BOROUGH OF CHIPPENHAM.

REPORT of the MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH for the year1919.

To the Mayor and members of the Chippenham Corporation

Gentlemen,

I have again the pleasure of presenting my Annual Report.

The War being happily over, I am directed by the Minist ry of Health to revert to a more detailed report in accordance with a plan laid down by them.

The population was estimated previously to be 8008, but is now estimated at 7840.

The number of deaths was 89, the death rate per 1000 - 11.91; the rate for England and Wales 18.8.

Number of births 116; rate per 1000 (based on a population of 7771) 14.91; rate for England & Wales 18.5.

Chippenham is an ancient Country town, and was some years ago the centre and chief market for cheese; this has now disappeared and is replaced with industries dealing with milk.

There are important trades carried on in the town, including:-
A larg e Milk Factory employing 378 hands.
The ancient Cloth factory, the producer of the celebrated cloths, which continues to prosper, and employs 165 hands.
A large iron foundry employing 530 men and boys and a smaller one employing 17 men.
A laundry employing 35 women and girls.
A large milk business employing some 75 men.

Thus it is evident that good housing accommodation is necessary for some 1200 or 1400 people if we hope to keep trade in the Town.

The amount of Poor Law relief is about £2,300.

There is a Cottage Hospital, which is constantly full, also an Isolation Hospital for infectious diseases.

I consider that the Town is prospering. There are amusements for young people. The Cinema is well patronised. There are strong clubs for football, tennis, cricket & bowls.
Part of the Town is built upon Clay and part on the Corn brash & rock. The river Avon runs through the town & in its passage works a large flour mill.

There are 2 or 3 portions of the town, which may be classed as slums. They are constantly under the observation of your Surveyor.

Water. There is an ample supply of potable water, which is obtained from the great colite formation. The filters and aerators for the removal of iron continue to give complete satisfaction.

Rivers & streams. There is practically no pollution of the rivers & streams in the Borough, other than that from factory waste and resulting from the condition of Patterdown Sewage Works. Plans to put the latter into an efficient condition are now before the Ministry of Health.

Drainage & sewerage. When the works enumerated above are carried out, the whole of the sewage, other than factory waste, will be efficiently treated.

Closet accommodation. With the exception of 4 earth closets, the whole of the sanitary arrangements in the old Borough are water closets. The same policy of converting earth closets into efficient water closets is being adopted in the recently added area of t he enlarged Borough.

Scavenging. All parts of the Borough are well scavenged. In the thickly populated parts 3 times a week, and in the outlying districts not less than once a week. The refuse is being used to fill up a derelict canal.

Sanitary Inspection.

Total no. of inspections	139
Informal notices served	47
Statutory notices served	8

All except 2 notices were complied with.

Schools. The sanitary condition and water supply of the Schools in good.

F O O D.

Milk Supply. The milk supply is good. Most of it is imported into the Town and is distributed by retailers from house to house.

In several instances, your Council have arranged that milk be supplied for Mothers & children free or at a reduced price.

Other foods. I have been called in by the Manager of the Wiltshire Bacon Curing Co. on 3 occasions to condemn as unfit for the food of man considerable quantities of foreign bacon.
I have also been called in by butchers on 2 occasions to examine tuberculous meat. I found the same to be unfit for human food & arranged for its destruction.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

There were 6 cases of Diphtheria notified - all were treated in the Isolation Hospital. The cases were as follows:-
2 brothers on Jan. 23rd. and Feb. 1st. The first died.
1 case on Feb 11th. 1 on March 13th. 1 on Sep. 11th.
1 on Sep. 12th.
No connection, except in the first 2 cases, could be discovered.
Diphtheria anti-toxin is used immediately the nature of the case is discovered. A supply is kept at the Isolation Hospital for distribution to Medical men applying for it.

Scarlatina. 22 cases were notified - 21 treated in the Isolation Hospital. The cases were notified as follows:- 1 in January, 2 in February, 2 in June, ~~2~~ 3 in August, 7 in September, 5 in October, 1 in November, 1 in December. One may have been a "return" case.

The universal use that is made of the Isolation Hospital accounts for the disease being kept under control. One or more epidemics might have been started otherwise.

Tuberculosis. Aoo cases notified to your Medical Officer are sent to the County Medical Officer, who deals with them. All are receiving attention by their own medical man and also by the County Medical Officer at the special Consulting rooms appointed and arranged by him. Some cases are sent to special Sanatoriums.

Bacteriological aids to diagnosis are in constant use.
~~All cases~~ 21 cases were notified.

The following were also notified:-
3 cases of Opthalmia Neonatorum; 2 of Malaria; 3 of Pneumonia.
There were some cases of Influenza, but hardly enough to be called an epidemic.

H O U S I N G.

Number of dwelling houses in the Borough	1930
No. of working class houses	1025
No. of houses built or commenced during the year	Nil
Population (estimated)	8000

It is estimated that 150 houses are required to meet the present demand, in addition to a further 120 to replace houses which are unfit for human habitation and others which fall below a reasonable standard.

Your Council have a scheme in hand for building 80 houses on the Ladyfield building estate as an instalment, and it is satisfactory to know that a Contract for 42 houses has been accepted and the work commenced.

FITNESS OF HOUSES AND UNHEALTHY AREAS.

The whole of the Borough was inspected under the Housing and Town Planning Act, 1919, when 71 houses were sheduled as unfit and unable to be made fit for human habitation. The number of occupants of these houses was 428.

There were also 81 houses found seriously defective, but able to be made habitable.

The chief defects were insufficient ventilation, pantry accommodation, dampness of walls.

In most of the properties, it was found that the closet accommodation and drainage arrangements were generally satisfactory.

This inspection occupied the time of your officers that usually has been devoted to the inspections under the Housing & Town Planning Act, 1909, and the Public Health Act.

The Council propose, as other houses become available, to close the houses which are not considered fit for human habitation.

Bye-laws as to houses, Common lodging houses etc.

The registered Common Lodging houses have been periodically inspected.

During the last few years, the number of itinerant lodgers has been small, but the number is now increasing.

The Council propose to consider at a suitable opportunity the preparation of new building bye-laws for the approval of the Ministry of Health.

CAUSES OF DEATH.

	Males	Females
All causes	45	44
Diphtheria & croup	1	
Influenza	2	
Pulmonary tuberculosis	2	2
Other tuberculous diseases	1	
Cancer, malignant disease	3	11
Rheumatic fever		1
Organic heart disease	6	5
Bronchitis	4	2
Pneumonia (all forms)	2	2
Other respiratory diseases	1	
Diarrhoea etc. (under 2 years)		1
Nephritis & Bright's disease	1	1
Congenital debility etc.	5	
Violence, apart from suicide	1	
Suicide	1	
Other defined diseases	19	19
Deaths of infants under 1 year of age	5	1

ISOLATION HOSPITAL.

During the past year 59 cases have been admitted into the Isolation Hospital. Owing to the War, some necessary repairs and additions had to stand over. The Committee are now furtunate in having been able to get tradesmen to carry out part of the work.

The advance of medical knowledge & science demand a more detailed treatment of patients if we are to get the full advantage of hospital treatment. Hence t o prevent what are called "Return" and "Carrier" cases, observation and convalescent wards are needed. The Hospital is in more general use than was anticipated when it was built. More nurses are required than sleeping accommodation was provided for. Hence the need for more bedrooms now. A bathroom for officers' use is required. The telephone should also be installed. The whole building requires painting and distempering.

During the year 60 cases of zymotic diseases were notified from the Urban and Rural districts (Diphtheria, Scarlet fever Enteric fever). 59 of them were admitt ed to the Hospital. This shows the extensive use made of the Hospital. Mild cases, if they remain at home, spread the disease.

The Hospital is managed by a Joint Committee of the County Council, and the Urban and Rural District Councils.

Miss B. Matthews has been appointed Matron. She is a qualified Nurse and has had extensive experience in Fever Wards.

I have the honour to remain, Gentlemen,
Your obedient Servant,

William Thos. Briscoe,
B.A. M.D.

Medical Officer of Health.