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ANNUAL REPORT


OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

1947.

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TO THE MAYOR, ALDERMEN AND  
COUNCILLORS OF THE BOROUGH  
OF BURY ST. EDMUNDS.

MR. MAYOR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present my 44th Annual Report on the Public Health Services. Circular 13/47 of the Ministry of Health dated 13th March, 1947, enumerates the same subjects of current interest, in particular those which the Minister would wish not to be excluded. These include Tuberculosis (including the allowances scheme), Venereal Diseases (including tracing of contacts and follow up of defaulters), the care of premature infants and the steps taken to combat infestation. The first two subjects are entrusted to the County Council and as far as this circular is concerned we are left only with infant welfare and verminous conditions. The subject of water supplies has been made one of primary importance and the Borough Surveyor, Mr. N. C. Goldsmith, M.B.E., has supplied you with a very comprehensive report. The Maternity and Child Welfare Centre has been enabled to continue its work by Dr. Roger, the County Medical Officer, obtaining the consent of the County Council to Miss Sneezum, who is School Nurse, acting at the weekly sessions. Without this, the Maternity and Child Welfare Service must have suffered from the fact that we have been unable to obtain a Health Visitor since September, 1943. Voluntary helpers include Mesdames Bulling, Higginson, Metcalfe, G. Noble, Parker, Steward, Watterson, Winterton and Miss Napier who have assisted at the regular sessions in rotation. I can only repeat that I am very much indebted to Mr. Eldred, your Sanitary Inspector, who has, during the year under review helped me more than I can say. To the Chairman and Members of the Public Health Committee I would express the same thanks for their continued interest and assistance.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient Servant,

ERNEST STORK,

*Medical Officer of Health.*



VITAL STATISTICS.—The birth rate shows an increase compared with the previous year and is almost identical with that for England and Wales. Still-births show an increase of 4—9 against 5—all of which are illegitimate. One satisfactory feature of the birth rate is that illegitimate births decreased during the year from 61 to 35. Infant Mortality fell from 37 to 28 per thousand births, the rate for England and Wales being 43. Premature birth accounted for only 1 death.

Summarising these figures, the rates for Bury St. Edmunds approximates very closely to that for England and Wales, more closely than in 1945.

LIVE BIRTHS.	Total	Male.	Female.
Legitimate ....	312 (262)	165 (134)	147 (128)
Illegitimate ....	35 (61)	18 (34)	17 (27)
Birth rate per 1,000 of Population	....	....	19.2 (18.12)
“ “ “ “	“	England and Wales	19.1 (16.1)

STILLBIRTHS.—	Total.	Male.	Female.
Legitimate ....	5 (5)	3	2
Illegitimate ....	4 (0)	0	4
Rate per 1,000 of Population	....	....	.49 (.22)
“ “ “ “	“	England and Wales	.53 (.46)
“ “ Total (live and still) births	....	....	25.6 (15.2)

DEATHS.—	Total.	Male.	Female.
	216 (209)	109 (111)	107 (98)
Death rate per 1,000 of Population	....	....	11.9 (11.7)
“ “ “ “	“	England and Wales	11.5 (11.4)

DEATHS FROM PUERPERAL CAUSES.—We have resumed our record of complete absence of death from puerperal causes, which is a matter of great satisfaction for a population of 18,000 people. It is in itself a testimony to the efficiency with which the maternity work is conducted at the West Suffolk General Hospital, St. Mary's Hospital and by the District Nurses, who are responsible for the great majority of births in the town.

## Deaths from Puerperal causes—

Puerperal Sepsis	....	....	....	0	(1 )
Other maternal causes	....	....	....	0	(0 )
Total	....	....	....	0	(1 )
Rate per 1,000 total births	....	....	....	0	(3.04)

Deaths of Infants under 1 year of age—again showed a gratifying decrease compared with the rate for England and Wales, the respective figures being 28 and 43.

## Deaths of Infants under 1 year of age—

	Total.	Male.	Female.
Legitimate	8 (6)	6 (5)	2 (1)
Illegitimate	2 (6)	1 (2)	1 (4)
Rate per 1,000 live births	....	....	28 (37)
“ “ “ England and Wales	....	....	43 (46)

Deaths from Cancer remained fairly constant. There were no deaths from Measles, Whooping Cough and Diarrhoea under 2 years of age. A study of the figures included in the table of notifiable diseases other than Tuberculosis, makes these figures very satisfactory.

Deaths from Cancer	....	....	....	31	( 29)
“ “ Measles (all ages)	....	....	....	0	( 0)
“ “ Whooping Cough	....	....	....	0	( 1)
“ “ Diarrhoea (under 2 years)	....	....	....	0	( 0)

Seven inquests were held and 10 deaths were certified by the Coroner without an inquest.

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION.—Immunisation has been carried on steadily, a special session being held on one day a week. The suggestions of the Ministry of Health as to publicity in this connection have been followed and the Managers of the Cinemas have played an active part in helping towards this end.

During 1946, 208 children under 5 years of age and 66 between the ages of 5 and 15 were immunised, and 171 had a secondary or re-inforcing injection.

SCABIES.—The cleansing station at the Borough Isolation Hospital dealt with 32 adult males, 60 females and 16 children, while the School Clinic treated 145 children.

This service has now been transferred to the County Council which treats all cases on two days a week on condition that all members of the family present themselves for treatment.

## SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

WATER.—The following is the Report of the Borough Water Engineer, Mr. N. C. Goldsmith, M.B.E. :—

“ Water.—Number of Analyses taken during the year. (April, 1946—April, 1947).

Chemical .... 4.                      Bacteriological .... 14.

The results of the bacteriological analyses are found to be consistently good, the supply providing very wholesome drinking water.

Borehole.—A new borehole, 24-ins. diameter, 250-ft. deep, has been driven during the past year, adjoining the site of the present pumping station. It is hoped to install a suitable pump during the current year.

The new borehole yielded 40,000 gallons of water per hour over a 7-day test period, with a quick return to normal rest level on completion of test.

Water Mains.—In connection with Mildenhall Road Housing Estate, some  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles of water main have now been laid.

Sewerage.—Normal sewer flushing has been carried out during the year, and with the completion of the Mildenhall Road Housing Site Advance Preparation, some three miles of soil sewers have been added to the sewerage system.

Refuse Collection.—Refuse Collection and Collection of Salvage are now incorporated.

An order has been placed for an S. & D. Freighter for Refuse Collection, and it is hoped that this will be delivered during the current year.”

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.—All closets are on the water carriage system.

SCHOOLS.—The Elementary Schools are all supplied with water from the public supply, and connected to the public sewerage system.

## INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

MILK.—The inspection of dairies and Cowsheds has been maintained. Three licences to bottle T.T. milk and one for "High Temperature Short Time" pasteurisation were issued.

MEAT AND OTHER FOODS.—Three slaughter houses, under the control of the Ministry of Food remained in use for the slaughter of animals for Bury St. Edmunds and the surrounding districts. 7,967 carcasses were examined.

UN SOUND FOOD.—Food-stuffs found to be unfit for human consumption and diverted to other purposes or destroyed were—

Meat and Offals	....	....	22 tons	10 cwts.	2 qrs.
Miscellaneous Articles	....	2	„	6	„

1,677 tins of meat, fish, milk, vegetables, etc., were destroyed and 607 certificates of condemnation issued.

## INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The table giving the notifications of infectious diseases shows a total of 57 as against 291 in 1945. There were two cases of Pneumonia notified and six deaths certified. For several years past, notification of cases of Pneumonia has often been neglected, or so it would appear. Most of these, perhaps, relate to cases which are notified in the district in which they occur and become transferable.

Only a single case of Diphtheria was notified, a child which had not been immunised, and after a very serious illness, which involved a tracheotomy, fortunately survived.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES (OTHER THAN TUBERCULOSIS).  
CIVILIANS.

Diseases.	Total Cases Notified.	AT AGES—YEARS.								Removed to Hospital.	Deaths.	
		Under	1	3	5	10	15	25	45			65 and over.
		1	3	5	10	15	25	45	65 and over.			
Scarlet Fever ....	17	—	3	—	6	5	1	—	—	13	—	
Whooping Cough ....	16	1	3	7	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Diphtheria ....	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	
Measles ....	9	—	5	2	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	
Enteric Fever ....	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Cerebro-Spinal Fever	6	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Erysipelas ....	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Dysentery ....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Pneumonia....	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	
Puerperal Pyrexia....	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Ophthalmia ....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Neonatorum ....	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	

VACCINATION.—The relaxation of the Regulations, referred to last year, has shown a still greater increase in the number of parents who now seek vaccination for their infants. More infants were vaccinated in 1946 than in any of the last 20 years.

PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS.—Section 176 of the Public Health Act, 1936. The Maternity and Child Welfare Clinic deals with all cases of Ophthalmia Neonatorum. One case was notified during the year.

TUBERCULOSIS.—The total number of notifications of Pulmonary and Non-Pulmonary Tuberculosis was slightly higher, but the deaths decreased from six to four.



## HOME HELP SCHEME.

This Report would be incomplete without some account of the new service established during 1946.

In March a meeting of persons likely to be interested was privately convened at the Guildhall, to hear an address given by the Area Secretary of the National Council for Social Services. There was a good attendance and, before the end, a representative Committee had been elected to work a local "Old People's Welfare Service," all the members of which were already engaged in voluntary public work.

At its first meeting the Committee elected as its Chairman Alderman S. J. M. Sampson, M.C., and also resolved to work through two Sub-Committees:—(1). To explore the possibilities of providing a Residential Hostel for elderly people who could no longer obtain help in their own homes. (2). To run a Home Help Service for elderly people, invalids and mothers either expectant or with newly-born babies.

The first Sub-Committee held a Public Meeting at the Athenaeum which was presided over by the Mayor, and at which Mr. Sampson outlined the financial aspects of his scheme. There was general approval of the project, and the promise of some financial support followed.

Since then consideration has been directed to the two alternatives of either buying or renting premises suitable for adaptation, or purchasing a site upon which to build a planned institution. It will be seen that both these alternatives bristle with difficulties arising from the present housing problem, and it is not surprising that no progress has been made despite constant efforts by the Sub-Committee.

The Home Help Service Sub-Committee has been able to record an immediate and progressive success. The Town Council has placed at its disposal, on one afternoon a week, an office and the services of a clerk. Miss E. M. Leigh, as Honorary Secretary and Treasurer, soon opened a Banking Account with money advanced by certain members of the Sub-Committee. She has on the one hand a register of part-time helpers who are paid 1/6 an hour for their services, and on the other, a record of all people applying for help. These pay the 1/6 and, in addition, a small percentage to cover the costs of insurance and postage which are considerable. The Scheme is in no sense a charitable one, nor does it aim at any profit, but simply pays its way, as an audit of the first year's Accounts shows. It has been of great

benefit to many invalids, and mothers with new-born babies, especially those with older children at school. In the four months, September-December 43 helpers were so employed, including 12 senior girls from the Silver Jubilee School, recommended by Miss Taylor for helping during the Summer holidays; and 77 cases received help for periods varying from a few days to several weeks. This work is increasing and promises to be permanently established.

In recent weeks a third Sub-Committee has been appointed to run an Old People's Club in co-operation with the British Red Cross Society with Dr. Joyce Cockram at its head.

The Club meets on one afternoon a week at Mustow House. All elderly people over 70 are admitted on payment of a penny, which is also the cost of each cup of tea, and each bun consumed. There is a room for card games, usually whist, dominoes or draughts. There is also a piano, kindly lent by Mrs. Hervey Lawrence, and a wireless set which belongs to the Red Cross. But the main enjoyment of these people who fill the Club regularly lies in the fact that, as many of them have said, they are free to do just as they like, without direction or rules of any kind, and that any suggestions they make for improving the Club's amenities are always adopted at once if possible. It is a thoroughly happy institution, and consideration is now being given to setting up a second Club on similar lines at the Western end of the town.

CAUSES OF DEATH DURING THE YEAR 1946  
IN BURY ST. EDMUNDS.

	Registrar-General's Figures.			
	M.		F.	
1. Typhoid and Para-Typhoid Fevers	—	(—)	—	(—)
2. Cerebro-spinal Fever	—	(1)	—	(—)
3. Scarlet Fever	—	(—)	—	(—)
4. Whooping Cough	—	(—)	—	(1)
5. Diphtheria	—	(—)	—	(—)
6. Tuberculosis of Respiratory System	1	(4)	1	(2)
7. Other forms of Tuberculosis	1	(—)	1	(—)
8. Syphilitic Diseases	—	(1)	—	(—)
9. Influenza	2	(—)	—	(1)
10. Measles	—	(—)	—	(—)
11. Acute Poliomyelitis and Polioen- cephalitis	—	(—)	—	(—)
12. Acute Infectious Encephalitis	—	(—)	—	(—)
13. Cancer of Buccal Cavity and Oeso- phagus (M) and Uterus (F)	—	(1)	1	(2)
14. Cancer of Stomach and Duodenum	1	(—)	4	(1)
15. Cancer of Breast	—	(1)	1	(2)
16. Cancer of all other sites	10	(13)	14	(9)
17. Diabetes	2	(—)	—	(1)
18. Intra-cranial Vascular Lesions	11	(10)	17	(11)
19. Heart Disease	38	(38)	39	(33)
20. Other diseases of Circulatory System	4	(2)	3	(6)
21. Bronchitis	5	(7)	4	(4)
22. Pneumonia	4	(9)	2	(4)
23. Other Respiratory Diseases	4	(1)	3	(1)
24. Ulcer of Stomach and Duodenum	5	(2)	—	(—)
25. Diarrhoea (under 2 years)	—	(—)	—	(—)
26. Appendicitis	—	(—)	—	(—)
27. Other digestive diseases...	1	(4)	5	(5)
28. Nephritis	3	(2)	1	(2)
29. Puerperal and Post Abortive Sepsis	—	(—)	—	(1)
30. Other maternal causes	—	(—)	—	(—)
31. Premature Birth	1	(1)	—	(2)
32. Congenital Malformations, birth injury, infantile disease	3	(—)	1	(1)
33. Suicide	—	(2)	1	(—)
34. Road Traffic Accidents	—	(1)	1	(—)
35. Other violent causes	1	(4)	3	(1)
36. All other causes	12	(7)	5	(8)



