1,646
Cows	13,882	1,099
Calves	1,371	56
Sheep	581	250
Pigs	1,032	767

Other Foods Condemned

100 lb.	Ice Cream products
112 lb.	Frozen Foods
60 lb.	Chocolate
61 lb.	Argentine Beef

Advantageous and desirable as the frozen food cabinet is to maintain food in its best condition, two factors emerge which cause considerable problems. Firstly power failures and mechanical breakdown with the resultant rapid deterioration of contents, secondly the failure of shop-keepers to ensure regular rotation of stock. In the first case emergency measures consist of packing any voids and the surface of the food layer with predijous amounts of newspaper - this maintains a reasonably constant temperature for up to four hours and if repairs can be affected within this period little deterioration of the food is noted, otherwise total condemnation of the stock is necessary. With regard to stock rotation, only constant attention by the shop-keeper can avoid any problems but it is regrettable to record that our inspection regularly shows proper attention is not being given to this very important matter.

MEAT AND OTHER FOODS (Cont'd)

Carcases and offal inspected and condemned in whole or part during the year:-

	Cattle excl. Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs
Number inspected	1,041	149	1,559	2,264	1,517
<u>All diseases except Tuberculosis and Cysticercosis</u> - whole carcasses condemned	3	18	30	12	7
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	138	97	23	88	157
% of the number inspected affected with disease other than Tuberculosis and Cysticerci	13.54	77.18	3.40	4.41	10.81
<u>Tuberculosis only -</u> Whole carcasses condemned	-	-	-	-	-
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	-	-	-	-	3
% of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis	-	-	-	-	0.20
<u>Cysticercosis</u> Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	-	-	-	-	-
Carcases submitted to treat- ment by refrigeration	-	-	-	-	-
Generalised and totally condemned	-	-	-	-	-

Condemned meat is normally disposed of to manufacturers of animal feeding stuffs and fertilisers where it is processed and sterilised by steam under pressure.

KNACKERS YARD

The one licenced premises is the District was not used to any great extent, it is really a reception centre, all animals being transferred to the Company's main works out of the District.

PRESERVED FOODS

There are 13 premises registered under Section 16, Food and Drugs Act, 1955. This includes the preparation of foods including sausages, brawn, faggots, pies, pasties, tongue ham and pressed beef.

In general the preparation and storage of cooked meats is carried out in accordance with the rules of good hygiene and quality control but the essential feature is temperature control. This is exercised by most food producers but often there is inadequate control after distribution with the resultant rapid deterioration in quality.

Special attention is paid to this aspect at all inspections - particularly in self service stores where packages tend to get "sorted-over" by the customer who often leaves it in a relatively exposed position within the display cabinet.

MILK AND DAIRIES

Regular and very detailed inspections were made to 3 milk product manufacturing premises and considerable progress has been achieved with the full co-operation of the owners on various aspects of production and storage.

There are 6 registered milk retailers.

POULTRY INSPECTION

The Nether Stowey packing station processed some 3,200,000 birds during the year with a similar rejection rate of about 1% or approximately 40 tons in weight.

It has long been accepted by the poultry industry that ultimately some form of compulsory inspection would have to be introduced. The introduction of 100% poultry inspection is not going to be achieved overnight but our entry to the E.E.C. and the regulations formulated by that body should bring a sharper awareness to inspection and quality control standards.

During the year the salmonella control programme was continued and the results proved to be very encouraging. The improvements in handling, washing and dressing resulted in an almost completely sterile pack. Samples of dressed poultry and surface swabs showed that although contamination could be shown to be present at some points of processing the methods of processing adopted resulted in a clean, fresh readily saleable product.

The inclusion of various forms of growth promoters to poultry feeding materials gives cause for concern from time to time. After our experiences with high copper content in 1970 it is disturbing to record a similar incident which fortunately involved a harmless additive Palm acid oil - but it underlines the diligence needed by inspector and 'spotter' alike.

The disease incidence is not high, the commonest reason for condemnation is underweight, deformed or damaged birds but chronic respiratory diseases continue to take a heavy toll.

WASTE FOODS

The outbreaks of animal disease during the year allegedly due to feeding pigs with unsterilised waste food occasioned more regular checks on the waste boiling plants but no contraventions were recorded.

This is a branch of public health work that receives our constant attention but it is time that legislation was prepared prohibiting the feeding of waste food to animals. The saving to the economy must be extremely marginal but when measured against the almost incalculable losses in both livestock and finances as the result of an outbreak of foot and mouth or swine fever, minimal.

MOVEABLE DWELLINGS

During the year a complete re-appraisal was made of the permanent caravan sites in the District and it was apparent that standards although not declining noticeably, had become totally inadequate to cater for the modern "mobile-home" and with the co-operation of the site owners was embarked on a scheme of improvement.

Improvements to sites are costly but the caravan occupiers have shown the willingness to accept increased rents for better services.

The demand for permanent sites shows no signs of slackening and almost daily we receive requests for sites. With all the problems that such sites bring unless the planning restrictions are lifted or eased it will be impossible to find suitable and proper sites, the alternative being scores of unlicensed, unsanitary sites with endless battles between officials of the health department and occupiers who are urged to move on only to establish another unauthorised site further on.

Several complaints were received regarding gypsy sites particularly in the Quantock Hills area. Almost without exception the occupiers were doing seasonal agricultural work therefore exempt from the provisions of the Caravan Act 1960. Because of a long season these sites take on an air of permanency and local residents get very concerned. These problems are encountered year after year and only emphasise the dismal lack of gypsy sites and until such time as sufficient sites are provided the Authorities will be plagued with this yearly conflict.

ANIMAL BOARDING ESTABLISHMENTS

Regular visits to the 7 licenced boarding establishments in the District showed a good level of management and hygiene and apart from some slackening of standards at one premises occasioned by personal troubles of the licensee it was not necessary to resort to other than informal action to remedy defects.

PEST CONTROL

There was an increase in complaints of rodent infestation during the year and at times our resources were stretched to the limit. The public have become very conscious of rat or mice infestation but unfortunately many adopted the attitude that this is solely the responsibility of the local Authority and little or no attempt is made to deal with the problem by the complainant.

/Test baiting of all

Test baiting of all the sewerage systems in the District showed that ~~as systems~~ from one short length of sewer the systems were free of infestation. Mouse infestations increased in all types of properties, and there was an increase in rats in agricultural premises but the number of rat infestations in private premises remained fairly static.

The increase in mouse infestation is probably due to the increase in incidence of resistance to anti-coagulant rodenticides. Alphachloros ~~is~~ relatively effective against mice but where ambient temperatures are high, say in the summer months, or in sheltered or warm situations even alphachlorose was not the answer and break-back traps have been resorted to.

The free service for eradication of insect pests continued during the year and it ~~has~~ become apparent that more sophisticated insecticides will be needed so that methods of control can be more variable.

It is disturbing to record that the number of complaints of flea infestation shows a marked increase on previous years, more probably caused by the increase in ~~number~~ of domestic pets than the traditional reason of dirty premises.

NOISE

A variety of complaints were received of noise nuisance ranging from industrial noise, such as power saws and planing machines to bird scaring devices. It was not found necessary to resort to formal action in any of these cases.

~~Th~~ industrial noise is difficult to delineate and one of our problems is that industrialists do not see the difference between insulation and absorption of noise and that the best way of tackling noise is to install quiet machines. To supress noise after it has been produced is a very expensive undertaking.

DEPOSIT OF POISONOUS WASTE ACT 1972

This Act which came into effect on 31st March, 1972 enforces a general prohibition on depositing poisonous and other dangerous waste.

There is one large industrial tip within the District receiving cellophane and polythene waste and it is not clear whether such material is regarded as coming within the scope of the Act but full investigations were made and tipping permitted to continue.

The control of future disposal sites will rest entirely on planning procedures to ins~~ist~~ on proper controls over development, types of deposit etc. An important problem is checking the authenticity of the analysis of the deposit but perhaps even more important still, checking untold thousands of deposits which although considered not to be toxic prove on analysis that they are.

SUMMARY OF VISITS

Water Supply	7
Water Samples	51
Drainage	161
New Work (Plans)	36
Nuisances	323
Refuse Disposal	40
Offices, Shops & Railway Premises Act	72
Factories	96
Schools	39
Housing (Slum Clearance)	29
Housing Repairs	381
Improvement Grants	286
Housing (Financial Provisions)	19
Qualification Certificate Inspections	10
Miscellaneous Housing Visits	118
Moveable Dwellings	157
Infectious Diseases	20
Filthy & Verminous Premises	-
Rodent Control	29
Other Pest Control	86
Meat and Food Inspections	586
Food Shops	160
Mobile Shops	37
Bakehouses	22
School Kitchens	39
Other Food Preparing Premises	75
Licensed Premises	67
Dairies	9
Ice Cream	75
Poultry Sample Visits	46
Poultry Packers	64
Slaughterhouses	24
Knacker Yard	3
Waste Food Plants	13
Animal Boarding Establishments	16
Miscellaneous Visits	73
Hairdressers	10
Public Sanitary Accommodation	90
Fire Precautions	7
Food Poisoning	13
Outworkers	12
Noise	18
Clean Air	2
Overcrowding	3
Swimming Pools	1

3,325

I would take this opportunity to record my appreciation to the Members of the Council and all members of staff, particularly those of my Department for their support and co-operation during the year.

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

D. E. COLDHAM
Chief Public Health Inspector



