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HARTISMERE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

for the

YEAR 1973.





OFFICERS OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Medical Officer of Health

K. M. HARDING, M.D., D.P.H., M.F.C.M., A.K.C.

Chief Public Health Inspector and Housing Officer.

H. SPINDLER, Cert. R.S.I. & S.I.E.J.B., M.A.P.H.I.

Additional Public Health Inspector

T. R. Gibbons, M.A.P.H.I.

COMMITTEES CONCERNED WITH MATTERS OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Public Health & Sewerage Committee.....	Sewerage, Refuse Collection, Septic Tank Emptying Service, Rodent Control, Caravans and all other Public Health Functions.
Housing Committee.....	Provision and Improvement of housing accommodation. (Council property.)
Building Plans Committee.....	Improvement Grants, Building Regulations. (Private property.)



To the Chairman and Members of Hartismere Rural District Council.

Madam Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present the last Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for this Rural District.

It is not a complete record because vital statistics relating to births, deaths and causes of death will not be available until some time after this Council ceases to exist on 31st March, 1974. However, it has been possible to compile other details usually given in my Annual Report, from our local records.

During the twenty years that I have served as Medical Officer of Health to this authority many changes have taken place in the field of Public Health.

A pure and wholesome mains water supply is now available for the Majority of households. People no longer have to drink from polluted shallow wells or even ponds (as some did only a few years ago). Of course the water supplied through our mains is hard compared with the water obtained from shallow wells and some housewives have found this a disadvantage on wash day. Some of our mains supplies contain a considerable amount of iron salts in suspension which causes discolouration both of the water and of the articles washed in it. However, it should be possible, in the not too distant future to treat the water in order to remove the iron in districts where this is still causing trouble. We are now assured by the best medical authorities that people who live in hard water areas are far less prone to certain diseases than those living in places where the water is soft. Once a village has been supplied with mains water, people naturally use more and then the problem arises of how to dispose of the waste water, so the provision of village sewage schemes had been a very important function of the council. Each scheme involved a tremendous amount of work. The area in question had to be surveyed and all its varying kinds of sanitation, or non-sanitation recorded. Consulting Engineers usually were called in to plan the sewage works and the line the sewers would take, and then the scheme had to be submitted to the County Council and the Ministry of Housing and Local Government for approval. Approval by the Ministry seemed to depend on the economic state of the country at the time. If the National Economy was in a good state approval would be given fairly readily, but if one of the recurrent economic blizzards was in progress the Powers in Whitehall would decide that a local Inquiry must be held before one of their Inspectors. The Public Health Department was actively concerned in this and after giving evidence about the number of pail closets and other primitive forms of sanitation in the area we would accompany the Inspector on a tour of inspection pointing out polluted rivers and ditches and other nuisances. Then the Inspector departed and we awaited his decision. Sometimes after a wait of some weeks or even some months we learnt that the scheme had been approved. On other less happy occasions, we heard, that despite our polluted rivers and ditches, the scheme had been put back for the time being.

However it is with a feeling of satisfaction that we can record that a large number of our villages now have main drainage.

Housing Inspection is a subject that has always been a most important part of the work of the Public Health Department. Following the War years during which the building of new houses was at a standstill and repairs to existing dwellings difficult to undertake it was inevitable that many houses



fell into a state of serious disrepair. Some of these could not be repaired at reasonable cost and many of the occupiers were living in conditions of extreme discomfort and privation. It was a tremendous task to carry out a detailed inspection of each house and to assess its condition and future, but although a number of houses still await action, the majority of unfit houses have been dealt with and in many cases the occupants have been re-housed. However the Housing shortage is still a very great problem and young couples, newly married or wishing to marry, have great difficulty in finding anywhere to live. This is despite the fact that this Council has built many houses, as well as bungalows; and sheltered accommodation for old people.

During the past twenty years two diseases have emerged as killers, responsible for an ever increasing number of deaths. These are Coronary heart disease, and Cancer of the lung. Experts tell us that the stress of modern living, too rich a diet, and lack of exercise are responsible for this form of heart disease, and there is no doubt that heavy cigarette smoking causes many cases of lung cancer.

The most notable achievement in the control of infectious diseases has been the conquest of Poliomyelitis. Only a few years ago it was an ever threatening menace. One never knew when or where it would strike and when it did so the younger members of society were usually its victims. They were often left with serious disablement; some even died. Now as the result of poliomyelitis vaccination this disease has virtually disappeared.

These are just a few of the thoughts that come to mind when reviewing our activities and progress during the past years.

The time has now come to hand on the torch to our successors, the Department of Environmental Health of the Council of Mid Suffolk. In doing so we give them our best wishes for the future in the assurance that they will carry on the traditions which we have tried to establish and the hope that their forthcoming achievements will be many.

It now only remains for me to express my appreciation to the Councillors for their support and encouragement during the past years, and to thank most warmly all officers and members of the staff for their help and co-operation; and particularly the staff of the Public Health department for their loyalty, assistance and enthusiasm in the performance of their many duties during my term of office.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

K. M. HARDING

Medical Officer of Health.

7th March, 1974.

1. GENERAL STATISTICS

Area.....	96,486 acres
Population.....	15,850
No. of inhabited houses.....	6,347
Rateable Value.....	£1,160,781.00
Product of a new penny rate (Estimated).....	£11,100.00.

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2.

Monthly Notifications of Notifiable Diseases (excluding Tuberculosis)

	<u>Jan.</u>	<u>Feb.</u>	<u>Mar.</u>	<u>Apr.</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>Aug.</u>	<u>Sept.</u>	<u>Oct.</u>	<u>Nov.</u>	<u>Dec.</u>	<u>Total.</u>
Dysentery	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Measles	2	-	5	64	15	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	93
Meningitis	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	3
Total	2	-	5	64	15	7	4	-	-	-	-	-	97



Notifiable Diseases - Age Distribution

	0-	1-	3-	5-	10-	15-	25-	45-	65-	Total
Dysentery	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Measles	-	1	6	11	63	10	1	1	-	93
Meningitis	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	3
Total	1	1	6	12	64	10	1	2	-	97

4.

Notifiable Diseases - Summary for past 5 years

1969      1970      1971      1972      1973

Scarlet Fever	-	5	1	6	-
Whooping Cough	-	-	30	-	-
Measles	72	71	103	13	73
Food Poisoning	-	-	2	-	-
Infective Hepatitis	5	4	-	1	-
Salmonella	1	1	2	-	-
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	-	1	-	-	-
Dysentery	-	-	-	-	1
Meningitis	-	-	-	-	3

5. IMMUNISATIONS (figures kindly supplied by the County Medical Officer).

	<u>Primary</u>	<u>Booster</u>
Diphtheria/Tetanus/Pertussis	186	34
Diphtheria/Tetanus	1	190
Tetanus	8	199
Sabin Poliomyelitis	178	330
Measles	179	-
Rubella	65	-

6. TUBERCULOSIS

	<u>Males</u>		<u>Females</u>		<u>Total</u>
	<u>Pulm.</u>	<u>Non.Pulm.</u>	<u>Pulm.</u>	<u>Non.Pulm.</u>	
Cases on Register at 1.1.73	9	-	8	1	18
Primary Notifications	1	-	-	-	1
Transfers in	-	-	-	-	-
	10	-	8	1	19
<u>Cases taken off</u>					
<u>Register in 1973</u>					
Deaths	1	-	-	-	1
Recovered	1	-	-	-	1
Removed from District	-	-	-	-	-
Re-diagnosed non-T.B.	-	-	-	-	-
Total removed	2	-	-	-	2
No. of cases remaining on Register at 31.12.73.	8	-	8	1	17



Tuberculosis - Statistical Summary for Past 5 years.

1969    1970    1971    1972    1973

Number added to Register by Primary Notifications - (a) Pulmonary (b) Non-Pulmonary	2	1	1	-	1
	-	-	-	-	-
Total number added to Register	2	1	1	-	1

## 7. SEWERAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL

The sewers and sewage disposal works for the village of Wetheringsett were completed during the year.

Sewerage schemes for Bedfield and Worlingworth are complete but await electricity supply before they can be commenced.

Mendham and Withersdale Street 90% complete.

Tenders approved for Westhorpe. 20% of work has been completed.

## 8. HOUSING

### Summary of Housing Activities:-

Number of houses inspected.....	21
Number of houses found unsatisfactory.....	7
Number of houses on which Demolition Orders were made.....	6
Number of houses on which Closing Orders were made.....	1

### Houses erected

Private.....	45
Council.....	10

### Number of Improvement Grants paid

Improvement.....	52
Standard.....	50.

## 9. FOOD AND DRUGS ACT, 1955

50 inspections of food premises were made during the year, minor contraventions of the Food Hygiene Regulations were brought to the attention of the proprietors.

Two premises were added to those registered under Section 16 of the Act bringing the total to 40.

## 10. POULTRY PACKING STATIONS

Number of Poultry Processing Premises within the district - 4

Total number of birds processed during the year - 3,910,150

Percentage of birds condemned as unfit for human  
consumption - 1.05

### Details of Poultry Killed and Rejected by Processors in the District.

	<u>Chickens</u>	<u>Hens</u>	<u>Capons</u>	<u>Turkeys</u>	<u>Geese</u>	<u>Ducks</u>	<u>Total</u>
Killed	2,026,296	969,513	98,015	96,201	20,125	700,000	3,910,150
Reject- ed	23,953	14,852	1,655	494	16	250	41,222



11. WATER SUPPLY

Water Examination

Wells and Private Bore Supplies

16 samples were taken, of these 9 were found to be unsatisfactory.

1 well was closed for further use as drinking water,

Mains Supply

28 Routine samples were taken in different parishes.

All reports showed the finding to be excellent.

Well Water Cyanosis

During the year the County Medical Officer notified cases of women due to be confined:-

(a) No. of notifications received..... 4

(b) No. not receiving mains water..... 4.

These were investigated and as a result samples were taken and submitted for reports on Nitrate Content and were found to be satisfactory.

12. MILK DEALERS LICENCES

There are now eleven licences issued by the County Council under the Milk (Special Designation) Regulations, 1963 enabling persons to sell pre-packed milk from an approved source in this district.

13. MILK SAMPLING

Statutory - Special Designation - .... 15 samples taken.

Chemical Analysis..... 10 samples taken.

Biological..... 2 samples taken.

Antibiotics & Brucella

Abortis..... 2 samples taken.

In all cases the results were satisfactory.

14. FOOD INSPECTION

118 cattle were killed in the one licensed slaughter house during the year and 100% inspection of carcasses was carried out.

No carcasses were condemned which again shows the first class quality of meat handled.

The following foodstuffs were condemned during the year:-

60 lbs Bovine liver - Abscess and Fluke.

15. NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT, 1948 - Section 47.

No action was taken under this Act.

16. FACTORIES ACT, 1937 and 1948.

No. of factories.....53

No. of inspections made.....19

No. of defects found..... -.



17. CIVIC AMENITIES ACT, 1967

Action was taken as follows:-

Number of vehicles abandoned.....15  
 Number removed by owner after  
 service of notice.....11  
 Number removed by this Authority  
 after expiry of 7-day notice..... 4.

A very large number of vehicles were brought to the depot by owners for disposal.

18. RODENT CONTROL

	<u>Type of Property</u>	
	<u>Non-Agricultural</u>	<u>Agricultural</u>
1. No. of properties in the district.	5,020	1,333
2. (a) Total number of properties (including nearby premises) inspected following notification	347	55
(b) Number infested by		
(i) Rats	326	55
(ii) Mice	21	-
3. (a) Total number of properties inspected for rats and/or mice for reasons other than notification	338	187
(b) Number infested by		
(i) Rats	297	187
(ii) Mice	41	-