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**HARPENDEN
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

AND

SENIOR SANITARY INSPECTOR

For the Year 1948

JAMES C. SLEIGH, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.,
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

ST. ALBANS

PRINTED BY H. A. RICHARDSON LTD., 5 HIGH STREET.

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HARPENDEN URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.
1948-49.

Chairman: Mr. R. G. TAYLOR, J.P.

**Vice-Chairman*: Mrs. H. RABAN.

*Mr. E. ACKROYD.

*Miss E. C. BUSBY, J.P.

Mr. C. J. CAMPION.

‡Mr. A. CLARK.

Mr. L. S. COLLINGRIDGE

Mr. L. W. EDGELL.

*Mr. F. N. GINGELL, M.B.E., J.P.

*Mr. H. H. JONES.

*Mr. C. J. PINNEY.

*Mr. C. F. PUTTERILL, C.C.

Mr. D. E. SANDERS.

Mr. H. C. WILLIAMSON.

*Mr. W. P. WOOD.

‡Denotes Chairman of the Public Health Committee.

*Denotes Member of the Public Health Committee.

The Chairman of the Council is *ex:officio* member of all Committees.

**PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT STAFF.
1948**

Medical Officer of Health.

JAMES C. SLEIGH, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.

Senior Sanitary Inspector and Housing Manager.

ERIC R. R. MENGHAM, C.S.I.B., M.R.S.I., M.S.I.A.,
Certified Meat and other Foods Inspector.

**Additional Sanitary Inspector and
Assistant Housing Manager.**

K. G. COOPER, C.S.I.B., A.R.S.I., M.S.I.A.,
Certified Meat and other Foods Inspector.

Pupil Sanitary Inspector and Clerk.

JOHN S. GEE, A.R.I.P.H.H.

URBAN DISTRICT OF HARPENDEN.

*To the Chairman and Members of the
Harpenden Urban District Council.*

Mr. Chairman, Mesdames and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present my report on the Health of Harpenden for the Year 1948.

I took up duty as your Medical Officer of Health on 1st September, 1948, and I feel it would be unwise to make any detailed comments on the Public Health of the area during that short time.

As everywhere the greatest Public Health need remains the provision of suitable housing for the people. A solution of this problem will do more to improve the health of the population than any other measure which can be foreseen in the immediate future.

The vital statistics are, however, extremely pleasing. An Infant Mortality rate of 11.7 per thousand live births is extremely low, but one must remember that in dealing with comparatively small figures this rate is apt to fluctuate markedly from year to year.

The condition of the River Lea has given rise to very serious problems and has been a matter for consideration by the courts. At the same time it is a very difficult problem indeed for a large town to produce an effluent of sufficient purity to form possibly 90 per cent. of the flow of the river. That means that the river does not dilute the sewage effluent to any practicable extent whereas in most areas a sewage effluent only forms a very small portion of the total flow of the river.

I wish to record my sincere thanks for the co-operation I have had from the Council and my brother officers during the year.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient servant,

J. C. SLEIGH,

Harpenden.

Medical Officer of Health.

SECTION A.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

Area (in acres)	3,157
Registrar General's estimate of resident population ...	14,160
Number of inhabited houses on the Rate Books:—	
Dwellinghouses	4,074
Shops with living accommodation	79
Licensed Premises with living accommodation ...	24
Rateable Value	£135,947
Sum represented by a penny rate	£535

Extracts from Vital Statistics.

	Males	Females	Total
Live Births—Legitimate	117	133	250
Illegitimate	3	4	7
Birth Rate per 1,000 of the estimated population			18·1
Stillbirths	2	3	5
Deaths	66	66	132
Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population			9·3

Deaths from Puerperal Causes.

	Deaths	Rate per 1,000 (total live and stillbirths)
Puerperal Sepsis	—	—
Other Maternal Causes	—	—
Total	—	—

Deaths of Infants under 1 Year.

	Males	Females	Total
Legitimate	2	1	3
Illegitimate	—	—	—
Death Rate of Infants under 1 year of age. All Infants per 1,000 live births			11·7

Births.

The number of births during 1948 was 257.

Deaths.

There were 132 Deaths.

Causes of Death.

ALL CAUSES				M. 66	F. 66
1	Typhoid Fever, etc.	...	...	...	...
2	Cerebro-spinal Fever	...	...	...	...
3	Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	...
4	Whooping Cough...	...	...	...	...
5	Diphtheria	...	...	...	...
6	Respiratory Tuberculosis	...	...	4	1
7	Other forms of Tuberculosis	...	...	...	...
8	Syphilitic Diseases	...	...	1	...
9	Influenza	...	...	...	...
10	Measles	...	...	...	...
11	Ac. polio-myel : and polio-enceph :	...	...	...	...
12	Ac. inf : enceph.	...	...	...	...
13	Cancer of buc : cav : and oesoph ; (M) uterus (F)	...	...	...	1
14	Cancer of stomach and duodenum	...	...	3	2
15	Cancer of breast	...	...	...	2
16	Cancer of all other sites	...	...	7	7
17	Diabetes	...	...	1	1
18	Intracranial vascular lesions	...	...	10	16
19	Heart diseases	...	...	15	17
20	Other diseases of circ. system	...	...	6	3
21	Bronchitis	...	...	4	1
22	Pneumonia	...	...	1	1
23	Other respiratory diseases	...	...	3	...
24	Ulcer of stomach or duodenum	...	...	1	...
25	Diarrhoea under 2 years	...	...	...	...
26	Appendicitis	...	...	...	...
27	Other digestive diseases	...	...	2	3
28	Nephritis	...	...	...	2
29	Puer : and post-abortion : sepsis	...	...	...	...
30	Other maternal causes	...	...	...	...
31	Premature birth	...	...	1	...
32	Con : mal : birth inj : infant : diseases	...	...	1	...
33	Suicide	...	...	1	...
34	Road traffic accidents	...	...	1	...
35	Other violent causes	...	...	...	2
35	All other causes	...	...	4	7

Birth Rates. Civilian Death Rates, Analysis of Mortality, Maternal Mortality and Case Rates for certain Infectious Diseases in the Year 1948. Provisional figures based on Quarterly Returns.

	England and Wales.	126 C.B's and Great Towns including London, 1931 Census.	148 Smaller Towns (Resident Pop. 25,000-50,000 at 1931 Census.	London Admin. County.
Rates per 1,000 Civilian Population.				
Births.				
Live Births	.. 17.9 (a)	20.0	19.2	20.1
Still Births	... 0.42 (a)	0.52	0.43	0.39
Deaths.				
All Causes	... 10.8 (a)	11.6	10.7	11.6
Typhoid & Paratyphoid	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00 (c)
Whooping Cough	... 0.02	0.02	0.02	0.01
Diphtheria	... 0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01
Tuberculosis	... 0.51	0.59	0.46	0.63
Influenza	... 0.03	0.03	0.04	0.02
Smallpox	... —	—	—	—
Acute Poliomyelitis & Polioencephalitis	.. 0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00
Pneumonia	... 0.41	0.38	0.36	0.54
Notifications (corrected).				
Typhoid Fever	... 0.01	0.00	0.01	0.00
Paratyphoid Fever	... 0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Cerebro-spinal Fever	... 0.03	0.03	0.02	0.03
Scarlet Fever	... 1.73	1.90	1.82	1.37
Whooping Cough	... 3.42	3.51	3.31	3.13
Diphtheria	... 0.08	0.10	0.09	0.10
Erysipelas	... 0.21	0.23	0.21	0.22
Smallpox	... —	—	—	—
Measles	... 9.34	9.75	8.84	9.17
Pneumonia	... 0.73	0.84	0.60	0.57
Acute Poliomyelitis	... 0.04	0.05	0.04	0.04
Acute Polioencephalitis	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rates per 1,000 Live Births.				
Deaths.				
All causes under 1 year of age	... 34 (b)	39	32	31
Enteritis and Diarrhoea under 2 years of age	3.3	4.5	2.1	2.4
Rate per 1,000 Total (Live and Still) Births).				
Notifications (corrected).				
Puerperal Fever and Pyrexia	... 6.89	8.90	4.71	7.34 (c)

Maternal Mortality in England and Wales.

	Rates per 1,000 Total (Live and Still) Births.	Rates per million women aged 15—44.
140 Abortion with Sepsis ...	0·11	9
141 Abortion without Sepsis ...	0·05	4
147 Puerperal infections ...	0·13	
142-146, 148-150 other Maternal causes ...	0·73	

(a) Rates per 1,000 total population.

(b) Per 1,000 related births.

(c) In London, Puerperal Fever alone was 0·61.

SECTION B.

GENERAL PROVISIONS OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.

Welfare Centres and Clinics.

Place	Address of Centre and Telephone No.	A.M. or P.M.	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Spicket Wood	The Social Club, Oak Avenue.	a.m.		Infant Welfare (2nd & 4th, Dr. attends 2nd) 2-4				
" "	Nurse's Cottage, Mount Pleasant Lane (Garston 2183).	p.m.						
Minor Ailments treated between 8.30 and 9 a.m.								
Cofney Heath	The Pavilion.	a.m.						
		p.m.		Infant Welfare (alternate weeks) 2.30-4				
" "				Minor Ailments—children treated in own homes or at local school.				

WELFARE CENTRES AND CLINICS—continued.

Place	Address of Centre and Telephone No.	A.M. or P.M.	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Harpenden	Memorial Hospital (Harpenden 3696)	a.m.	Minor Ailment 9-10	Ophthalmic (1st & 3rd) 9.30-12	Minor Ailment 9.30-12 (Dr. attends)	Dental 9-30-12-30	Minor Ailment, 9-10	Dental (1st & 3rd) 9.30-12. Orthopædic (once monthly Surgeon attends).
		p.m.	Ante-Natal 2-4	Dental (2nd, 4th & 5th) 2-5	Infant Welfare 1.45-4.30	Dental 2-5	Speech Therapy 2-5	
	National Children's Home.	a.m.	Dental 9.30-12					
		p.m.						
London Colney	Primary School, King's Head Lane.	a.m.	Minor Ailment 9.30-10.30	Minor Ailment 9.30-10.30	Minor Ailment 9.30-10.30	Minor Ailment 9.30-10.30	Minor Ailment 9.30-12 Dr. attends alternate wks.	
		p.m.		Infant Welfare (1st & 3rd) 1.45-4.30				

WELFARE CENTRES AND CLINICS—continued.

Place	Address of Centre and Telephone No.	A.M. or P.M.	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Redbourn	Congregational Hall	a.m.						
"	18 Bettespoi Meadows (Nurse's residence, Redbourn 251)	p.m.		Infant Welfare (1st & 3rd) 2.30-4.30				
			Minor Ailments treated 8.15—8.30 and 6.15—6.45.					
St. Albans	The Village Hall, Park Street.	a.m.						
"	St. Luke's Hall, Camp Road.	a.m.						
"		p.m.	Infant Welfare (2nd & 4th) 1.30-4					
"		p.m.					Infant Weighing (2nd & 4th) 2.0-4	

WELFARE CENTRES AND CLINICS—continued.

Place	Address of Centre and Telephone No.	A.M. or P.M.	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
St. Albans (continued)	Wellington Court, Bricket Road (St. Albans 4926),	a.m.	Minor Ailment 9-12 Doctor attends 9.30 Dental 9.30-12.30 Speech 9.30-12.30	Dental 9.30-12.30 Orthoptic 10.0-12.30 Ophthalmic 10.0-12	Minor Ailment 9.0-10 Dental 9.30-12.30 Ante-Natal 2.30-11.30	Minor Ailment 9.0-10 Dental 9.30-12.30	Orthoptic 10.0-12.30 Dental 9.30-12.30 Ophthalmic 10.0-12 (2nd, 4th & 5th weeks)	Dental 9.30-12
"	Bricket House, Bricket Road (St. Albans 5431).	p.m.	Speech 1.30-4.30 Dental 2.0-5 Immunisation (1st & 3rd) 1.30-3.30	Dental 2.0-5 Infant Welfare. No Doctor. Foods Issued 1.30-4 Ophthalmic 1.30-3.30 (1st, 3rd & 5th week)	Infant Welfare. No Foods Issued. 1.30-4	Dental 2.0-5 Orthoptic 2.0-4.30	Infant Welfare 1.30-4 Orthoptic 2.0-4.30	
"		a.m.	Orthopaedic		Orthopaedic		Orthopaedic	
"		p.m.	Orthopaedic		Orthopaedic (Surgeon attends 3rd)		Orthopaedic (Surgeon attends 2nd)	

WELFARE CENTRES AND CLINICS—continued.

Place	Address of Centre and Telephone No.	A.M. or P.M.	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
St. Albans (continued)	Osterhills Hospital, Normandy Road (St. Albans 2211)	a.m.		V.D. (women) 10.0-12	Post-Natal 11.0			
"		p.m.		V.D. (women) 5.0-7	V.D. (men) 2.0-4		V.D. (women) 2-4 Men 5-7	
"	Chest Clinic, Osterhills Hospital.	a.m.		Children 10.30				
"		p.m.		Adults 2				
"	The Clinic, Hill End (St. Albans 5555).	a.m.	Child Guidance	Child Guidance	Child Guidance	Child Guidance	Child Guidance	
"	Fifield House, Manor Road, Lemsford Road (St. Albans 266).	p.m.	Child Guidance	Child Guidance	Child Guidance	Child Guidance	Child Guidance	
"	St. Albans & Mid Herts Hospital, Verulam Road.	a.m.				Child Guidance		
"		p.m.						

Ophthalmic cases referred to Doctor at his surgery between 9 and 10 a.m. or 6 and 7 p.m., except Tuesday evenings and alternate Saturday evenings. (Cases which cannot be received at his consulting rooms to be seen at Wellington Court Ophthalmic Clinic.)

WELFARE CENTRES AND CLINICS—continued.

Place	Address of Centre and Telephone No.	A.M. or P.M.	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Sandridge	The Parish Hall, Sandridge.	a.m.						
		p.m.		Infant Weighing (alt. weeks) 2.30-3.30				
	2 Reynold's Crescent, (Nurse's residence) Sandridge.		Minor Ailments treated 4—5 p.m. or in children's own homes, if necessary.					
Shenley			Minor Ailments treated at school. Nurse's address—"Elsyna," Main Road, London Colney. (Telephone—London Colney 3189).					
Wheatthampstead	Inez Cottage, Luton Road (Nurse's Residence) Wheatthampstead 3123		Minor Ailments treated 8.30—9 a.m.					
		a.m.						
	Mead Hall, East Lane	p.m.					Talks to Mothers (1st week) 3 Infant Welfare (2nd & 4th week) 2.30-4 Dr. attends 3 Ante-Natal (4th wk.) combined with above	
	The Senior School.	a.m.					Dental (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th week). 9.30-12.30	

Ambulance Service.

I am indebted to Divisional Officer R. Hughes for the following information.

The County Council assumed authority for the Ambulance Service on the 5th July, 1948, and it will be known that the Service is now operated jointly with the Fire Brigade, the Ambulance and personnel being accommodated at the Fire Station.

Personnel.

The establishment has been raised to five professional Ambulance Men and this provides an ambulance manned by two men between the hours of 7 a.m. until 11 p.m. Ambulance cover during the night-time is provided by a 'key' ambulance sited at St. Albans, though the number of calls received at night has been extremely small.

The men work a 44-hour week, this being the agreed hours of duty under the Award of the appropriate Joint Industrial Council. All men are required to qualify for the Certificate of the St. John Ambulance Association, and receive training in emergency maternity work.

Uniform and Equipment.

The men are provided with two sets of battledress, caps, overcoats, white coats, and shoes. The Ambulance equipment has been augmented to an agreed standard, which includes resuscitation apparatus and an emergency maternity pack. An adequate reserve of equipment is held at the Station.

Infectious Cases.

The County Council maintains infectious diseases ambulances at various Isolation Hospitals, including the Sisters' Hospital, St. Albans, but emergency isolation cases are carried in the general ambulance when no isolation ambulance is available. After dealing with such cases the ambulance is disinfected, together with all equipment; and where necessary the clothes of the personnel are also dealt with. Smallpox cases are not carried by general ambulances.

Calls.

Appended is a schedule giving brief details of the calls handled by the Harpenden Ambulance from the 5th July, 1948, to the 21st May, 1949. Taking the County as a whole, calls have increased by roughly 400 per cent. since the Appointed Day:—

Accidents	...	...	45
Sudden Illness	...	...	18
Removals	...	...	586
Maternity	...	...	16
			615

Hospitals.

I am indebted to F. Stanford, Esq., Secretary, Mid Herts Group Hospital Management Committee for the following information:—

The Ministry of Health under the National Health Service Act, 1946, took over from the 5th July, 1948, the Osterhills Hospital, Normandy Road; Sisters' Hospital, Folly Avenue; St. Albans and Mid Herts Hospital, Church Crescent, and the Bricket House Nursing Home, Bricket Road.

The administration of these hospitals was delegated to the Mid Herts Group Hospital Management Committee, and the members of this Committee were appointed by the North Metropolitan Regional Hospital Board.

The accommodation at these hospitals as at present constituted is as follows:—

Patients' Beds. Type of Bed.	Osterhills Hospital	Sisters' Hospital.	St. Albans & Mid Herts Hospital	Bricket House	Hill End Hospital
General ...	54	...	95	10	365
Chronic Sick ...	65	...	15	...	...
Fever ...	...	94	...	...	...
Sick ...	25	...	...	...	...
Tuberculosis ...	6	...	...	...	10
Mental ...	...	...	...	...	* ( 139 204
Maternity ...	44	...	...	5	...
Others ...	6	...	...	...	66
TOTALS ...	200	94	110	15	* (139 645

In addition to these beds, accommodation is also provided for 179 aged and infirm persons for and on behalf of the Hertfordshire County Council.

*Unstaffed Beds.

Nursing in the Home.

The District Nursing Sisters are available for all cases of domiciliary nursing which includes Midwifery and General Nursing and in all cases where a request is made personally or at the request of the Doctor in attendance.

SECTION C.**SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.****Water.**

The Public Water Supply is provided by the Harpenden Water Company from boreholes at Shakespeare Road and East Hyde and both quality and quantity were satisfactory during the year.

Drainage.

The total quantity of sewage treated at the Sewage Works was 204,560, 120 gallons, compared with 210,984,821 gallons in 1947.

The rainfall was 26.38 inches compared with 19.53 inches in 1947.

Public Baths.

There are no public baths in the Urban District.

REPORT OF THE SENIOR SANITARY INSPECTOR.**Summary of Inspections.****General Sanitation.**

Bakehouses	...	...	...	9
Drainage	...	...	...	106
Factories	...	...	...	85
Mosquito Control	...	...	...	7
Nuisances	...	...	...	12
Petroleum premises	...	...	...	1
Refuse Collection and Disposal	...	...	...	27
River pollution	...	...	...	15
Rodent Control	...	...	...	37
Samples of Sewage Works effluent, river water and sludge	...	...	...	8
Shops Acts	...	...	...	3
Smoke observations	...	...	...	3
Stables and piggeries	...	...	...	4
Tents, vans and sheds	...	...	...	61
Water supply	...	...	...	27
Miscellaneous sanitary visits	...	...	...	59

Housing.*Under Public Health Acts—*

Number of houses inspected	...	...	39
Additional visits paid to above houses	...	...	116

Under Housing Acts—

Number of houses inspected	...	...	11
Additional visits paid to above houses	...	...	64

Verminous Premises—

Number of houses inspected	...	...	18
Houses disinfested	...	...	16
Additional visits paid to above houses	...	...	25

Miscellaneous house inspections	7
---------------------------------	-----	-----	---

Infectious Diseases.

Inquiries in cases of Infectious Disease	...	...	23
Visits <i>re</i> disinfection	...	...	12
Miscellaneous visits	...	...	8

Meat and other Foods.*Inspection of Food.*

Visits to shops and stalls	65
----------------------------	-----	-----	----

General Inspections

Butchers	} as shown above	...	...	65
Fishmongers				
Grocers				
Cowsheds	...	...	...	36
Dairies and Milkshops	...	...	...	95
Ice Cream premises, handcarts and vehicles	...	...	...	53
Restaurants	...	...	...	46
Watercress growers	...	...	...	12

Sampling and visits in connection therewith—

Milk—Bacteriological	..	...	...	197
Milk—tubercle bacilli	...	...	...	3
Milk churn and bottle rinses	...	...	...	16
Ice cream	...	...	...	27
Water—Chemical	...	...	...	2
Water—Bacteriological	...	...	...	4
Watercress and spring water	...	...	...	14
Miscellaneous food visits	...	...	...	75

GENERAL SANITATION**Drainage.**

Four premises were connected to the main sewer during the year. The Council bear the cost of one emptying of a cesspool each year for premises that are not within a reasonable distance of the Council's sewers.

All alterations, adaptations and repairs to existing drainage systems are supervised by the Department.

FACTORIES ACT, 1937.
1.—Inspections for purposes of provisions as to health.

Premises (1)	Number on Register (2)	Number of		
		Inspections (3)	Written notices (4)	Occupiers prosecuted (5)
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities ...	10	19	3	Nil
(ii) Factories not included in (i) to which Section 7 applies— (a) Subject to the Local Authorities (Transfer of Enforcement) Order 1938 ...	58	66	8	Nil
(b) Others ...	...	...	...	...
(iii) Other Premises under the Act (excluding out-workers' premises) ...	...	...	...	...
TOTAL ...	68	85	11	Nil

2—Cases in which Defects were found.

Particulars (1)	Number of cases in which defects were found				Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted (6)
	Found (2)	Remedied (3)	Referred		
			To H.M. Inspector (4)	By H.M. Inspector (5)	
Want of cleanliness (S.1)	1	1	...	1	Nil
Overcrowding (S.2) ... ..	...	...	...	...	...
Unreasonable Temperature (S.3) ... ..	...	...	...	...	...
Inadequate ventilation (S.4) ... ..	...	...	...	...	...
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6)	1	1	...	...	Nil
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)	...	...	...	...	...
(a) insufficient ... ..	...	...	...	...	...
(b) Unsuitable or defective	8	8	..	1	Nil
(c) Not separate for sexes	1	1	...	...	Nil
Other offences (not including offences relating to Homework) ... ..	...	...	...	...	...
TOTAL	11	11	Nil	2	Nil

River Pollution and problems arising therefrom.

Lord Brocket v. Luton Corporation

It was reported last year that the action by Harpenden and other affected local authorities in the matter of the condition of the River Lee was postponed owing to the service of a Writ by Lord Brocket's Solicitors upon Luton Corporation.

The action came for trial in July, 1948, and Councillor F. N. Gingell, M.B.E., J.P., and myself were subpoenaed to give evidence for the plaintiff.

Councillor Gingell submitted a Petition signed by 260 residents of Batford and Cold Harbour in which they called for immediate action to improve the filthy condition of the river. He emphasised the complete absence of fish, insect and plant life in the river and enumerated the steps taken by Harpenden to improve the unsatisfactory conditions that had now existed for several years. Contact had been maintained with the Lee Conservancy Board and Luton Corporation and the works had been inspected by Members of the Council upon the Corporation's invitation. Conferences had been convened between the local authorities and other affected persons and deputations had placed their case before the Ministry of Health.

Dr. H. E. Cox, Consulting Chemist, said that in all his experience he had never seen a river so polluted as the Lee.

I submitted samples of river water and sludge and photographs of thick carpets of sludge and humus on the surface of the river which I had personally seen to be between four and eight inches thick.

Judgment was given for Lord Brocket as follows :—

“THIS COURT DOETH ORDER that the Defendants be restrained from causing or permitting (whether by their agents or servants or workmen or otherwise) any matter or substance (whether liquid or solid) to flow or pass into the River Lee either from the present outfall of the Defendants' Sewage Works at Luton in the County of Bedford or by any other outfall or channel unless and until the same shall have been so treated and purified as (a) not to pollute the water in any part of the said River where its bed adjoins on one or both of its banks the Plaintiffs' Brocket Estate mentioned in the Statement of Claim or the water in the lakes on the said estate and (b) not to occasion the accumulation in the bed of the said River or the bed of the said lakes or on the banks of the said River or of the said lakes or any such solid matter or substance so and in such manner as (in any such case) to be a nuisance or cause of injury to the Plaintiffs or either of them or their sequels in title or their tenants owners or occupiers of the said estate or any part thereof or to any of such persons.”

It was ordered that the operation of the injunction be suspended for the period of one year and eleven months from the date of the Order, *i.e.* 30th July, 1948.

Councillor Gingell then applied to the Court for an injunction in respect of his own land adjoining the River and the same was granted in similar terms.

Further action in the matter was therefore suspended although there was no appreciable improvement in the condition of the river.

(b) Mosquito Control.

Although the evidence submitted concerning the existence of a serious nuisance through the prolific breeding of mosquitoes on the polluted and lifeless river was not admitted, it was of utmost concern to the inhabitants of that area of the district adjoining the river.

Control was carried out with D.D.T. sprays and dusts and good results obtained although residual effects were not possible owing to the movement of the water.

(c) Watercress Beds.

Routine samples of water and cress taken from the beds during February revealed gross contamination and it was fairly obvious that their close proximity to the polluted river was the cause. This suspicion was confirmed when samples taken from the six bores supplying the beds were found to be quite satisfactory upon bacteriological examination. Seepage from the river banks through rat holes and fissures and overflowing banks were matters that were almost impossible to control, and it was therefore decided to experiment with chemical cleansing treatment for the cress in an endeavour to remedy the most unsatisfactory and, in fact, dangerous conditions. So far as is known no treatment of this kind has been contemplated before, and it should be recorded that the Director of the Public Health Laboratory at Luton gave all possible facilities and encouragement, and a solution to the problem was finally arrived at and the scheme was put into full operation. Success could not have been achieved without the full co-operation of the grower who was at all times most helpful and anxious to take all possible steps to eliminate the risk of contaminated cress finding its way to the public.

Most of the cress is delivered to other parts of the country, and it was at first feared that chemical treatment would affect keeping quality and marketability. It is interesting however to note that during the first summer of treatment no consignments were returned as being unsaleable, and the grower is convinced that the treatment helps the cress to retain its freshness.

The Council forwarded a report upon the investigation and treatment to the Ministry of Health with a request for any advice and comments from the Department. A reply was received in which

it was pointed out that no regulations or requirements for watercross beds have been issued, and that the information available on the subject was not sufficient to enable any advice or useful comments to be made.

It was thought that the information might be of benefit to other authorities who were experiencing the same difficulties.

Rats and Mice (Destruction) Act, 1919.

The Hertfordshire County Council continued to operate a rodent control scheme in the district owing to the fact that application for delegation of powers to this authority had been refused in 1946.

Complaints of infestation were forwarded to the County Council for attention, but no action was taken to check the work carried out or to make surveys of infested property as the Department had no power to take action against defaulting owners and occupiers.

The Hertfordshire County Agricultural Executive Committee wrote to the Council in August and pointed out that although they were carrying out rodent control in the district by arrangement with the County Council, the Agriculture Act of 1947 did not include provision for the surveying and servicing of non-agricultural areas and that they were anxious that the transfer of control to the local authority should be affected as soon as possible.

The Council immediately replied that they were ready to accept delegation, but the matter had not been settled by the end of the year.

Council Property.

Careful supervision of the Council's Depôts and stores was maintained during the year and any infestation at the Sewage Works was dealt with by the Manager.

Regular test and maintenance treatments of the public sewers in previous years had revealed that most of the area continued to be free from infestation, and in the treatments carried out during the year particular attention was therefore paid to the few areas known to be continually or intermittently infested.

Test Treatment, commenced 20th December, 1947:—

Total number of manholes in district	...	450 approx.
Number tested	...	50
Number of takes	...	20

Follow-up Treatment, January, 1948:—

Number of manholes treated	...	78
Number showing prebait takes	...	23
Consecutive baiting with sausage rusk and zinc phosphide. Estimated kill	...	120

Tents, Vans and Sheds.

The Council's position with regard to the use of caravans in the district for permanent occupation was investigated during the year as several inquiries had been made by persons who desired to allow occupation of their land by one or more caravans in order to assist those who were finding it difficult to obtain housing accommodation.

The positioning of caravans and the use of sites now constitutes a change of use of land outside the provisions of "Permitted Development" under the Town and Country Planning Act 1947 if it is intended to use the van or site for any period exceeding 28 days.

The provisions of the Hertfordshire County Council Act 1935 applied to the Harpenden Urban District so far as control of moveable dwellings were concerned, as the relevant sections had not been repealed by the Public Health Act 1936. Byelaws made for the Urban District as provided by the Act had expired and it was therefore considered opportune to regularise the position by:—

1. Making application to the Minister for an order setting aside Part VII of the Hertfordshire County Council Act 1935.
2. Giving temporary permission for applicants to stand on sites for 6 months—as authorised by the Hertfordshire County Council Act 1935.
3. Informing owners of sites that they must obtain planning permission before reconsideration can be given to individual applications for caravan licences.

On the assumption that the Minister would grant the order and the County Council give planning permission to owners of the sites, the action to be taken by the Council would be as follows:—

1. Consideration, at the end of six months, (providing an order had been obtained and planning permission granted) of the individual applications for licensing. Section 269 of the Public Health Act 1936 would then be operative.
2. Licensing of individuals rather than sites if conditions were satisfactory—it being considered that better control can be obtained by restricting the licence to individuals rather than an overall site licence for several caravans.
3. All licences granted to be for the duration of one year only and renewable upon application at the discretion of the Council.

Water Supply.

Routine water samples for chemical examinations were sent to the Clinical Research Association London W.C.1, and samples for bacteriological examination were sent to the Public Health Laboratory at Luton.

An investigation was made following a complaint of a large deposit found in the supply tank in a private house. Analysis revealed between 96 per cent. and 98 per cent. iron oxide and traces of sand, silica, carbonates and chlorides and it was revealed that progressive deterioration of the tank through rusting had taken place.

Action taken under the Water Act 1945 resulted in 3 cottages being provided with a main water supply.

HOUSING.

Unfit Houses.

Generally speaking the condition of working class property in the district is above average, but there are several blocks of obsolescent cottages that will have to be scheduled for clearance as soon as the housing shortage is alleviated.

The Council continued their policy of purchasing unfit houses offered to them and a block of four cottages adjoining the seven purchased in 1947, were acquired during the year. They were in poor structural condition, verminous and two were overcrowded. Steps were immediately taken to disinfect them, render them reasonably weather proof and to abate the overcrowding. It is intended to demolish these cottages as soon as possible but it is a sad aspect of present day conditions to report that any vacancy is followed by many applications from families for the tenancy of this very substandard accommodation.

One cottage was scheduled as being unfit for human habitation and incapable of being rendered fit at a reasonable expense. Arrangements were in progress at the end of the year for the rehousing of the occupiers by the Council and the demolition of the property by the owners.

Housing Management

The duties entailed in this connection occupied by far the greater portion of the Department's time during the year. 3,855 interviews, inspections and visits were undertaken during the year. The Department is responsible for the operation of the Council's "Points" Scheme for rehousing, the management and maintenance of all Council houses and an emergency hatted camp, the supervision of repairs by a direct labour staff and by contract, costing of repairs, and liaison between the Council and the Public Utility undertakings in connection with the hire of appliances and assessment of "fixed charges" payable in the rents.

133 families were rehoused during the year as follows:—

Couples with no children	...	...	35	in flats
" " 1 child or first expected	...	...	51	part in flats
" " 2 children or second expected	...	...	31	
" " 3 children or third expected	...	...	7	
" " 4 "	...	...	3	
" " 5 "	...	...	2	
" " 6 "	...	...	1	
" " 7 "	...	...	1	
" " 8 "	...	...	1	
" " 9 "	...	...	1	

Housing applicants are required to re-register every 6 months in order to keep the Register up to date. At the end of the year there were 322 applicants for Council accommodation and 80 applicants for private building licences.

202 on Active List

88 on Deferred List (residence in Harpenden commenced after 31/12/40)

32 on List for Aged Peoples Flats.

An analysis was made of the time that applicants had been on the Register and the following information was obtained :—

Up to 1 year	...	...	...	144
Up to 2 years	...	...	...	59
Up to 3 years	...	...	...	64
Up to 4 years	...	...	...	16
Up to 5 years	...	...	...	3
Up to 6 years	...	...	...	1
7 years and over	...	...	...	3

It was therefore decided to award "pointing" for length of time on the Register and length of marriage (since September 1939) combined with a compulsory waiting period of one year (relaxed only for urgent medical reasons) on the Register before being considered for any accommodation. This was done in an endeavour to remedy the position whereby it was possible for applicants to create overcrowding and consequently obtain a high position on the waiting list despite the fact that they had only been on the Register a short time

The "Points" Scheme in operation at the end of the year was as follows :

				<i>Points.</i>
1.	Man and Wife (1 Point each)...	...	...	2
2.	Widow or Widower	...	...	2
3.	First child, either sex, over 10 years	...	...	2
4.	Each additional child over 10 years	...	...	1
5.	Each child under 10 years	...	...	1
6.	Expectant mother	...	...	1
7.	War Service in H.M. Forces or Merchant Navy, before 31st March, 1946 :—			
	Each year of service	...	...	$\frac{1}{4}$
	Each year overseas	...	...	$\frac{1}{4}$
8.	Service discharge through disability :—			
	Either man or wife	...	...	1—5 according to percentage pension.
9.	Direction from District during war years :—			
	Each year	...	...	$\frac{1}{4}$
10.	Residence in District of Applicant and wife :—			
	Each year	...	...	1/10th up to maximum of 5.
11.	If existing accommodation is unsatisfactory :—			
	(a) Overcrowding	...	...	1—4
	(b) Damp or insanitary	...	...	1—4
	(c) Health reasons (Doctor's or Public Health Dept. Certificate required)	...	...	1—4
12.	Special reasons	...	...	1—4
13.	Length of marriage (since September, 1939) :—			
	Each year	...	...	$\frac{1}{4}$ up to a maximum of 2.
14.	Length of time on List (with effect from Jan. 1st, 1946) :			
	Each 6 months	...	...	$\frac{1}{2}$

NOTE.—(i) All applicants resident in Harpenden since 31st December, 1940, placed in Category C, *i.e.* the "Deferred List."

(ii) Engaged couples are eligible for consideration for pointing for "Man and Wife," and special reasons if they can show that they are waiting, and have need for housing accommodation, before they can marry.

(iii) No application can receive consideration until twelve months have elapsed after the date of registration.

It was found increasingly difficult to find suitable accommodation for the lower income groups and it was found necessary to arrange a series of transfers of the tenants of the pre-war to post-war houses to make the cheaper houses available—there being a difference in the rents of between 10/- and 16/- a week.

Whilst appreciating the difficulties of these applicants and having made every effort to accommodate them satisfactorily, I am firmly of the opinion that some persons *will* not rather than *can* not find the rent. One often meets the type of person nowadays who has had so much assistance in various ways that he finds himself incapable of self help and is all too ready to complain rather than examine for himself the cause and possible remedy of his position. In this District it is found that many of the applicants at present living in furnished and unfurnished rooms pay more net rent than the gross rent (i.e. rent, rates, water rate, hire of cooker, copper and refrigerator and electricity "fixed" charge) of our post-war Council houses,

Work was started during the year upon two blocks of flats to accommodate twelve families of aged persons and there was a very favourable local reaction to the Council's policy in this matter. A further scheme is contemplated, and apart from providing specially planned and accessible accommodation it will also make available certain Council houses which are at present under occupied.

Further recommendations of an "Occupation Survey" of the pre-war housing estate made in 1947 were implemented during the year, four families being transferred from two to three bedroom houses and overcrowding abated in six cases by granting houses or flats to subtenants. In addition twelve tenants with families were moved from Duplex flats to three bedroom houses and three to two bedroom houses.

MEAT AND OTHER FOODS INSPECTION.

Meat Inspection.

All home killed meat consumed in the district is inspected at the Ministry of Food Slaughterhouse at Luton by the Borough's officers.

Twenty-three lbs of Argentine Beef, $6\frac{1}{2}$ lbs of Argentine lamb, 14 lbs of Australian Beef, $93\frac{3}{4}$ lbs of Home killed Beef, $18\frac{1}{4}$ lbs of Pork, 85 lbs of Canadian Bacon, 7 lbs of Canned Bacon, 12 lbs of Home cured Bacon 5 lbs of Kidney Suet, $91\frac{1}{4}$ lbs of Meat Preparations, $1\frac{3}{4}$ lbs of Corned Pork and 515 lbs of Corned Beef were condemned as being unfit for human consumption from premises in Harpenden.

Food Inspection

The following foodstuffs were condemned as being unfit for human consumption and destruction or salvage was arranged:—

Beans	...	...	32 cans
Butter	...	...	1½ lbs
Cereals	...	...	7¼ lbs
Cheese	...	...	12¼ lbs
Fats	...	...	6 lbs
Fish, wet	...	...	108½ lbs
Fish, canned	..	...	203 cans
Fishpaste	...	...	1 pot
Fruit	...	..	28 lbs
Jam	...	...	8 lbs
Marmalade	...	...	34 lbs
Milk, evaporated	...	...	67 cans
Milk, condensed	...	..	4 cans
Peas	...	...	28 cans
Pickles	...	...	5 jars
Spaghetti	...	..	1 can
Soup	...	...	6 cans
Syrup	...	...	2 lbs
Vegetables	...	...	3 cans
Vegetable Preparations	...	...	14½ lbs

Food Preparing Premises.

A comprehensive inspection of all restaurant and hotel kitchens, canteens, snack bars and stalls was carried out. The general standards of cleanliness were slightly above average and it was found necessary to serve informal notices in respect of thirteen premises where there were contraventions of Section 13 of the Food and Drugs Act 1938.

It was subsequently found necessary to serve formal notices upon defaulting owners of two premises in cases where structural work was necessary and these matters were outstanding at the end of the year.

Milk and Dairies Acts and Orders.

There are, in the district, two producer retailers of ungraded milk, three producers of Tuberculin Tested milk, seven registered dairies and twenty-one registered retailers.

There is one pasteurising plant in the district owned and operated by a Farmers' Society, the members of which—with one exception—send their milk from farms outside the Urban District boundary. This firm holds a Principal Licence to pasteurise and retail milk, and two other firms retail Pasteurised Milk under Supplementary Licences.

The Heat Treated other than Pasteurised Milk that is sold by two retailers is obtained from outside the district.

Constant supervision of supplies was maintained and the following samples were taken during the year:—

(a) By the Local Authority:—

Type of Milk.	Number Examined	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Ungraded	42	31	11
Heat Treated other than Pasteurised ...	33	30	3
Pasteurised (including School Milk) ...	63	55	8
Tuberculin Tested	59	44	15
	197	160	37
(b) By the County Council:—			
Pasteurised (School)	18	18	0
Tuberculin Tested	4	3	1
	22	21	1

Two samples of milk from the ungraded producers were submitted for guinea pig inoculation. Results were negative for Tuberculosis, but the fact that one sample was positive for *Brucella Abortus* was reported to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries for further action.

Ice Cream.

There were seventeen retailers on the Register at the beginning of the year, two of whom manufactured their own supply. Two registrations lapsed upon change of ownership but were subsequently re-issued during the year when arrangements were made to obtain supplies satisfactory to the requirements of the Council.

As previously reported the following interpretation of Article V. of the Heat Treatment Regulations, 1947 was adopted by resolution of the Council to take effect from January 12th, 1948:—

1. All barrows, handcarts, etc., shall be roofed over with side screens, leaving front and back open for serving.
2. Biscuit containers shall be covered.
3. Utensils shall be kept in water which shall be frequently changed
4. Soap, towel and water shall be provided on the barrow for use by the vendor.

N.B.—These provisions are restricted to vehicles from which *loose* ice cream is sold.

It was found possible by the adoption of this measure to effectively control sales from handcarts and barrows of vendors who were not registered by this authority. Ice cream sold in the streets and on the Common was consequently confined to the pre-packed varieties, or when loose, from vehicles complying with the Council's requirements.

Twenty-seven samples were taken, the results being fairly satisfactory, as shown below :—

	GRADE			
	I.	II.	III.	IV.
Manufactured and Retailed in Harpenden ...	8	...	...	...
Manufactured outside Harpenden... Loose	...	3	4	...
and sold in the District from hand-carts and vans Pre-packed	1	...	...	...
Manufactured outside Harpenden... Loose	4	...	...	5
and sold from Shops or cinemas ... Pre-packed	1	...	...	...
Water Ices	1	...	...	...
TOTALS	15	3	4	5

It is interesting to note that all samples taken of locally manufactured ice cream were Grade I. The five Grade IV. samples were from a prospective supply from another district. Registration was refused owing to these unsatisfactory results and an alternative supply was obtained.

Article 5 of the Ice Cream (Heat Treatment Regulations 1947), provides that :—

“Ice Cream shall be protected from dirt, dust or other contamination at all times during its manufacture, storage and DISTRIBUTION, and all apparatus and utensils brought into contact with ice cream during its manufacture, storage or DISTRIBUTION shall be thoroughly cleansed immediately after use and shall be kept clean at all times.”

ERIC R. R. MENGHAM.

Senior Sanitary Inspector.

Inspector of Meat and other Foods.

Housing Manager.

SECTION D.

HOUSING.

Number of new houses erected during the year :—

(a) By the Local Authority	110
Actual number of dwellings	129
(includes Duplex Flats)	
(b) By private enterprise	9

1. Inspection of Dwelling Houses during the year.

(1) (a) Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or housing Acts)	50
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose ...	220
(2) (a) Number of dwelling houses (included under sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Consolidated) Regulations, 1925	4
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose ...	16
(3) Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	1
(4) Number of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	9

2. Remedy of Defects during the year without service of Formal Notice.

Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers... ..	35
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3. Action under Statutory Powers during the year.

A.—Proceedings under Sections 9, 10 and 16 of the Housing Act, 1936 :—

(1)	Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs...	...	3
(2)	Number of dwelling houses which were rendered fit after service of Formal Notice :		
(a)	By owners	... ..	1
(b)	By Local Authority in default of owners	...	1

B.—Proceedings under Public Health Acts :—

(1)	Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	... ..	38
(2)	Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied after service of Formal Notices :		
(a)	By owners	... ..	4
(b)	By Local Authority in default of owners	...	1

SECTION E.

PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER
INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES.

(a) Notifiable Diseases (other than Tuberculosis) during the year 1948.

Disease	Total Cases	Deaths
Diphtheria	8	...
Scarlet Fever	16	...
Pneumonia ... ..	...	...
Puerperal Pyrexia	1	...
Erysipelas ... ..	...	...
Encephalitis Lethargica ... ..	...	...
Acute Poliomyelitis ... ..	...	...
Ophthalmia Neonatorum ... ..	...	...
Malaria ... ..	...	...
Typhoid and Paratyphoid Fever ... ..	...	...
Cerebro Spinal Fever ... ..	...	...
Whooping Cough	28	...
Measles	240	...
Dysentery ... ..	...	...

(b) Infectious Diseases (Ages).

Age Periods	Whooping Cough	Measles	Scarlet Fever	Diphtheria	Erysipelas	Pneumonia	Puerperal Pyrexia	Typhoid and Paratyphoid	Ophthalmia Neonatorum	Acute Poliomyelitis	Cerebro Spinal Fever	Malaria	Dysentery
0 —	3	16	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
1 —	10	56	1	4	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
3 —	9	40	3	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
5 —	5	107	8	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
10 —	...	12	2	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
15 —	1	2	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
25 —	...	3	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..
45 —	...	4	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
65 and upwards	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
TOTALS ...	28	240	16	8	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...

Scarlet Fever.

This group covers a group of thirty odd different diseases. The first attack of any one of them usually produces a rash, and is therefore notified. Subsequent attacks by other members of the group usually do not show a rash, but have all the other features of the disease. They are usually not notified. From this it follows that roughly only five to ten per cent. of the Scarlet Fever group of diseases are, in fact, notified.

To isolate such five to ten per cent. cases obviously would produce no effect whatever on the incidence of the disease on the general population. I therefore recommend that Scarlet Fever should not be admitted to hospital unless (a) The patient is so ill as to require hospital treatment, or (b) Is placed in such circumstances as to present a particularly dangerous source of infection to the general public, for example—in a dairy or other food store.

The fact that the disease is thirty odd different diseases means that to admit cases into hospital they run, in hospital, a serious risk of getting one of the other thirty different types unless they can be separately isolated in a cubicle.

It follows also that to exclude contacts of Scarlet Fever from school, and, at the same time, allow contacts of Scarlet Fever without a rash to remain at school, is completely silly. I have, therefore, allowed contacts of Scarlet Fever to attend school, but they should be kept at home if they show any signs of a sore throat, whether they have a rash or not.

Notification of Tuberculosis.

The number of cases remaining on the Register at the end of 1948 was as follows:—

PULMONARY		NON-PULMONARY		TOTAL
Male	Female	Male	Female	
23	10	7	7	47

Cancer.

The facilities for diagnosis are General Practitioners and Hospitals.

The total number of deaths was 22, allocated as follows:—

	M.	F.
Buc : Cav : and Oesoph (M) Uterus (F) ...	—	1
Stomach and Duodenum	3	2
Breast	—	2
All other sites	7	7



