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HARPENDEN URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

A N N U A L R E P O R T

of the

M E D I C A L O F F I C E R O F H E A L T H

James C. Sleigh,
M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.

and

S E N I O R S A N I T A R Y I N S P E C T O R

John Snowdon,
M.S.I.A., C.S.I.B.

FOR THE YEAR 1953.

HARPENDEN URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

1953

HARPENDEN URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

James C. Sleigh,
M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.

and

SENIOR SANITARY INSPECTOR

John Snowdon,
M.S.I.A., C.S.I.B.

FOR THE YEAR 1953.

HARPENDEN URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

1953

Chairman: Mr. L.W. Edgell, J.P.

Vice-Chairman: Mr. A. Clark.

Mrs. C. West	Mr. N.H. Jones
Mr. E. Ackroyd	Mr. C.F. Putterill, C.A.
Mr. L.S. Collingridge	Mr. D.E. Sanders
Mr. C.W. Curl	Mr. R.G. Taylor
Mr. F.M. Drake	Mr. L. Townend
Mr. L.T. Fowler	Mr. H.C. Williamson
Mr. F.N. Gingell, M.B.E., J.P., C.C.	

Public Health Committee

Chairman: Mr. L.T. Fowler

Mrs. C. West	Mr. D.E. Sanders
Mr. E. Ackroyd	Mr. R.G. Taylor
Mr. A. Clark	Mr. L. Townend
Mr. L.S. Collingridge	Mr. H.C. Williamson
Mr. F.N. Gingell, M.B.E., J.P., C.C.	

URBAN DISTRICT OF HARPENDEN

To the Chairman and Councillors of the Harpenden Urban District Council.

Mr. Chairman, Madam and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present my report on the health of Harpenden for the Year 1953.

The general health of the district remained good throughout the year, though the epidemic of measles mentioned in my 1952 Report was very widespread in the first half of the year, as will be seen by the table of Infectious Disease Notifications. There were, however, no deaths, and generally the disease was of a mild type.

The infant mortality came down to 29.56 per 1,000 live births, a figure slightly above the country as a whole, but in dealing with small numbers - the actual deaths were 6 - these figures are not truly comparable. All but one occurred under 28 days.

To you Mr. Chairman, Lady and Gentlemen, I wish to record my sincere thanks for all consideration and help you have at all times shown me, and to my staff I wish to record my sincere thanks for their effort and conscientious performance of their duties.

I am also deeply indebted to the Chief Clerk and Secretary in the Divisional Health Office for their assistance in the preparation of the statistics for this report and for the many extra duties carried out by them during the year, which were actually outside their Divisional Health Office duties.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient Servant,

J.C. SLEIGH,

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	..	..	..	14,710
Number of inhabited houses on the Rate Books:				
Inhabited dwelling-houses (including flats and huts but excluding caravans) ..	..	..	..	4,518
Shops with living accommodation	..	..	..	76
Licensed premises with living accommodation	..	..	..	24
Rateable Value	..	..	..	£147,189
Sum represented by a penny rate	..	..	..	£600

Extracts from Vital Statistics.

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
Live Births - Legitimate ..	90	110	200
Illegitimate ..	3	-	3
Birth Rate per 1,000 of the estimated population ..	..	..	13.80
Still Births ..	5	-	5
Still Birth Rate (i.e. per 1,000 total live and still births) ..	..	..	24.04
Still Birth Rate (i.e. per 1,000 of estimated population) ..	..	..	0.34
Deaths ..	79	79	158
Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population ..	..	..	10.74

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Deaths from Pregnancy, Childbirth, or Abortion.</u>	-	1	1
Rate per 1,000 (total live and stillbirths) ..	..	..	4.81
<u>Deaths of Infants under 1 Year.</u>			
Legitimate ..	4	2	6
Illegitimate ..	-	-	-
Death Rate of Infants under 1 year of age (all infants per 1,000 live births) ..	..	..	29.56
Neonatal Death Rate ..	..	..	24.63
<u>Births.</u>			

The number of births during 1953 was 203.

Deaths.

There were 158 deaths.

The Infant Mortality Rate of 29.56 per 1,000 live births shows a decrease on the 1952 figure of 42.5 per 1,000 live births, and is a little above the rate of 29.43 for the St. Albans Health Division which includes St. Albans City, St. Albans Rural District and Harpenden Urban District.

The number of Infant Deaths under 1 year of age was six, the cause of death in each of these cases was:

Prematurity .. 4. Congenital defects .. 2.,

whilst the age at death was:

Less than 24 hours ..	..	..	2
7 days ..	..	..	2
21 days ..	..	..	1
28 days ..	..	..	1

All were cases at Hospital.

CAUSES OF DEATH

		<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>	
1.	Tuberculosis, respiratory	-	-	
2.	Tuberculosis, other	-	1	
3.	Syphilitic Diseases	-	-	
4.	Diphtheria	-	-	
5.	Whooping Cough	-	-	
6.	Meningococcal infections	-	-	
7.	Acute Poliomyelitis	-	-	
8.	Measles	-	-	
9.	Other infective and parasitic diseases	-	-	
10.	Malignant Neoplasm, stomach	1	6	} 34 Cancer
11.	Malignant Neoplasm, lung, bronchus	3	-	
12.	Malignant Neoplasm, breast	-	8	
13.	Malignant Neoplasm, uterus	-	1	
14.	Other lymphatic and malignant Neoplasms	6	9	
15.	Leukaemia, aleukaemia	-	1	
16.	Diabetes	1	1	
17.	Vascular lesions of nervous system	9	9	
18.	Coronary disease, angina	12	12	} 49 Heart Disease
19.	Hypertension	5	7	
20.	Other heart disease	7	6	
21.	Other circulatory disease	5	-	
22.	Influenza	2	2	
23.	Pneumonia	2	2	
24.	Bronchitis	9	3	
25.	Other diseases of respiratory system	-	2	
26.	Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	2	-	
27.	Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea	-	1	
28.	Nephritis and nephrosis	-	-	
29.	Hyperplasia of prostate	2	-	
30.	Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion	-	1	
31.	Congenital malformations	-	-	
32.	Other defined and ill-defined diseases	10	6	
		—	—	
C/fwd ..		76	78	

<u>Cause.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>
B/fwd ..	76	78
33. Motor vehicle accidents ..	-	1
34. All other accidents ..	1	-
35. Suicide ..	2	-
36. Homicide and operations of war..	-	-
<u>Totals</u> ..	<u>79</u>	<u>79</u>
	==	==

Cancer Death Rate (per 1,000 of estimated population) - 2.31
Heart Disease
Death Rate (per 1,000 of estimated population) - 3.33

AVERAGE AGE AT DEATH

	Harpenden U.D.C.		St. Albans City		St. Albans R.D.		St. Albans Health Division, excluding Elstree	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
All Deaths	69.05	68.10	63.41	69.09	62.89	70.05	63.95	69.39
Excluding deaths of infants under 1 year of age	72.73	69.92	66.58	71.39	64.74	71.40	66.62	71.20

I am including this table to show how the expectation of life has increased over the past fifty years. The figures speak for themselves when it is recollected that the average age at death fifty years ago was about 49. This

was largely due to the very high infant mortality at that time and, as far as I can judge, excluding infant mortality and mortality from infectious diseases, etc., which apply chiefly to the younger age groups, if one does live to, say, 50, the expectation of life is not very much more than it was fifty years ago. In other words, we have saved lives in the early years, but towards the end of life there is comparatively little change.

I think it can be said that life for those over 50 is rather more strenuous now than fifty years ago, and we cannot expect the average age at death to increase by very much during the next fifty years. It is true that "medicated survival" may increase the span of life by a few months, but whether this is altogether desirable either for the patient himself or the community at large is open to doubt.

AVERAGE AGE AT DEATH

* * * * *	* * * * *	* * * * *	* * * * *	* * * * *
<u>Heart Disease.</u>				
<p>It will be seen from the following table that 37 out of 49 deaths officially due to heart disease occurred over the age of 65. I would submit that most of the 37 did not die of heart disease but simply that, due to old age, the body generally became worn out and death took place when the heart, which also of course suffered the general wearing-out process, ceased to beat. These 37 deaths should, I believe, be classified as due to old age, and not to heart disease - the heart was no more diseased than the rest of the body.</p>				

* * * * *

I am including this table to show how the average age at death has increased over the past fifty years. The figures speak for themselves when it is recalled that the average age at death fifty years ago was about 49.

HEART DISEASE

	30/40 years	40/50 years	50/55 years	55/60 years	60/65 years	65/70 years	70/75 years	75/80 years	80/85 years	85/90 years	over 90 years	Average age at death
<u>Sanitary District</u>												
<u>St. Albans City</u>	3 (youngest 32 years)	3	6	4	15	17	23	25	28	15	7	73.31
<u>St. Albans Rural District</u>	-	4	5	4	8	12	25	41	34	19	7	75.56
<u>Harpden Urban District</u>	1	2	-	2	7	5	8	4	11	6	3	73.82
<u>St. Albans Health Division (excluding Elstree)</u>	4	9	11	10	30	34	56	70	73	40	17	74.37

SECTION B.

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.

Welfare Centres and Clinics.

The County Council Child Welfare Clinics are now held at No. 40, Luton Road on the first and third Wednesday afternoons of each month and at Batford J.M.I. school on the second and fourth Wednesday afternoons.

This arrangement is working very well. At Batford we are deeply indebted to the Headmaster, Mr. Walton, for his enthusiastic co-operation. The school buildings were not designed for this purpose and undoubtedly we do cause some inconvenience to the teaching staff but they on their part have gone out of their way to be helpful. With quite minor alterations in the original layout, the scheme for using the Medical Inspection rooms in schools as Part III health centres can certainly be implemented with very considerable savings in the overall costs and this is being done in selected new schools in various parts of the county.

The Ophthalmic Clinic is also held at No. 40 Luton Road, but it was not until May 1954 that we were able to open a Dental Clinic. This is open on Thursday, Friday and Saturday forenoons, by appointment only.

National Health Service Act.

The Divisional Administration of the health services administered by the Local Health Authority, the County Council, continues to work very smoothly and an increasing amount of detailed administration is being passed out to Divisional Health Offices from Hertford. I need only mention the Home Help service, Ambulance service and supervision of County Council cars.

The records available in the Divisional Health Office on Local Health Authority work are of the greatest value to me in my local Sanitary Authority (Medical Officer of Health) work, especially in what is my most difficult job, assessing medical points for housing applications.

Ambulance Service.

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

Districts of St. Albans and Harpenden.

Year ending 31st December, 1953.

Details of the calls dealt with during the above period are given below. A further increase has again to be reported.

	<u>Accident.</u>	<u>Sudden Illness.</u>	<u>Removals.</u>	<u>Mater- nity.</u>	<u>Total.</u>	<u>Vehicle Journeys.</u>	<u>Mileage.</u>
1953.	88	28	3,273	42	3,431	919	18,387
Increase and decrease over 1952.	-17	+2	+44	-9	+20		

The relatively high accident rate amongst vehicles by Ambulance men has been a source of concern both to the Ambulance Sub-Committee and the Council's insurers and although it would be only fair to point out that no accident entailing very serious damage to a vehicle has occurred, the number of scrapes and scratches was thought to be too high. A handbook on driving and maintenance has accordingly been prepared for issue to all drivers and will in future form part of the syllabus for future promotion and proficiency examinations.

In accordance with recommendations from the Ministry of Health, courses of instruction have been given to all men in Civil Defence Basic and Ambulance Section training and two men now hold Instructors (Green) Certificates and a number of others hold certificates of competence in Civil Defence First Aid. This is, of course, in addition to the requirement of the County Council that all men qualify according to the rules of the St. John Ambulance Association and in this connection, a number of men now hold the Medallion and Label qualification of this body.

The vehicle fleet now consists of Daimler Ambulances (with one exception - an Austin "Welfarer") and Bedford Utilicons and the advantages of standardisation are manifest in satisfactory service and comparatively trouble free running of these vehicles. The County Fire and Ambulance organisation has its own workshop situated at Hatfield with its own skilled staff. They can deal most expeditiously with mechanical faults and repairs and thus reduce to a minimum the periods a vehicle is off the run.

A new type uniform has now been introduced. This comprises an open neck tunic (as opposed to the 'dog-collar' type in use formerly) and it is considered that, with the issue of white shirts and collars, the men present a very clean and tidy appearance in keeping with their duties.

HARPENDEN: Approval has been given to the erection of a two-bay appliance room at the rear of the Fire Station. The footings have been prepared, access road completed, and when delivery is made, the erection of the "Dri-crete" garage will commence. The work is under contract with Messrs. Claridge and Hall.

Hospitals.

The Harpenden Memorial Hospital forms part of the Luton and Hitchin Group administered by the Management Committee under the North-West Metropolitan Regional Hospital Board. Four House Committees have been appointed by the Management Committee, one of which is concerned with this Hospital and for this purpose the Hospital is linked with Welwyn and Stevenage.

Statistics.

Year ended December 1953.

<u>Bed complement</u>	-	Surgical and Medical	..	18	
		Maternity	..	<u>12</u>	30
<u>Average daily number of available beds</u>			..		29.5
<u>Admissions</u>			..		563

<u>Number of Births</u>	-	Live	..	..	212
		Still	..	..	6

Average daily number of occupied beds .. 19.3

Out-patient Departments:

<u>Physiotherapy Dept.</u>	<u>New Patients.</u>	<u>Attendances.</u>
In -patients	21	213
Out-patients	643	8,286
<u>Casualty Dept.</u>	533	631
<u>Specialist Consultations.</u>	153	190

General Nutrition.

Poor nutrition is rare and often is the result of fussing parents indulging food fads. Underweight children often are of small birth weight or have small parents.

I must emphasise that there is no fixed weight for age. Both weight and height vary within pretty wide limits in completely healthy children.

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 there is illness in the home where a request is made personally or at the request of the Doctor in attendance.

All notifications of measles and whooping cough and diseases where skilled nursing is particularly necessary are passed on at once to the District Nurse so that if she has not already been called in she can offer her services.

Home Help Service.

This service is administered by the Hertfordshire

County Council and provides domestic help for householders where such help is required owing to the presence of any person who is ill, lying-in, an expectant mother, mentally defective, aged, or a child not over compulsory school age within the meaning of the Education Act 1944.

The service is not free. Each case is assessed on ability to pay and the method of assessment in order to ensure fairness all round has given rise to much careful consideration by the County Council. The scheme as laid down now seems to be about as fair as it is possible to make it and includes a right of appeal where there are exceptional circumstances which are not allowed for in the main scheme. A special allowance is made for cases of tuberculosis where it is so important that adequate rest and nourishment be not prejudiced by having to pay high charges for Home Helps.

Health Visiting.

There are two Health Visitors in the area. They are employed for the visiting of persons in their homes for the purpose of giving advice as to the care of young children, old persons, persons suffering from illness, and expectant or nursing mothers, and as to the measures necessary to prevent the spread of infection.

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, both fairly near the River Lee which is well known to be highly polluted with sewage. The water is therefore chlorinated, a very necessary precaution, but we do get a fair number of complaints regarding taste. Whether in fact these complaints of taste are all due to chlorine in the water is highly doubtful but there can be no question of stopping chlorination of a water supply derived from an area so near a known heavily polluted stream such as the River Lee.

Sewage Disposal.

I am indebted to Mr. H. Pettingale, the Council's Engineer and Surveyor for the following details:

The total quantity of sewage treated at the Sewage Works was 234,402,000 gallons compared with 229,152,000 gallons in 1952.

The rainfall was 24.85 inches compared with 26.63 inches in 1952.

SECTION D.

HOUSING.

Slum Clearance.

I receive representations from Private Medical Practitioners, Tenants and others, that such and such a house is in a disgraceful condition and should be demolished. In many cases I have to agree with them that the house is bad but before recommending demolition I have to consider re-housing the tenants and this involves placing still further down the housing list others who have been waiting years, after living with in-laws, in "Rooms" or in overcrowded conditions, and this requires very careful balancing of the relative needs.

Re-housing.

This is still the greatest problem confronting the Council. The points scheme is in use and in addition all certificates from medical practitioners requesting priority for any of their patients are submitted to me as Medical Officer of Health. I have the power to allocate additional points on medical grounds without disclosing my reasons for doing so. In extreme cases I also have the power of giving absolute priority but this power I am very unwilling to use as, of course, if this power were abused it would ruin the whole points scheme with which I am completely in favour.

The duty thus imposed on me is a very difficult one and I have no doubt that on occasions I shall make mistakes but I can assure the Council that I shall do my utmost to make their housing scheme work as fairly as humanly possible, bearing in mind the very large and urgent demand for houses.

Points are allotted independently of me for such conditions as overcrowding. I therefore never give points for conditions which already attract points under the Housing points scheme.

Number of new houses and flats erected during the year:

(a) By the Local Authority	..	..	32
(b) By Private Enterprise	..	..	86

1. Inspection of dwelling houses during the year:

(i) (a) Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health and Housing Acts)	..	..	..	123
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose	..	..	..	362
(ii) (a) Number of dwelling houses (included under sub-head (i) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Consolidated) Regulations 1925	..	..	..	-
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose	..	..	..	-
(iii) Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	..	..	..	2
(iv) 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	..	..	..	12

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	40
---	----	----	----

3. Action under Statutory Powers during this year:

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

- (i) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs 1
- (ii) Number of dwelling houses rendered fit after service of Formal Notices:
 - (a) By Owners 1
 - (b) By Local Authority in default of Owners -

B. Proceedings under Public Health Acts:

- (i) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied .. 37
- (ii) Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied after service of Formal Notices:
 - (a) By Owners 8
 - (b) By Local Authority in default of Owners -

SECTION F.

PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Notifiable Diseases (other than Tuberculosis) during the year 1953:

<u>Disease.</u>	<u>Total Cases.</u>	<u>Deaths.</u>
Scarlet Fever ..	40	-
Whooping Cough ..	44	-
Acute Poliomyelitis ..	4	-
Measles ..	412	-
Diphtheria ..	-	-
Pneumonia ..	4	-
Dysentery ..	2	-
Encephalitis Lethargica ..	-	-
Typhoid and Paratyphoid ..	2	-
Erysipelas ..	1	-
Meningococcal Infection ..	1	-
Puerperal Pyrexia ..	-	-
Ophthalmia Neonatorum ..	-	-
Malaria ..	1	-
Undulant Fever ..	-	-
Cerebro Spinal Fever ..	-	-
Infective Hepatitis ..	8	-

Smallpox: There were no cases during 1953.

Vaccination:

Number of Persons Vaccinated (or re-Vaccinated) during 1953.

<u>Age at 31st December:</u>	<u>Under 1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2-4</u>	<u>5-15</u>	<u>15 or over</u>	<u>Total</u>
Number Vaccinated	155	8	3	9	17	192
Number re-Vaccinated	-	-	1	7	46	51

Number of cases specially reported during period (age groups as above) - Nil -

Number of births registered for Harpenden .. 203

Primary vaccination rate per 100 births .. 76.3%

Of the total number of vaccinations (243), 24 were carried out at County Council clinics.

A primary vaccination rate of 76 per 100 births is very satisfactory indeed, being considerably higher than my past experience when vaccination was compulsory!

I would emphasise that the ideal age for primary vaccination is under one year of age, when the risk of complications is practically nil. Complications do occur when the primary vaccination is done later in life, but not when re-vaccination takes place at an older age. Vaccination is compulsory for many people who wish to travel abroad or take up certain employment, and it is well worth while having all babies vaccinated so that no risk may be run if they have to be vaccinated in adult life.

Diphtheria Immunisation:

Number of children who completed a Full Course for Primary Immunisation in the Authority's Area (including temporary residents) in 1953:

Age at date of Final Injection.

<u>Under 5.</u>	<u>5 - 15.</u>
155	39

Total: 194

Number of children who were given a secondary or reinforcing injection (i.e. subsequent to complete Full Course):

Total: 265

Births for the same area 203

Primary Immunisation Rate per 100 births .. 95.5%

The numbers shown above include 28 children who

received combined Whooping Cough - Diphtheria immunisation injections from general practitioners.

Of the total shown, 1 primary immunisation and 147 reinforcing injections were given at County Council clinics.

The primary immunisation rate of 95.5% of births is extremely satisfactory, and shows great credit on the doctors and nurses in the area in persuading parents to have their children immunised, especially as Diphtheria being now a very rare disease, there is a great natural tendency to say "Well, is it worth while?", but if Diphtheria broke out in a largely non-immunised population, the result would be very serious indeed.

Whooping Cough:

On the 16th March 1953 the County Council scheme under Section 26 of the National Health Service Act 1946 was extended to cover protection against Whooping Cough.

As it is obviously wise to immunise children as soon as possible, because by far the greatest danger occurs in the first year, it has been decided that as far as Infant Welfare Centres in this Division are concerned, immunisation is to be restricted at present to children between the ages of four months and one year.

Number of children who completed a Full Course for Primary Immunisation in the Authority's Area (including temporary residents) in 1953:

Age at date of final injection:

<u>Under 5.</u>	<u>5 - 15.</u>
41	-

Total: 41.

These figures include 28 children who received a primary immunisation with a combined Whooping Cough - Diphtheria vaccine.

The number of children immunised is comparatively low, but it will be recollected that the scheme only started in the Spring of 1953. This was followed by the usual few cases of Polio so that we discouraged Whooping Cough immunisation until later in the year. The scheme is now becoming much more popular.

The recommended procedure for all vaccinations and inoculations is as follows:

Vaccination against Smallpox at 3 months of age.

Inoculation against Whooping Cough:

1st dose	-	4 months
2nd dose	-	5 months
3rd dose	-	6 months

Immunisation against Diphtheria:

1st dose (0.5 c.c.APT)	-	6 months
2nd dose (0.5 c.c.APT)	-	12 months

At present I cannot recommend the giving of a combined Diphtheria-Whooping Cough vaccine for the first Diphtheria and third Whooping Cough injection but they can be given at the same time, with separate syringes and in different arms.

Poliomyelitis:

Four cases were notified during 1953, two of which were paralytic and two non-paralytic.

REPORT OF THE SENIOR SANITARY INSPECTOR.

Tuberculosis;

Cases on Register as at 31st December, 1953.

<u>Pulmonary</u>		<u>Non-Pulmonary</u>		<u>Totals</u>
<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	
32 (26)	23 (22)	5 (5)	10 (7)	70 (60)

Figures as at 31st December, 1952, are in brackets.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTIONS.

General Sanitation.

104	Public Health Acts - primary inspections
205	re-inspections
29	Gasworks
10	Drainage
10	Drainage
650	Drainage
10	Factories
10	Housing Act
10	Infectious Diseases
10	Mobile Dwellings
10	Robert's Control
10	Shops Act
10	Stables and Piggeries
10	Water Supplies
10	Smoke Operations
10	Miscellaneous Visits
10	Workplaces

* Includes 1,107 visits made by the Council's Robert's Operative.

REPORT OF THE SENIOR SANITARY INSPECTOR.

Mr. Chairman, Madam and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my first report on the work of the Public Health and Housing Department for the year 1953. As I only commenced duties on the 9th November 1953 much of the credit due for the work carried out during the year must go to my predecessor, Mr. W.G. Coker. One other staff change occurred during the year when Mr. J.C. Hale of Edmonton was appointed as Additional Sanitary Inspector and Assistant Housing Manager to replace Mr. G.A. Kirrage.

I should like to express my appreciation to the Chairman and Members of the Public Health and Housing Committees for the keen interest taken in the work of the Department and for their friendly and close co-operation at all times.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTIONS.

General Sanitation.

Public Health Acts - primary inspections	..	104
re-inspections	..	203
Cesspools	..	59
Disinfection	..	5
Disinfestation	..	16
Drainage	..	656
Factories	..	12
Housing Act	..	55
Infectious Disease	..	66
Movable Dwellings	..	146
Rodent Control	..	1,701 *
Shops Act	..	77
Stables and Piggeries	..	3
Water Supplies	..	5
Smoke Observations	..	7
Miscellaneous Visits	..	138
Workplaces	..	5
		<hr/>
		3,258
		=====

* Includes 1,107 visits made by the Council's Rodent Operative.

Food Hygiene.

Bakehouses	.. ..	39
Butchers Shops	.. ..	125
Dairies	.. ..	77
Foodshops and Stalls	.. ..	120
Ice Cream Premises	.. ..	77
Restaurants	.. ..	37
Milk distributors - sampling	.. ..	81
Fried Fish Shops	.. ..	1

		557

Frequent routine visits and inspections were maintained during the year to ensure observance of the requirements of Public Health Legislation.

GENERAL SANITATION.

Complaints.

During the year, 201 complaints were received and dealt with; 141 of these were regarding infestations by rats and mice.

Disinfection and Disinfestation.

Six premises were disinfected after cases of infectious disease with proprietary formaldehyde preparations and liquid disinfectants.

During the year three properties were cleansed and disinfested using liquid insecticides, powders and other D.D.T. preparations.

The department was called upon to destroy wasps' nests at ten premises.

Drainage.

A considerable amount of work was carried out during the year in connection with the testing, alteration and repairs to existing drainage systems and 656 visits were made to properties following complaints of rat infestation or following surveys of property near sewers infested with rats.

The drainage systems of 118 new houses and flats constructed during the year were connected to the sewers.

Cesspools:

There were at the end of the year 47 properties with cesspool drainage and in most cases the houses concerned are in scattered small groups where connection to main drainage is not practicable at the present time. At two properties within the district the use of cesspools was discontinued when the sewer was extended at Kinsbourne Green by the St. Albans Rural District Council.

Cesspool Emptying Service:

The Council bear the cost of one emptying of a cesspool each year for premises that are not within reasonable distance of the Council's sewers. This work is undertaken by a private firm of contractors who during the year carried out 45 emptyings.

Factories Acts, 1937 and 1948.

The following table shows the number of registered factories within the district, the number of inspections, and details of defects:

<u>Premises.</u>	<u>Number on Register.</u>	<u>Inspections.</u>
Factories in which sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are enforced by the Local Authority.	7	4
Factories not included above in which section 7 is enforced.	57	71
	—	—
	64	75
	==	==

<u>Defects.</u>	<u>Number found.</u>	<u>Remedied.</u>	<u>Referred by H.M. Inspector.</u>
Sanitary Conveniences. (S.7.)	5	5	3
<u>Outworkers:</u>			
<u>Nature of Work.</u>			<u>Number.</u>
Wearing apparel - making etc.	..	..	2
The making of boxes or other receptacles or parts thereof made wholly or partially of paper	..	..	1
Brush Making	..	..	1
Stuffed Toys	..	..	2
			—
			6
			—

Movable Dwellings.

During the year the use of caravans as a means of human habitation did not decline and at the end of the year thirty licences were in force authorising the use of caravans under the provisions of Section 269 of the Public Health Act, 1936. Particular attention was paid to the sanitary accommodation, drainage, refuse disposal and water supply to each dwelling and for this purpose 146 inspections were made during the year.

Notices.

The following notices were served during the year. Compliance with notices was effected without recourse to legal proceedings.

Statutory Notices.

Section 9, Public Health Act, 1936.

Notices served ..	1
Complied with by owners ..	-

Section 39, Public Health Act, 1936.

Notices served ..	2
Complied with by owners ..	2

Section 93, Public Health Act, 1936.

Notices served ..	8
Complied with by owners ..	8

Section 7, Factories Act, 1937.

Notices served ..	1
Complied with by owners ..	1

Informal Notices.

Notices served ..	45
Complied with by owners ..	40

Rodent Control.

The extermination of rats and mice is carried out as a free service to the occupiers of private premises. A charge is made in respect of business premises at an hourly rate to cover the cost of labour, materials and administration.

One hundred and forty-one complaints concerning infestations by rats and mice were received and dealt with, resulting in the treatment of 404 properties. For this purpose 1,107 visits were made and 150 rats were found.

The Council employ one Rodent Operative (Mr. E.A.C. Faram) for this work. Mr. Faram received training under the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Scheme.

Sewers:

In accordance with the requirements of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, a ten per cent test of sewer manholes and two treatments of infested sewers were carried out during the year. Although 71 manholes were test baited, none were found to be infested. 118 manholes previously infested were baited during the two treatments - 12 were found to be infested during the summer treatment and 12 during the winter treatment. The treatments were followed by an intensive check of house drainage systems in infested areas involving the thorough inspection of drains at nearly 200 properties.

Council Properties:

Careful supervision of the Council's Depots and Stores was maintained during the year and any infestation of the Sewage Works and Refuse Tip was dealt with by the Manager.

Shops.

There are 192 retail shops in the district. The provisions of the Shops Act 1950 were administered and 77 visits were made for the purpose.

CONTROL OF FOOD AND FOOD PREMISES.

Meat Inspection.

All home killed meat consumed in this district during the year continued to be distributed from Ministry of Food slaughterhouses at Luton and Dunstable where the necessary inspection was carried out by the officers of the local authorities concerned. Careful watch has been kept on the transport and handling of meat and on the protective clothing used during delivery to the shops.

Food Inspection.

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

Fruit, fish, milk, jam, soup and vegetables	.. ..	410	tins
Cheese	.. ..	9 $\frac{3}{4}$	lbs
Chicken	.. ..	1	tin
Sausages	.. ..	120	lbs
Tinned Ham..	.. ..	32	tins
Tinned Meat and Meat Products	.. ..	24	lbs

Food Premises.

Byelaws with respect to the Handling, Wrapping and Delivery of Food and Sale of Food in the Open Air were adopted by the Council in 1950.

By regular visiting and inspection, improvements were effected in hygienic conditions in foodshops and retailers were generally co-operative in this respect. 557 visits of inspection were made to food premises, particular attention being given to cleanliness, water closet and washing facilities for the staff and protection of food from contamination.

Ten premises in the district are registered for the manufacture and sale of sausages and one for the preparation and sale of fried fish and potatoes.

Ice Cream.

There are in the district 34 premises licensed for the sale or storage of ice-cream under Section 14 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938, and in each case the ice-cream is obtained from one of the well known large manufacturers. Practically all the ice-cream sold is pre-packed. No licences are in operation for the manufacture of ice-cream.

A number of ice-cream vehicles move into the district from neighbouring towns and at present the effective control of the sale of ice-cream from such vehicles is exceedingly difficult since they invariably operate at week-ends and holidays. However, it is hoped that legislation will be forthcoming whereby such vendors of ice-cream will be required to be licensed by each local authority in whose area they operate.

During the year 48 samples of ice-cream were submitted to the Public Health Laboratory at Luton for examination, and the results are set out below:

<u>Type of Sample</u>	<u>Grade</u>				<u>Total</u>
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	
Pre-packed ..	38	8	1	1	48
	--	-	-	-	--

N.B. Samples in Grades 1 and 2 are considered satisfactory.

Milk and Dairies Acts and Orders.

There are in the district six registered distributors of milk and three registered dairies.

The following licences were issued during the year:

Dealers' licences authorising the use of the special designation.

Pasteurised ..	..	2
Sterilised ..	..	2
Tuberculin Tested ..	..	2

Supplementary licences authorising the use
of the special designation.

Pasteurised	2
Sterilised	1
Tuberculin Tested ..	2

There is one pasteurising plant in the district, licensed by the Food and Drugs Authority, the Hertfordshire County Council.

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

(a) By the Local Authority:

<u>Type of Milk</u>	<u>Number examined</u>	<u>Satis- factory.</u>	<u>Unsatis- factory.</u>
Pasteurised	43	41	2
T.T. (Farm Bottled)	29	27	2
T.T. (Pasteurised)	20	18	2
	<u>92</u>	<u>86</u>	<u>6</u>
	==	==	=

(b) By the County Council:

Pasteurised (School)	6	6	-
	==	==	==

HOUSING.

The condition of working class property in the district is reasonably good but it has not yet been possible to recommence systematic house-to-house inspections. Defects causing dampness, defective drainage and items of disrepair were dealt with by informal and formal notice.

Of nine sub-standard cottages purchased by the Council in 1951 only three now remain occupied, four of

the tenants having been rehoused during the year. It is hoped that the site will ultimately be cleared and redeveloped by the provision of old people's dwellings.

Housing Management.

The Council now own 648 permanent houses, 69 emergency huttled dwellings and 25 prefabricated bungalows, making a total of 742 housing units. In addition, the management of 70 houses belonging to a Workmen's Housing Association is the responsibility of the Department.

The recording and investigation of applications for housing accommodation, involving the operation of a points scheme, the management and maintenance of all properties, the supervision of maintenance work by direct labour staff and by Contractors, the costing of repairs, and liaison between the Council and Public Utility undertakings, give an outline of the duties entailed in this connection.

During the year, the following visits and inspections were made in the performance of the duties of housing management:

To applicants	107
Maintenance	858
Administration	183
Tenancies	199
			<hr/>
Total	..		1,347

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Eighty-one families were rehoused during the year in permanent dwellings and a further twenty-one families were rehoused in temporary huttled accommodation.

A summary of applicants on the housing list as at 31st December 1953 is set out below:

<u>Housing applicants.</u>	<u>Active List.</u>	<u>Deferred List.</u>	<u>Total.</u>
Married couples with children	130	53	183
Married couples and engaged couples	86	87	173
Single persons	11	11	22
Old persons	51	-	51
	—	—	—
<u>Totals:</u>	278	151	429
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The time necessarily devoted to interviews by the Department was considerable and applicants are assured the circumstances brought to our notice are fully appreciated and due consideration is given to the facts of each case before reference to the Housing Committee.

PETROLEUM REGULATIONS.

The provisions of the Petroleum Acts and Regulations are administered by the Department. Twenty-one occupiers of filling stations, repair garages and other premises are licensed to store petroleum spirit.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

J. SNOWDON,

Senior Sanitary
Inspector.
