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Contributors

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BROMYARD URBAN DISTRICT

HEREFORDSHIRE

ANNUAL REPORT

on the

STATE of the PUBLIC HEALTH

for the Year

1949

Staff of the Public Health Department

Medical Officer of Health	...	...	M. J. PLEYDELL, M.C., M.D., D.P.H.
Clerk	...	...	MISS S. DENSHAM (Resigned on 31st May, 1949)
			G. PROSSER (Appointed on 1st June, 1949)
Sanitary Inspector	...	...	A. A. MAXWELL, M.S.I.A., M.I.P.C., (Appointed on 17th October., 1949). (Telephone: Bromyard 5).

Public Health Office: 4, CHURCH STREET, LEOMINSTER.
Telephone No.: Leominster 95.

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

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report for the year 1949, which has been compiled in accordance with the Ministry of Health Circular 2/50.

Housing remains the chief problem of the Council, and a housing survey is required in order that an exact assessment of the present needs may be estimated. In addition to the houses which are structurally unsound it must be remembered that there are many in which overcrowding is present.

The treatment of the town's sewage is another problem which is receiving attention. The unsatisfactory nature of the present means of sewage disposal is accentuated during the winter months, when heavy rains cause flooding of houses not far distant from the sewage outfall.

These are local problems. In Public Health throughout the country, the gravest problem today is the prevention, treatment, and care of persons suffering from tuberculosis. At present these functions come under the control of three separate bodies: the District Councils, the Regional Hospital Boards, and the County Councils respectively. A greater degree of unification is required to combat an infection of such vast magnitude.

The care of the aged is a problem which will claim more and more attention in the forthcoming years. At present it is estimated that there is one person over working age (65 years) for every six persons of working age, and it is expected that this proportion will increase to one in four or even one in three in the next quarter of a century. The housing of elderly persons comes within the ambit of the district council, and there is little doubt that this will present many difficulties in the future.

During the year there have been no serious outbreaks of infectious disease. The water supply has remained adequate in quality and quantity. Of the seventeen samples of water taken, only one gave an unsatisfactory result on analysis, and resampling on this occasion gave a satisfactory report.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Mr. Maxwell, your Sanitary Inspector, for the assistance he has afforded me.

M. J. PLEYDELL,
Medical Officer of Health.

SECTION A.—STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA

Area in acres)	213
Population (civilian)	1,772
Number of inhabited houses (end of 1949) according to the Rate Books	510
Rateable Value	£9,295
Sum represented by a Penny Rate	£36 15 0

EXTRACT FROM THE VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR:

	Total	Male	Female
LIVE BIRTHS (Legitimate)	29	13	16
(Illegitimate)	1	1	—
Total	30	14	16
STILL BIRTHS (Legitimate)	2	—	2
(Illegitimate)	1	—	1
DEATHS	21	9	12
DEATHS FROM PUERPERAL CAUSES	—	—	—
DEATHS OF INFANTS UNDER ONE YEAR OF AGE (Legitimate)	1	1	—

COMPARABLE DATA FOR ENGLAND AND WALES, 1949:

Birth rate (per 1,000 of the estimated resident population)	16.9
Birth rate for England and Wales	16.7
Still Birth rate (per 1,000 of the estimated resident population)	1.69
Still Birth rate for England and Wales	0.39
Death rate (per 1,000 of the estimated resident population)	11.9
Death rate for England and Wales	11.7
Infant Mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	33.3
Infant Mortality rate for England and Wales	32.0

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

LABORATORY FACILITIES

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

CLINICS

There are no clinics provided by the Local Authority.

Under the County Council and Regional Hospital Board 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 schemes also provide for Maternity 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, or at the request of the Medical Practitioner.

I am indebted to Mr. A. A. Maxwell, Sanitary Inspector to the Council, for the following Statement (Section C to E) furnished under the Sanitary Officers (Outside London) Regulations.

SECTION C.—SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES AND INSPECTION

WATER SUPPLIES

The source of the supply for the Urban Area is at Buckenhill where the flow of six shallow wells is collected and conveyed by gravitation to the Three Mills Pumping Station. The supply during the year has not shown much variation despite the long periods of drought, but the supply of two other existing springs should be connected to the existing supply. At present the supply is conveyed in glazed earthen-ware pipes from the springs to the pumping station and these pipes require to be replaced to stop any leaks or contamination that may occur. Chlorination of the supply is carried out at the pumping station before the water is pumped to the reservoirs in The Knapp and at Flaggoners Green which hold 100,000 gallons and 40,000 gallons respectively. Bacteriological examination of the supply showed the same to be satisfactory, and this is checked by routine samples. The town has now no stand pipes in the streets and every house has water on the premises. Whilst the supply of water for the area is adequate, the average consumption per head is excessive, being approximately 35 gallons. More economy is needed, and the installation of larger storage. To offset the latter, an automatic electric pumping plant is being installed.

The Urban Council supplies water to six farms and eleven houses in the Rural Area.

WATER SAMPLING

Number of samples taken for bacteriological examination:—

(a) Satisfactory	...	...	16
(b) Unsatisfactory	...	...	1

SEWAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL

The conversion of earth closets to water carriage has been one line of progress within the district, which is almost 100 per cent on water carriage.

The sewage disposal of the area is discharging untreated into the River Frome, and at the principal outfall situated at "Forburries" has a flow of over 40,000 gallons per day. This position is indeed a serious one from the point of view of the Health of the District, and the gross pollution of the river, and the need of efficient purification works cannot be overemphasised, as this work is long overdue. It is hoped that within the next year some definite steps will have been taken to rectify this position.

INSPECTION OF DRAINAGE, ETC.

Smoke, colour and water tests	...	...	...	12
New drains	...	...	...	4

RIVER POLLUTION

As mentioned in the previous section the Urban Authority are amongst the greatest offenders in the pollution of the river, and it is to be regretted that this situation has occurred as the river runs round the area in a circle and the pleasure of children, paddling or bathing, has been spoiled by former administrators of the Urban Area, allowing the discharge of untreated sewage into the river.

REFUSE COLLECTION

This work is carried out by contract, and whilst there is much to be said for this method from an economical point of view, the fault is that continual supervision is required to see that the conditions of the Contract are carried out. The disposal is by means of tipping at the Three Mills.

RODENT CONTROL

The sewers received treatment and the 'take' showed that the infestation was on the decrease. No major infestations of rodents have been found in the town.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS

Number on Register	...	...	8
Inspections	...	...	18
Defects found	...	...	2
Remedied	...	...	2

CAMPING SITES

There are no camping sites registered within the area.

VERMIN

One house was disinfested during the year.

MEAT AND FOOD INSPECTIONS

Visits to dairies and premises selling or preparing food for human consumption	...	...	...	28
Milk Samples taken	...	...	...	3
Informal Notices for defects or cleanliness	...	...	...	2

Meat is inspected at Hereford Abattoir and sent to the town, whilst the transport and handling of the meat meets with no complaint.

The quality issued cannot be termed as "prime."

ICE CREAM

Six premises are registered under the Food and Drugs Act, 1938.

FOOD FOUND TO BE UNFIT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION

135 tins of varied goods — Approx. weight 92 lbs.
(Blown, damaged or rusty tins).

SECTION D.—HOUSING.

The number of houses completed during the year was:—

Private Enterprise	...	...	1
Council	...	...	Nil

The prospect of Houses being erected on the Bannut Tree Meadow Site is still in the planning stages, and difficulties are being encountered with drainage and sewage, but it is hoped that this work will be commenced during the coming year.

The housing situation in the area still remains a problem, and the needs of the Aged People must be considered with the erection of houses with one or two bedrooms. If these were erected a large number of houses at present occupied by one tenant could be freed and this would help to ease the situation. Whilst the Council remain faithful to the traditional type of house, the time has come when I feel that they should consider the erection of other types to break the monotony of the estates.

The general condition of much of the old property in the town is bad; and owing to the high cost of repairs and the low rentals charged, in all fairness to the tenant and landlord I cannot see when these properties will be repaired under the Housing Acts at a reasonable cost and as an economic proposition for the owners. The conditions that exist have, in my opinion, been due to neglect over the war years, the supply of material, and the labour situation; and much patience is necessary in explaining to tenants the reason for delay in repairs, and to house seekers.

The Council own 60 houses and with very few exceptions can they be classed as of perfect standard when we find that a number of the houses have no hot water system except by the wash-boiler. The general conditions of the houses show that when erected the materials were not of the best, and that supervision had been slack. This applies more to the post-war houses, and the repairs required to this property is indeed a serious matter.

The availability of labour in the Building trade within the area is acute and the present firms in business would rather quote for new work than jobbing repairs.

INSPECTIONS OF DWELLING HOUSES DURING THE YEAR

1. (a) Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects under the Public Health and Housing Acts	54
(b) Number of Inspections made for the purpose	72
2. Number of dwelling houses found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	31

ACTION UNDER STATUTORY NOTICES DURING THE YEAR

Proceedings under the Public Health Acts:—

1. Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	5
2. Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied after the service of formal notices:—	
(a) By Owners	5
(b) By Local Authority	Nil

VAN DWELLINGS. Nil.

SECTION E.—SANITARY INSPECTIONS OF THE DISTRICT

Informal and Verbal Notices	61
Do. do. complied with	34
Letters sent out	76
Complaints received	16
Complaints confirmed	14
Nuisances found	8

SYNOPSIS OF INSPECTIONS MADE

Total number of Inspections	129
Total number of Re-inspections made	182

DWELLING HOUSES

	Inspections
Ordinary	54
Infectious Disease	1
Housing Act, Overcrowding	4
Prospective Council House Tenants	2

SANITARY CONVENIENCES

Water Closets	3
Privies	2

REFUSE STORAGE AND DISPOSAL

Ashpits	4
Ashbins	5
Tips	14

DRAINS

Inspections	12
Smoke and Water Tests	12

SEWERS, ETC.

Sewers	20
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FOOD STORAGE AND PREPARATION

Bakehouses	5
Butchers' Shops	21
Fish Frying Premises	4
Ice Cream Premises	8

MISCELLANEOUS

Accumulations	...	...	...	5
Animals	...	...	...	2
Meetings with Owners and Tradesmen	...	...	...	59
Works in Progress	...	...	...	31
Building Licences	...	...	...	7
Special Visits	...	...	...	10

SECTION F.—PREVALENCE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE

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	
Measles	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Pneumonia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4
Acute Polioencephalitis	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Erysipelas	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION

The following figures are presented through information supplied by the County Medical Officer.

Number of children at 31st December, 1949 who had completed a course of immunisation at any time before that date (i.e. at any time since 1st January, 1935):

Age at 31.12.49	Under 1	1	2	3	4	5-9	10-14	Total under 15	Estimated mid-year child population 1949			
									Under 5	5-14	Total	
i.e. Born in year	1949	48	47	46	45	40-44	35-39					
		3	21	39	22	20	139	142	386	174	290	464

These figures indicate that 60.3% of the child population under five years of age has been immunised against diphtheria as compared with 53% at the end of 1948. 96.9% of the child population of 5-14 years has been immunised against diphtheria as compared with 98.2% at the end of the previous year; while 83.2% of the children under 15 years of age has been protected against diphtheria by immunisation as compared with 81% last year.

TUBERCULOSIS

At the end of 1949, the Tuberculosis Register contained the names of three males and six females, who normally reside in the district.

During the year two new cases were notified, one on account of Pulmonary Tuberculosis and one because of the presence of the disease in parts of the body other than the lungs. During the same period one person left the district.

CAUSES OF DEATH (all ages)

DISEASE	Males	Females	Total
Cancer (all forms)	2	—	2
Intra-cranial vascular lesions	2	2	4
Diseases of the Heart and Arteries	1	6	7
Pneumonia and other			
Respiratory diseases	—	1	1
Diseases of the Digestive system	—	1	1
Nephritis	2	—	2
Congenital conditions at birth	1	—	1
Violence	1	—	1
All other causes	—	2	2