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Contributors

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HITCHIN RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT
of the
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
for the year
1951



PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS:

District Medical Officer of Health (and Divisional Medical
Officer for North Herts Area):

VICTOR R. WALKER, M.B., Ch.B., B.Sc., D.P.H.

Divisional Health Office,
12 Brand Street, Hitchin.
(Telephone: Hitchin 1757)

Senior Sanitary Inspector:

SAMUEL T. GUNNING, Cert. S.I.E.B., F.S.I.A.
(January to May)

WILLIAM M. MATHEWS, Certs. S.I.E.J.B.,
(May to December) Meat & Foods,
San. Science,
Smoke Inspection.

Additional Inspector:

ROBERT B. BOLT, Cert. S.I.E.J.B., M.S.I.A.

Council Offices,
21 Bancroft, Hitchin
(Phone: Hitchin 1112-5)

Wm. E. Potter, Clerk to the Council.

MICHIGAN RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

of the
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
for the year

1931



PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS:

Director Medical Officer of Health (and Divisional Medical Officer for North West Area):

VICTOR R. WALKER, M.D., D.P.H., D.Sc., D.F.H.

Divisional Health Officer,
18 Grand Street, Michigan
(Telephone: 215-1177)

Senior Secretary In-charge:

AGNES T. OWNING, Cert. S.I.E.B., S.S.I.A.
(January to May)

WILLIAM M. MARSHALL, Cert. S.I.E.B.,
Health Foods, (May to December)
Gen. Science,
Grain Inspection.

Additional In-charge:

ROBERT S. BOLT, Cert. S.I.E.B., M.S.I.A.

Council Offices,
21 Bancroft, Michigan
(Phone: 215-112-21)

Mr. E. Rafter, Clerk to the Council.

To the Chairman and Members of the Hitchin Rural District Council

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present the annual report for the year 1951 upon the health and sanitary conditions of your district by direction of Ministry of Health Circular 42/51.

Despite some loading of the older age groups (shown by the supplied comparability factor of 0.89) the local death rate (11.4) is more favourable than that for England and Wales (12.5) though the birth rate (14.7) falls below the national rate (15.5). Local infant mortality and stillbirth rates continued favourable and the incidence of serious infectious disease was again low.

Your main local health problem, often affecting mental health more than physical, continues to be housing, which includes the difficult problem of increasing disrepair of older properties.

I would again acknowledge having received from your Council and its Chief Officers every consideration and help during the year and in the compilation of this report the great assistance of your Senior Sanitary Inspector, Mr. W. M. Mathews, who is responsible for the sections touching sanitary environment.

I am, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Your obedient servant,

VICTOR R. WALKER

District Medical Officer of Health

July 1952

To the Chairman and Members of the Health Council

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honor to present the annual report for the year 1951 upon the health and sanitary conditions of your district by direction of Ministry of Health Circular 42/51.

Despite some loading of the older age groups (shown by the applied comparability factor of 0.80) the local death rate (11.5) is more favorable than that for England and Wales (12.3) though the birth rate (14.7) falls below the national rate (15.3). Local infant mortality and stillbirth rates continued favorable and the incidence of serious infantile diseases was again low.

Your main local health problem, often affecting mental health more than physical, continues to be housing, which includes the difficult problem of increasing demand for older properties.

I would again acknowledge having received from your Council and the Chief Officers every consideration and help during the year and in the preparation of this report the great assistance of your Senior Sanitary Inspector, Mr. W. N. Matthews, who is responsible for the section covering sanitary services.

I am, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Your obedient servant,

VICTOR R. WALKER

District Medical Officer of Health

July 1952

LOCAL STATISTICS

Area (in acres)	82,559
Home Population - Registrar General's estimate for mid-1951	22,060
Number of inhabited houses at 1st April 1952 (estd.)	6,612
Rateable Value - 1st April 1952	£104,106
Sum represented by Penny Rate (estimate 1952/3)	£419

EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 1951

	<u>Totals</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>HITCHIN RURAL DISTRICT</u>	<u>Comparable rate for England and Wales</u>
<u>LIVE BIRTHS</u>					
Legitimate	309	166	143		
Illegitimate	<u>15</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>6</u>		
All	<u>324</u>	<u>175</u>	<u>149</u>		

Rate per 1,000 of the est. resident population.. 14.7 15.5

Deaths: 252 130 122

Rate per 1,000 of the est. resident population.. 11.4 12.5

STILLBIRTHS:

Legitimate	6	3	3
Illegitimate	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
All	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>

Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births.... 17 23

DEATHS OF INFANTS UNDER ONE YEAR

Rate for All infants per 1,000 live births 28 30

" " Legitimate" " 1,000 leg. "... 22

" " Illegit. " " 1,000 illeg. "... 133

Actual number of such deaths (a) under 4 weeks and (b) total under one year

Legitimate	3	7
Illegitimate	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
All	<u>4</u>	<u>9</u>

Deaths from Puerperal causes	-
Deaths from Cancer (all sites)	31
Deaths from Measles	-
Deaths from Whooping Cough	-
Deaths from other infective and parasitic diseases	1

Comment on Vital Statistics

The estimate of local mid-year population for 1951 again shows a rise, this year of 380.

The birth rate of 14.7 shows a reduction on the figure for 1950 (15.1). The local death rate (11.4) is higher than for 1950 (10.8) but below the national rate for 1951 (12.5).

Stillbirth and infant mortality rates were both below the national figures, though the presence of 2 illegitimate infants in the 9 infant deaths gave an unfavourable mortality rate among illegitimate births.

Principal Causes of Death

Of the total of 252 deaths 109 were attributed to Heart and other Circulatory Diseases, 32 to Vascular Lesions of the Nervous System, 31 to Cancer (all sites), 37 to Respiratory Diseases, and 5 (all males) to Motor Vehicle Accidents.

SECTION B

General Provision of Health Services

There was no important change during the year.

SECTION C

Staff.

As recorded in the foreword of the 1950 report, Mr. S. T. Gunning retired from the post of Senior Sanitary Inspector on 17th May and was succeeded by Mr. W. M. Mathews from 18th May.

Sanitary Circumstances of the Area

Water Supplies

The water levels in the Council's borholes throughout the district are not unsatisfactory.

It is hoped that the Council will soon be in a position to go to tender for the carrying out of their Comprehensive Water Scheme, which involves the extension of mains generally over the whole area, and for the construction of two new Water Towers at Codicote to replace the existing towers which have become defective.

The water main from Offley to Pirton was sufficiently complete for water samples to be taken in the latter part of December, and the same position obtains in the new main from Lilley to Hoxton.

The purity of water supplied has been maintained both at the pumping stations and at points of delivery throughout the district.

Two tables of analysis are submitted -

- I. Taken by the Council's Engineer & Surveyor to test the quality of the water delivered from the pumping stations into the mains.
- II. Taken by the Public Health Department to test the quality of the water delivered to the consumer.

Table I

Pumping Station	Total	Raw Water		Treated Water	
		Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail
Ashwell	4	3	1	-	-
Codicote	4	4	-	-	-
King's Walden	8	4	-	4	-
Peter's Green	7	2	2	3	-
Wymondley	6	4	2	-	-
Braughing		No record of any samples			
Totals	29	17	5	7	-

Table II

	<u>No.</u> <u>taken</u>	<u>Satis-</u> <u>factory</u>	<u>Unsatis-</u> <u>factory</u>	<u>Doubt-</u> <u>ful</u>
1. <u>Council Undertakings</u>				
Offley-Lilley scheme	12	6	6	-
Hitchin-Braughing	20	19	1	-
Ashwell	7	5	2	-
Codicote	1	1	-	-
Wymondley	3	3	-	-
Peter's Green	4	4	-	-
2. <u>Private Undertakings</u>				
Knebworth	1	1	-	-
Bygrave	2	2	-	-
Newnham (Mr. Farr's supply)	2	1	1	-
3. <u>Bulk Supplies</u>				
Hitchin U.D. (Ickleford, Holwell and Pirton)	7	6	1	-
Stevenage U.D. (Graveloy and Todd's Green)	3	3	-	-
Hertford R.D. (Shephall)	1	1	-	-
4. <u>Other Sources</u>				
Hexton Pump	1	-	1	-
Langley	4	4	-	-
Radwell	1	1	-	-
Newnham (Council Cottages)	1	1	-	-
Special samples (private sups.)	16	3	13	-
	<hr/> 86	<hr/> 61	<hr/> 25	<hr/> -

Sewerage and Sewage Disposal

There is still no visible progress with the various Sewage Schemes. The Council's greatest hope is at Offley where March 1953 has been given as a starting date for the Scheme for this village. The other schemes under design are for Barkway, Lilley, Wymondley, Whitwell, Kimpton and Ickleford.

Quite a number of these Sewerage and Sewage Disposal Schemes are of paramount importance, as the time has now arrived when the absence of these facilities is hindering housing development; in fact, in some Parishes it is imperative that no further

building be proceeded with owing to the overloading of sewers and sewage outfalls.

A scheme for the reconstruction of certain sewers is being put forward for the village of Knebworth as a matter of urgency.

Public Cleansing Service

Refuse Collection

The service continues to operate without the receipt of serious complaints from the residents, and this reflects credit upon the foreman and outside staff.

Work proceeded upon the construction of the Central Depot at Gosmore and this will come into use early in 1952.

Certain aspects of this service cause some concern to your officers however, and now that the collection and disposal system set up in 1948 has had several years in which to become consolidated, next year might be an opportune time to consider any improvements which may be practicable.

The figures for the last four years are given below:-

	<u>No. of loads</u>	<u>Approx. weight of all materials collected</u>	<u>Vehicle mileage</u>
1948	1671	3554 tons	28148
1949	1729	4545 "	38699 (foreman's van intro.)
1950	1835	4674 "	44327
1951	1802	4063 "	47616

Disposal of the collected refuse is by the controlled system on eight tips. The use of a new tip at Ashwell was secured thanks to the kind co-operation of Mr. W. A. Farr of Newnham, and the old Ashwell tip was vacated. Steps were taken to secure the use of a tip at Potters Heath, and the changing situation is constantly under review.

Cesspool and Night-soil Emptying

Due to the expanding demands upon this service it was necessary to submit a report to Council upon the functioning of this branch of activity. After careful consideration, it was decided that a further vehicle with the necessary crew was needed and the order was placed with Dennis Bros., Guildford, for an 800-gallon, diesel-engined vehicle.

Number of cesspools emptied at -

	<u>Houses in Private</u>		<u>Council Houses</u>		<u>Loads from</u> <u>Sewage Works</u>	<u>Pails</u> <u>emptied</u>
	<u>Free</u>	<u>Chargeable</u>	<u>Free</u>	<u>Chargeable</u>		
1948	287	78	27	82	339	476 ($\frac{1}{2}$ yr.)
1949	308	126	32	206 (inc. 148 Hinx.)	329	2641
1950	395	201	25	59	409	3765
1951	411 [#]	200 [#]	26	47	425	4221

In addition, 22 free and 3 chargeable emptyings were carried out for the Council by private contractors.

Salvage

Returns for salvage, both in weight and value, make rather interesting reading compared with other years. The differences are due to several factors, amongst them the urgent national demand and the salvage bonus to the men which started late in 1950.

Two special type trailers for this work were purchased during the year and proved to be of material help in collections.

1948	-	64 tons	collected	-	income	£269. 7. 0d.
1949	-	53 $\frac{3}{4}$	"	"	"	£180. 2. 6d.
1950	-	39	"	"	"	£131. 6. 2d.
1951	-	56	"	"	"	£837.11. 9d.

Prevention of Damage by Pests Act

Perusal of the annual report upon the operation of the Joint Scheme will demonstrate that much useful work has been done under this heading. Reference to the Annual Report 1950 finds the following paragraph -

"It was found that with one Operator only it was not possible to undertake Block Inspections to the extent necessary to reduce the rat population in the more heavily infested areas"

During 1951 the truth of this, combined with a similar inability to make inspections of Agricultural lands, has further suggested that a re-consideration of the Joint Scheme is indicated in the not too distant future.

HITCHIN AND WELLYN RURAL AND ROYSTON URBAN DISTRICT COUNCILS
 JOINT PESTS CONTROL SCHEME

SUMMARY

JANUARY 1st to DECEMBER 31st 1951

DISTRICT	NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED						TOTAL	NO. OF RATS AND/OR MICE PICKED UP
	REFUSE SMEETS	PRIVATE Dwellings	BUS. PREMS.	BLOCK INSP.	INSP. OF AGR. LAND	TOTAL		
HITCHIN R. D. C.	94½	286½	562½	102	12½	7½	1065	1295 59
WELLYN R. D. C.	10	93½	228	35½	1½	-	368½	586 36
ROYSTON U. D. C.	36½	52½	116½	6½	19	¾	231¾	301 18
	141	432½	906¾	144¼	32½	8	1665	2132 113

Other figures -
 Total mileage covered by vehicle - 8480
 Petrol used - 265 gals.
 Approx. miles per gal. - 32

Total time spent on mixing bait, vehicle maintenance etc.
 Total hours worked

392
2057

Sanitary Inspection of the Area

Analysis of the number of inspections carried out by your two Inspectors again shows that a considerable volume of work is handled with the minimum use of Statutory Authority.

The number of visits and inspections for all purposes was 2373, detailed as follows:-

General Sanitation etc.

Water Supply	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	93
Drainage	..	.....	.....	.....	.....	401
Cowsheds, Stables and Piggeries	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	30
Tents, Vans and Sheds (including Caravans)	.	.....	.....	.....	.....	157
Factories	..	.....	.....	.....	.....	17
Bakehouses	.	.....	.....	.....	.....	1
Licensed Premises	..	.....	.....	.....	.....	16
Refuse Collection and Disposal and Salvage	.	.....	.....	.....	.....	455
Rodent Control	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	56
Atmospheric Pollution	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	5
Schools	...	.....	.....	.....	.....	2
Shops	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	10
Petroleum Regulations	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	29
Miscellaneous visits	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	85

Housing

Public Health Act - visits paid	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	777
Housing Acts - " "	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	45
Overcrowding - " "	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1
Filthy or Verminous premises - visits paid	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	10
Miscellaneous visits	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	4

Infectious Diseases

Enquiries in cases of I.D.	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	17
Visits re disinfection	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	11
Miscellaneous I.D. visits	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	45

Meat and Food Inspection

Slaughterhouses etc.	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	14
Butchers	..	.....	.....	.....	.....	22
Canteens	..	.....	.....	.....	.....	8
Dairies and Milk Distributors	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	5
Fishmongers and Poulterers	.	.....	.....	.....	.....	1
Food Preparing Premises	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	7
Grocers	...	.....	.....	.....	.....	34
Ice-Cream Premises	.	.....	.....	.....	.....	3
Restaurants	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	10
Miscellaneous food visits	..	.....	.....	.....	.....	4

It was not found necessary to serve Statutory Notices or have recourse to prosecutions during 1951.

Civil Defence

This commitment, involving Welfare, Emergency Feeding, and Emergency Mortuary Service, begins to take on the aspect of a major service as the demands of these branches become clear and the need for workable plans becomes evident. Much time and thought have been donated to this aspect of Local Authority activity and it becomes more apparent daily that the scale of the task facing the Council's Officers should not be underrated. A great deal remains to be done in this field.

SECTION D

Housing

The number of applications for accommodation on the files at December 31st 1951 was 1180, which is an increase of 31 on the previous year. During 1951, 188 new applicants were registered and 157 were removed from the lists, the greater number of the latter having been re-housed.

By transferring many of the smaller families from the older and larger-type houses to new bungalows and two-bedroom houses it has been possible to house a number of larger families in these older houses. The greater proportion of applications now on the files, for the majority of the parishes, are from people with only one child or no children at all, and approximately fifty-per-cent of them are living in with other families, never having had a home of their own.

The figures for the year ended 31st December 1951 are as follows:-

No. of new permanent dwellings completed by the Council	54
--	----

No. of new permanent dwellings completed by private enterprise ...	14
---	----

Total	<u>68</u>
-------------	-----------

Caravans

The area has become widely used by caravan occupiers in recent times. Much of the present situation has been precipitated by the general housing position, but the problem is closely linked with the construction of the Stevenage new town and an overflow of population is also evident from bordering districts whose attitude to caravan dwellers leaves something to be desired. The result has been that the Hitchin Rural District has had to absorb considerable numbers of caravans and the situation continues to grow apace. Much time and effort on the part of the departments concerned is constantly needed to keep abreast of developments.

One licensed site, run by private enterprise, exists in the area and this accommodates eleven vans.

Housing - Reconditioning

Necessary and desirable re-conditioning work was carried out by private owners, under licence, during the year, affecting some 29 dwellings. No grants under the Improvements sections of the Housing Act 1949 have yet been approved.

In addition to the re-conditioning work referred to above, repairs and improvements have been carried out at many premises during the year (see summary of visits made by Inspectors, Page 9).

SECTION E

Inspection and Supervision of Food

Owing to pressure of work in other directions only cursory attention could be given to this important branch of activity. The need for progress to be made in this direction however, became so apparent during the year that a report on the staff situation in the Public Health Department was prepared and submitted in December. As a result of a most careful consideration of all factors, it was decided that the services of a third qualified Sanitary Inspector were needed. The appointment of such Officer should result in discernable improvement in the course of time.

a. Milk

The results of samples taken in the area are given herewith -

Summary of milk samples taken during 1951 -

Sampling Authority	Designated and School milks		Non-Designated milks		Tubercule Bacilli		
	<u>Satis- fied</u>	<u>Failed</u>	<u>Satis- fied</u>	<u>Failed</u>	<u>Pos.</u>	<u>Neg.</u>	<u>No Result</u>
Herts. County Council	29	2	-	-	-	-	-
Other Authorities	29	2	3	-	-	-	-
Hitchin Rural Dist. Council	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	58	4	3	-	-	-	-

Total number of samples - 65

b. Inspection of meat and other foods

This routine work continues. Perhaps the most interesting example of the useful nature of this duty is the fact that, in several cases, it has been possible to track down the origins of certain animals which were slaughtered without notification and sent in to the Ministry depots. In two cases, an animal was found to be tuberculous and thanks to immediate and extensive investigation the exact circumstances of the occurrence were established in a matter of hours, thus enabling suitable protective action to be taken. The explanation of such happenings is usually ignorance of governing conditions and explanation of these in no uncertain manner leaves the offender in no doubt as to what must be done in the future.

The amount of foodstuff condemned as unsound and unfit during the year was as follows:-

	<u>Cwts.</u>	<u>Qtrs.</u>	<u>Lbs.</u>	<u>Ozs.</u>
Tinned Food	3	-	1	13
Fish	-	2	-	-
Meat	-	-	7	-
Total	3	2	8	13

c. Food Poisoning Outbreaks

No outbreak of food poisoning has been reported during the year.

d. Factories Act 1937

An abstract from the Report submitted to the Ministry of Labour and National Service on Form 572 is given herewith -

Factories Acts 1937 and 1948

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

Premises	No. on Register	Number of		
		Inspections	Written Notices	Occupiers Prosecuted
(i) Factories in which Secs.1, 2,3,4 and 6 are to be enforced	21	-	-	-
(ii) Factories not inc.in (i) in which Sec.7 is enforced by the Local Auth.	86	17	3	-
(iii) Other prems.in which Sec.7 is enforced by the Local Auth. (excl.Outworkers)	-	-	-	-
Total	107	17	3	-

2. Cases in which Defects were found

Particulars	No. of cases in which defects found				No. of prosecutions
	Found	Remedied	To H.M. Inspec.	By H.M. Inspec.	
Want of cleanliness	-	-	-	-	-
Overcrowding	-	-	-	-	-
Unreasonable temp.	-	-	-	-	-
Inadequate ventil.	-	-	-	-	-
Ineffective drainage of floors	-	-	-	-	-
Sanitary Conveniences					
(a) Insufficient	2	1	-	-	-
(b) Unsuitable or defective	-	-	-	-	-
(c) Not separate for sexes	-	-	-	-	-
Other offences against the Act	2	1	-	-	-
Total	4	2	-	-	-

Outworkers. There are 15 outworkers reported in the district.

SECTION F

Prevalence of and Control over, Infectious and other Diseases

During the year local notifications of infectious disease (after correction of diagnosis) were: Measles 248, whooping cough 120, dysentery 39, acute pneumonia 11, scarlet fever 7, acute poliomyelitis 1, diphtheria 1, erysipelas 1, and infective hepatitis 1

Measles and whooping cough were moderately high in their incidence, mainly at infant school age, in the first and second quarters.

Scarlet Fever notifications were remarkably low (total 7). Apart from a group of three children in Ashwell they were scattered in distribution and apparently of mild severity.

Dysentery notifications arose mainly from an institutional outbreak of "Sonne" infection in the first quarter.

Acute pneumonia notifications were almost wholly coincident with influenza prevalence around the month of February.

Acute poliomyelitis was confined to an adult caravan dweller in a rural village - the only confirmed case in North Herts. during the year.

Diphtheria - was confirmed in hospital clinically (but not bacteriologically) in one Kimpton child, no other case occurring either in Herts. or the neighbouring county at the actual point in time. There was a record of past immunisation in this child, whose recovery was uneventful. Such isolated case in no way vitiates the claim that immunisation confers a high degree of protection against attack and its offer to children continues to be accepted by a large majority of parents in the district.

TUBERCULOSIS

New Cases and Deaths during the year 1951

Age Periods	New Cases				Deaths			
	Respiratory		Non-Respiratory		Respiratory		Non-Respiratory	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0 - 1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1 - 5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5 - 15	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
15 - 25	3	4	1	2	-	-	-	-
25 - 35	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
35 - 45	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
45 - 55	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
55 - 65	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
and over	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Totals	9	5	1	2	-	1	-	-

Deaths allocated by the Registrar-General after final transfers

- 1 - -

The total of new notifications again shows some reduction and the single death for the year is very favourable.

VICTOR R. WALKER
District Medical Officer
of Health

July 1952.