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1948.

ANNUAL REPORT
ON THE HEALTH
OF THE
COWES URBAN DISTRICT

BY

JOHN MILLS,

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Medical Officer of Health.

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COUNTY HALL,
NEWPORT, I.W.

September, 1949.

To the Members of the Cowes Urban District Council :—

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to submit the Annual Report on the health of the District for the year 1948.

The birth rate (16.8 per 1000) and the death rate (12.9 per 1000) were less than for 1947, and the infantile mortality rate decreased from 53.3 per 1000 to 14.5, a great improvement.

The number of notifications of infectious disease has increased from 84 to 131, largely due to an outbreak of Measles and Whooping Cough. There was 1 case of Diphtheria.

Houses still continue to be a desperate need, much illhealth and unhappiness being due to some of the dark, damp, overcrowded dwellings in the district.

I am, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

JOHN MILLS,

Medical Officer of Health.

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS, 1948.

Medical Officer of Health :—

JOHN MILLS, M.D., Ch.B., M.R.C.S. (Eng.), L.R.C.P.
(Lond.), D.P.H.

Sanitary Inspector :—

J. W. BROMLEY, M.R.S.I., M.S.I.A.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area in acres	5542
No. of inhabited houses (end of 1948) per rate books	5092
Rateable value	£108,564
Sum represented by a penny rate	£447

SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

These are unchanged since the last report.

EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS.

Population (Registrar General's Figures)	16,350
Live birth rate per 1000 of the estimated resident population	16.8
Still birth rate per 1000 total (live and still) births ...	38.5
Death rate per 1000 of the estimated resident population	14.5
Puerperal death rate per 1000 total (live and still) births	Nil

Infantile Mortality :—

All infants per 1000 live births	14.5
Legitimate infants per 1000 legitimate births ...	15.3
Illegitimate infants per 1000 illegitimate births ...	Nil
Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	27
Deaths from Measles (all ages)	Nil
Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages)	Nil
Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age) ...	Nil

BIRTHS.

The total number of live births was 275, giving a live birth rate per 1000 living of 16.8, the corresponding rate for England and Wales being 17.9.

DEATHS.

The number of deaths was 211 giving a death rate of 12.9 per 1000 of the estimated resident population. The corresponding rate for England and Wales was 10.8.

INFANTILE MORTALITY.

The Infantile Mortality rate was 14.5 per 1000 registered live births, the rate for England and Wales being 34.0.

The 14.5 constitutes an excellent improvement over the 53.3 per 1000 recorded last year.

DIPHTHERIA.

Far too many parents are failing to have their babies immunized against this most deadly and crippling disease.

Only 36.9 per cent. of children under five are protected and though 68.0 per cent. of children of school age have been immunised, this figure is still too low.

INFANTILE PARALYSIS.

No cases.

WATER SUPPLY.

In West Cowes water is supplied from a deep well and from land drained water passing into large open reservoirs. It also has a supply from Newport.

Bacteriological examination of the water in the open reservoirs showed varying degrees of pollution with Coli-Aerogenes organisms of both surface soil and faecal type. After filtration through pressure sand filters followed by chlorination, no evidence of harmful pollution was found.

The raw water from the Broadfields Pumping Station on two occasions showed slight pollution with Coli-Aerogenes bacteria of the surface soil type, but tests after chlorination showed no evidence of harmful pollution.

Examinations made of the West Cowes main supply and chlorinated water from the filter house, were satisfactory, bacteriologically.

The water supply to East Cowes is from both a deep well and from the Newport supply. The supply from the deep well is too hard and too saline and should be abandoned at the earliest opportunity. Quarterly examination of the raw and treated water revealed no evidence of harmful pollution.

The number of samples examined was 23.

5,400 dwelling houses, with an estimated population of 15,820, are supplied with water from the water mains, and 50 dwelling houses with approximately 300 population are supplied by means of stand-pipes.

ICE CREAM.

Close supervision of manufacturers and retailers of ice cream was maintained and the products controlled by frequent analyses. Any samples of ice cream which failed the test were closely investigated and the cause found and remedied.

SWIMMING POOLS.

Swimming Pool water was subjected to regular analysis and was found to be satisfactory.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

There were no new works of sewerage or sewage disposal during the year.

HOUSING.

The housing problem is still acute and is the cause of much physical as well as mental ill-health. Bad housing is a great social blot which will undermine all the other efforts to provide a healthy contented people.

Excellent airy schools are of greatly reduced value if the children have to return to overcrowded homes, where their

feeling of security is constantly threatened by the domestic upheavals consequent upon many families sharing the one roof, and in some cases the one room. Overcrowding is the most important single adverse social factor affecting the welfare of the children.

If tuberculosis is present in a family living under overcrowded conditions, the chance of its wide dissemination is great.

It has been wisely said that the problem of tuberculosis is as much a problem of the one and two-roomed house (or home) as a problem of medical care. Sir J. B. Russell in 1888, said :—

“Imagine yourselves with all your appetites and passions, your bodily necessities and functions, your feelings of modesty, your sense of propriety, your births, your sickness, your deaths, your children—in short your **lives** in the whole round of their relationship with the seen and the unseen suddenly shrivelled and shrunk into such conditions of space.”

These conditions even in this year 1948 are not just imaginings, but are actualities.

FOOD HYGIENE.

Low standards of hygiene in the handling of food are reflected in the increasing numbers of cases of food poisoning.

The number of cases brought to the notice of the Medical Officer of Health is only a very small fraction of the true figure. The individual afflicted with a short sharp attack of diarrhoea or vomiting, or both, usually does not bother his doctor and seeks his remedy from the chemist directly.

Efforts are continually being made by the staff of the Health Department to make food handlers acutely aware of the grave responsibility that lies in their hands.

Unfortunately the war has given certain food shops an excuse for careless hygiene which has passed on easily into the peace. There is now no difficulty in obtaining wrapping papers and no bread should be handed to the purchaser in an unwrapped state.

Flies can be controlled in fish shops. It has been my experience that the large fish shops offend more in this respect than the small. The health officers are endeavouring to educate the offenders.

In certain public-houses the standard of cleanliness of glassware is very low, and efforts are also being made in this direction to enforce a decent standard of hygiene where none exists.

FACTORIES ACT, 1937.

Particulars of the administration of the Factories Act, 1937, Parts I and VIII administered by the Council.

PART I OF THE ACT.

1.—INSPECTIONS for purposes of provisions as to health (including inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors).

Premises	Number on Register	Number of		
		Inspections	Written notices	Occupiers prosecuted
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	48	26	—	—
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority ...	25	10	—	—
(iii) Other Premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out-workers' premises)	19	14	—	—
Total ...	92	50	—	—

2.—CASES IN WHICH DEFECTS WERE FOUND.

(If defects are discovered at the premises on two, three or more separate occasions they are reckoned as two, three or more "cases.")

Particulars	Number of cases in which defects were found				Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted
	Found	Remedied	Referred		
			To H.M. Inspector	By H.M. Inspector	
Want of cleanliness (S.1)		5	—	—	—
Overcrowding (S.2) ...	—	—	—	—	—
Unreasonable temperature (S.3)	—	—	—	—	—
Inadequate ventilation (S.4)	1	1	—	—	—
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6)	—	—	—	—	—
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)					
(a) insufficient... ..	2	2	—	1	—
(b) Unsuitable or defective	—	—	—	—	—
(c) not separate for sexes	1	1	—	—	—
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Outwork)	—	—	—	—	—
Total ...	9	9	—	1	—

PART VIII OF THE ACT.

OUTWORK. (Sections 110 and 111.)

Nature of Work	Section 110			Section 111		
	No. of out-workers in August list required by Sect 110 (1) (c)	No. of cases of default in sending lists to the Council	No. of prosecutions for failure to supply lists	No. of instances of work in unwholesome premises	Notices served	Prosecutions
Wearing apparel } Making, etc.	—	—	—	—	—	—
} Cleaning and washing	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lampshades	98	—	—	—	—	—
Other classes of work	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total ...	98	—	—	—	—	—

HOUSING.

Two hundred and thirty two houses were inspected under the Public Health and Housing Acts, 1936, and as a result various defects were found in all the houses.

Two hundred and eighteen dwelling houses have been put into a fit state by informal notices under the Public Health and Housing Acts, 1936, leaving fourteen houses where repairs had not been completed.

Seven Statutory Notices under the Public Health and Housing Acts, 1936, were served during the year and these were all complied with in the time stated.

Three Statutory Notices were served under Section 11 of the Housing Act, 1936, requiring 3 houses to be demolished. One of these has been demolished and the other two will be demolished when tenants vacate the houses.

405 visits have been paid as a routine inspection of all Council Houses and Council Owned property.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

All animals are slaughtered at Government controlled Slaughter Houses in Newport or Wroxall.

When carcasses and offal arrive at Allocation Centre, weekly inspection is again carried out before being passed on to local butchers.

UNSOUND FOOD.

The following table shows the amount of unsound food dealt with during the year : -

					lbs.
Beef Trimmings Imp.	...	...	...	...	264
Topside	...	...	...	...	122
Bacon	...	...	...	...	67

					lbs.
Butter	...	...	...	...	56
Semolina	...	...	...	..	224
Soya Flour	...	...	...	...	90
Pea Flour	...	...	...	...	112
Ground Rice	...	...	...	...	30
Tea	...	...	...	...	2 $\frac{1}{4}$
Rolled Oats	...	...	...	...	90
Whale Meat Sausages	...	...	...	...	9 $\frac{1}{2}$
Dates	...	...	...	...	20
Xmas Puddings	...	...	...	...	21
Kippers	...	...	...	...	280
Smoked Fish	...	...	...	...	50
Bloaters	...	...	...	...	136
Fresh Fish	...	...	...	...	220
Corned Beef	...	...	...	...	288
				Total	2081

In addition, 869 tins containing fish, fruit, vegetables, milk, etc., weighing 1102 lbs. were found to be unsound and unfit for human consumption.

All the above were disposed of in accordance with instructions from the Ministry of Food.

PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES.

There were 131 notifications of infectious diseases, 15 being of Scarlet Fever and 44 of Measles. There was one case of Diphtheria. Immunisation against this disease commenced in 1939 and although only 36.9 per cent. of the children under five are immunised the percentage among children of school age is 68.0.

Non-notifiable Infectious Diseases among school children.

Mumps	...	...	...	71
Chicken Pox	...	...	...	25
Ringworm	...	...	...	—
Scabies	...	...	...	—
German Measles	...	...	...	8
				—
				104
				—

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES DURING THE YEAR.

Disease.	Total Cases Notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital.	Total Deaths.
Dysentery ...	—	—	—
Cerebro Spinal Fever...	—	—	—
Smallpox ...	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever ...	15	7	—
Diphtheria ...	1	1	—
Enteric Fever (includ- ing Paratyphoid) ...	—	—	—
Puerperal Pyrexia ...	1	—	—
Pneumonia ...	1	—	—
Erysipelas ...	1	—	—
Encephalitis			—
Lethargica ...	—	—	—
Poliomyelitis ...	—	—	—
Ophthalmia			
Neonatorum ...	—	—	—
Measles ...	44	—	—
Whooping Cough ...	68	—	—
Totals ...	131	8	—

NOTE—Figures for non-civilians are not included.

AGE AT DATE OF NOTIFICATION.

Age.	Scarlet Fever	Diphtheria	Enteric Fever	Puerperal Pyrexia	Pneumonia	Erysipelas	Whooping Cough	Measles	Cerebro Spinal Fever	Ophthalmia Neonatorum	Acute Poliomyelitis	Encephalitis Lethargica
Under 1	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	3	—	—	—	—
1 and under 2	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	1	—	—	—	—
2 „ 3	1	—	—	—	—	—	7	3	—	—	—	—
3 „ 4	1	—	—	—	—	—	10	8	—	—	—	—
4 „ 5	2	—	—	—	—	—	15	8	—	—	—	—
5 „ 10	11	1	—	—	—	—	23	20	—	—	—	—
10 „ 15	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—
15 „ 20	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
20 „ 35	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
35 „ 45	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
45 „ 65	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
65 and over	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	15	1	—	1	1	1	68	44	—	—	—	—

TUBERCULOSIS.

AGE PERIODS.	Totals.	New Cases.				Totals.	Deaths.			
		Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary			Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
		M	F	M	F		M	F	M	F
0 and under 1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1 " " 5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5 " " 10	6	—	—	3	3	—	—	—	—	—
10 " " 15	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
15 " " 20	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
20 " " 25	3	—	3	—	—	1	—	1	—	—
25 " " 35	—	—	—	—	—	2	1	1	—	—
35 " " 45	2	2	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	—
45 " " 55	4	3	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
55 " " 65	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—
65 and upwards	3	2	1	—	—	2	1	1	—	—
Total ...*	18	7	5	3	3	‡7	3	4	—	—

*Included in this total are two transfers from the mainland and one case in which the death return gave the first information.

‡Includes one case who died from another disease.