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Contributors

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Bromyard Rural District

HEREFORDSHIRE



ANNUAL REPORT

on the

State of the Public Health

For the Year 1946

Staff of the Public Health Department

Medical Officer of Health	... ..	H. F. GREEN, M.A., M.B., D.P.H. (Private Tel.: Leominster 323) (Returned to duty on the 1st September, 1946)
Acting Medical Officer of Health (Deputy County Medical Officer)	... ..	I. F. MACKENZIE, M.D. (Edin.), D.P.H., D.T.M. & H. (Relinquished duty on the 31st August, 1946)
Clerk	... ..	B. J. SCANDRETT (On War Service from 1939)
Temporary Clerk	MISS D. M. J. BRAMFITT
Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor	J. N. S. HARRISON, M.S.I.A., M.I.E.T.

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To the Chairman and Members of the Bromyard Rural District Council.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present the Annual Report for the year 1946.

I returned to duty on the 1st of September, 1946. This report, therefore, deals largely with the work of the Public Health Staff. May I take this opportunity of expressing my gratitude to them all for the way in which the work has been carried on during these times of stress, when many additional duties were added to their normal work.

During the war years conditions in the hopyards have inevitably deteriorated and there is much leeway to be made up, both in the provision of new quarters for hop-pickers and in the management of the "camp" conditions.

Before the war a start had been made in improving the housing conditions in the district but the problem now is far greater both by reason of the accumulated dilapidations and by the overcrowding of young families living with their parents.

Housing construction and water supplies are therefore most urgent necessities, to be pressed forward as circumstances permit.

H. F. GREEN,
Medical Officer of Health.

SECTION A. STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

Area (in acres)	61,000
Number of inhabited houses (end of 1946) according to the Rate Books	2,022
Rateable Value	£16,728
Sum represented by a Penny Rate	£73 18 5

EXTRACT FROM VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR:

LIVE BIRTH RATE (per 1,000 of estimated resident population)	21.0
STILL-BIRTH RATE (per 1,000 Live and Still Birth)	44.9
DEATH RATE (per 1,000 of estimated resident population)	11.9
INFANTILE MORTALITY RATE (per 1,000 live births)	33.6
DEATHS FROM PUERPERAL CAUSES: No death attributable to Puerperal infection occurred during 1946.	

COMPARABLE DATA FOR ENGLAND AND WALES, 1946:

LIVE BIRTH RATE	19.1
DEATH RATE	11.5
INFANTILE MORTALITY RATE	43.0

SECTION B.—GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.

LABORATORY FACILITIES.

Laboratory facilities continued to be available at the Public Health Laboratory, Hereford, which is at present under the administration of the Medical Research Council.

CLINICS.

There are none provided by the Local Authority.

Under the County Council schemes the following Clinic facilities are available to residents in the district.

Child Welfare Centre: In Frome Bank, Bromyard, on alternate Thursdays at 1.30 p.m.

Venereal Diseases: At the County Council Hospital, Hereford, on Wednesdays and Fridays.

The County schemes also provide for Maternal and Child Welfare Clinics, Paediatric, Ear, Nose and Throat, and Eye Clinics. Children are referred to these Clinics as and when required, on the recommendation of the School Medical or Infant Welfare Authority at the request of the Medical Practitioner.

I am indebted to Mr. J. N. S. Harrison for the following statement (Sections C. to E.) furnished under Article 27 (Sub-Section 18) of the Sanitary Officers (outside London) Regulations.

SECTION C.—SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

WATER SUPPLIES.

With the exception of the Council's Houses at Wolferlow and Pencombe, all piped supplies in the District are privately owned.

No complaints of water shortage were reported during the year, but numerous complaints of well and spring water supplies being polluted were received. Arising from these complaints, 40 samples were taken, showing 32 to be polluted.

The Council have engaged a Water and Sewage Engineer to prepare a comprehensive Water Scheme to supply water to the whole of the Rural area. The Whitbourne area will take a supply from a separate source and be fed by gravitation. This scheme is being pushed forward as the Council are unable to find any other suitable water supply for their proposed Council houses for Whitbourne.

DRAINAGE AND SEWAGE.

The only sewer vested in the Council is that serving Bishop's Frome. The outfall is an open ditch on the Ledbury Road which gives rise to constant complaints. The Council have engaged a Water and Sewage Engineer who has prepared a scheme for the complete sewerage of the village, together with treatment works and outfall drains.

RIVERS AND STREAMS.

A complaint was received concerning the pollution of a small stream at the rear of the Council's houses at Pencombe by the Council's houses sewer. It was found to be caused by the choking up of the treatment tanks filter media. Orders have been given for this to be replaced and put in order.

REFUSE DISPOSAL.

There is no organised refuse collection in the District. A few requests have been received for collection. The Sanitary Inspector advised on suitable arrangements for disposal in each case. The Council erected six signs prohibiting the continued use of war-time scrap metal dumps, after receiving complaints about the rubbish thereon. The practice now appears to be abated.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA.

INSPECTIONS UNDER	Number of inspections	Informal Notices served	Statutory Notices served	Notices complied with
Housing Acts	397	15	2	19
Public Health Act, 1936	61	10	1	10
Cowsheds	155	75	1	46
Factories and Workshops	2	—	—	—
Bakehouses	2	—	—	—
Hop-pickers' quarters	99	54	—	50
Nuisances (Complaints)	29	19	—	19
Water Supplies	201	3	—	15
Infectious Disease	10	—	—	—
Butcher's Shops, etc.	14	—	—	—

CAMPING SITES.

Three camping sites in the District are licenced. A good water supply is laid on and adequate sanitary accommodation is provided.

VERMINOUS PREMISES, ETC.

No complaints have been received concerning verminous premises.

HOP-PICKERS' QUARTERS.

The Hop-Pickers' quarters in the District were inspected and 99 visits were made. Owing to the large number of premises in this district and the shortness of the season, it is impossible for me to make the number of inspections necessary for minimum supervision, and when contraventions are found it is doubly difficult for me to make the necessary re-visits.

The Ministry of Health visiting Officer (Dr. Brunyate) in his report to the Council on his visit to the hop-pickers' quarters this year, states that the Sanitary Inspector requires assistance in order that a minimum standard of supervision and inspection can be maintained and brought the Council's attention to three premises seriously contravening the Byelaws. One of these premises has recently changed ownership and I can report good improvement there and what is more valuable, good co-operation with the Sanitary Inspector. The other two premises belong to one owner who was recently taken to Court over hop-pickers' Byelaws contraventions. The number of pickers and families on these two farms is high (approximately 1,800) but the grade of picker is very low.

Generally speaking the farmers are willing to help all they can and are realising that good premises can command good pickers. Several new premises and improvements have been made during the year, but the national shortage of material and labour retards this work.

At one large farm the majority of the pickers' quarters were gutted by fire in the middle of the season. Temporary quarters were provided in the farm out-buildings and for next year new and improved premises are being erected and should be complete before next season.

SECTION D.—HOUSING.

The Council now own 16 houses situated as follows: Pencombe (4), Much Cowarne (4), Stoke Lacy (4), Wolferlow (2), Avenbury (2). Four Swedish Type houses are in course of erection at Stoke Lacy, and two at Pencombe.

New houses erected privately during the year: Storrige (1).

Additional accommodation made by conversion of existing property: (2).

INSPECTION OF DWELLING HOUSES DURING THE YEAR.

1. (a) Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects under the Public Health and Housing Acts	...	...	195
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose	...	...	397
2. Number of dwelling houses found not to be, in all respects, fit for human habitation	...	...	195

ACTION UNDER STATUTORY POWERS DURING THE YEAR.

Proceedings under the Public Health Acts.

Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	...	...	0
Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied after serving of formal notices:			
(a) By Owners	...	...	0
(b) By Local Authority in default of Owners	...	...	0

VAN DWELLINGS.

No cases of vans overstaying the statutory period were noted.

SECTION E.—INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

MILK.

155 visits were made to inspect Cowsheds and Dairies. Nineteen Cowsheds and Dairies were repaired or improved during the year.

MEAT AND OTHER FOODS.

Butcher's shops throughout the district were inspected.

FOOD FOUND TO BE UNFIT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION.

Approximately 50 lbs. of Beef were condemned on account of decomposition.

SECTION F.—PREVALENCE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

No undue prevalence of any infectious disease was noted during the year. The two cases of diphtheria occurred in persons who had not been immunised.

ANALYSIS OF TOTAL NOTIFIED CASES, ACCORDING TO AGE.

Disease.	Age of Patient.											Total			
	0-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-10	10-15	15-20	20-30		30-40	Over 40	Unknown
Pneumonia ...	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	2	1	—	—	11
Scarlet Fever ...	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	2	1	1	1	—	—	7
Measles ...	—	1	—	—	—	2	—	4	2	—	2	—	—	—	13
Whooping Cough...	1	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3
Erysipelas ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
Diphtheria ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	2

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION.

The state of immunisation of the child population of the district at the end of 1946 is indicated in the table below.

	Under 5 years of age		Between 5 and 15 years of age		Total Under 15
	Number	Percentage of group	Number	Percentage of group	
Locals	164	26.9%	709	61.7%	873
Evacuees (all ages)	—	—	—	—	54

Since practically all evacuees had returned to their homes by the end of 1946, it was felt desirable to sub-divide the groups of children immunised into "locals" and evacuees. All the records have therefore been re-checked. The figures given this year are not strictly comparable to those given in the Annual Reports of 1945 and 1944. A further source of inaccuracy lies in the fact that a number of children have been immunised privately by their own doctors, some with a plain diphtheria antigen such as A.P.T. or T.A.F., and some with a proprietary combined diphtheria-whooping cough antigen.

The figures do, however, reveal a considerable falling off in the number of children immunised in the years 1942-1946, who are under five years of age.

"LOCAL" CHILDREN aged 0—4 years.

	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946
Number immunised during year	1	—	106	85	58	75	29	61
Number immunised at any time	1	1	107	163	173	192	151	164

"Immunised" indicates only those children who have completed a full course of injections.

The immunisation scheme did not get under way until early in 1944. The novelty of the scheme proved a great attraction, but as the novelty wore off and cases of diphtheria became extremely rare, it has become increasingly difficult to prevent parents from putting off the immunisation course from day to day, until it never gets done at all. The population is lightly and evenly spread over the district. While most of the district regards Bromyard as its market town, the eastern part (Cradley, Whitbourne and the Whitbourne areas) tend to shop in Malvern and Worcester; the northern part (Thornbury and Upper Sapey) may shop in Tenbury; and the western part (Burley Gate, Felton, etc.) may shop in Hereford. Thus it is difficult to attract the parents to the Bromyard Clinic for immunisation and they tend not to seek immunisation in the other centres outside the County.

Until 1946 this problem could only be tackled by holding clinics from time to time at the schools, a procedure involving the spending of much time by a somewhat harassed medical staff.

With the introduction in July, 1946, of the general Practitioners scheme whereby children can obtain free immunisation from their own doctors, it seems likely that many more children will be immunised. Furthermore, our records are now more complete.

TUBERCULOSIS.

At the end of 1946, the Tuberculosis Register contained the names of twenty males and thirteen females who normally reside in the district.

During the year twelve new cases were notified, nine on account of Pulmonary Tuberculosis and three because of the presence of the disease in parts of the body other than the lungs. During the same period, six deaths of persons suffering from the disease occurred.

CAUSES OF DEATH (ALL AGES)

Disease	Males	Females	Total
Diphtheria	—	1	1
Tuberculosis	5	1	6
Influenza	1	—	1
Cancer (all forms)	6	5	11
Diabetes	1	—	1
Intra-cranial Vascular lesions	5	3	8
Diseases of the Heart and Arteries	25	9	34
Bronchitis and Pneumonia	3	2	5
Other Respiratory Diseases	1	—	1
Diseases of the Digestive System	2	—	2
Appendicitis	—	1	1
Nephritis	—	2	2
Premature Birth	—	1	1
Diarrhoea (under 2 years)	—	1	1
Congenital Conditions (at birth)	—	1	1
Road Traffic Accidents	1	1	2
Violence	1	—	1
All other causes	4	1	5

