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KINGSBRIDGE
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL



REPORT


of the

Medical Officer of Health

for the Year 1956



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KINGSBRIDGE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Annual Report
OF THE
Medical Officer of Health
FOR THE YEAR, 1956.

Medical Officer of Health : DR. R. B. WALKER, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.,
D.P.H.
Deputy Medical Officer of Health : DR. W. H. COWPER, M.B.,
B.CH., B.A.O.
Surveyor and Public Health Inspector : MR. N. HARRIS, A.I.A.S.,
C.R.S.I.
Public Health Inspector : MR. D. J. COLE, M.R.S.H.

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present the Report on the health of the district for the year 1956.

The Report is divided into two parts. The first is without details or tables. It is hoped it will give a general picture of occurrences during the year. The second contains more detailed information which may be of interest to only a few.

The area is mainly agricultural, although on the coast many of the inhabitants are employed in sea-faring pursuits. The beauty of the whole area, coast and inland, attracts many visitors throughout the year, the largest number, naturally, being during the summer months. Catering for these visitors is one of the main sources of livelihood for many of the residents of the district. There are situated geographically within the district, the Urban Districts of Kingsbridge and Salcombe.

PROVISIONS OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.

The personal health services are provided by various bodies, by far the greater part being under the control of the Regional Hospital Board, Devon County Council and the Local Executive Council. The environmental health services are controlled by the District Council.

The Public Health Laboratory Service has a laboratory in Plymouth for the investigation of communicable diseases and the examination of milk, water, ice-cream, foodstuffs, etc. It is under the direction of Dr. C. Jellard. The help which is given by him and his staff so freely and frequently is greatly appreciated.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

A table showing the number of cases of notifiable diseases that have occurred is printed in the second part of this report. Included in this section is Tuberculosis. It is sometimes not realised that it is an infectious disease. It is the undiscovered chronic case who is a danger to others, the treated supervised case rarely. During the year, we were visited by the Mass Radiography Unit. It is unfortunate that, although the public are gradually adopting a more sensible attitude towards Tuberculosis, there are still many who would rather do anything than have their chests x-rayed. There was, however, a fair attendance at the Mass Radiography Unit.

There have been, during the year, several outbreaks of Winter Vomiting. Little is known of this condition. It is thought to be due to infection by a virus, but it has not yet been isolated and its method of spread is not known. As it is a mild condition from which the victims usually recover fairly rapidly, information is not usually obtained when an outbreak starts but only when it has attained remarkable proportions.

Inoculations against Poliomyelitis were carried out by the County Health Department during the year for the first time.

FOOD POISONING.

There was an outbreak of food poisoning but no definite conclusion as to its source was reached. Often information is not obtained about food poisoning until it is too late to carry out effective investigations.

There were some cases of Salmonella Dublini in lambs in the area. This is an organism which can cause food poisoning in humans. Fortunately the cases were confined to animals.

WATER SUPPLY.

The main water supply is by the South Devon Water Board. There are many private supplies. These are sampled so that advice may be given concerning their fitness for domestic and agricultural purposes.

SEWERAGE.

Malborough Sewage Disposal Works were taken over from the Royal Air Force. They have been functioning satisfactorily. All the village is not served by the works, but it is planned to connect that part on the Northern slope of the hill at some future date. It will necessitate pumping.

Work at Stokenham, South Milton and Thurlestone is in progress.

Preparation for work at Churchstow and Kingston is being undertaken.

Work is to be done at Hope Cove to lengthen the outfall sewer. It is hoped that this, combined with the blocking of pipes under the breakwater, will prevent the fouling of the beach inside the breakwater. In a district where practically every portion of the coastline is used by holidaymakers, it is most important that there should be no chance of sewage polluting the bathing beaches.

The work of providing sewerage systems in the outlying districts increases with the improvement of the water supply. There are still many parts of the district where arrangements for the disposal of sewage are of the most primitive kind.

PUBLIC CONVENIENCES.

Torcross and Modbury have been altered and improved.

It is hoped that Thurlestone will be ready for the summer season.

Preparation is being made for work at East Portlemouth.

Public Conveniences in a district which attracts holidaymakers are always a difficult problem. They are used only for a part of the year; are always wilfully damaged by a section of the public of a peculiar mentality; bring in little revenue; and are costly to maintain. Unless very carefully sited, they are an eyesore, if too unobtrusive, nobody finds them. They are used practically exclusively by visitors to the district who contribute nothing directly to the rates. Nevertheless, the visitors do contribute to the prosperity of the district. It is essential, for the sake of their health and that of the residents, that there should be adequate provision of conveniences at those places where there is a concentration of people.

HOUSING.

Some progress has been made with slum clearance. Unfortunately, the last complete survey of housing in the district was so long ago that it is of very little value as a guide to the state of the dwellings now. It has not been found possible to do another complete survey, so the problem of clearing bad housing has had to be tackled in those places where it appears worst, and where it will be possible to provide housing for the displaced occupants.

MOVEABLE DWELLINGS.

There are in the district many caravan and camping sites.

I feel that there should be a constant effort to improve the sanitary facilities at these camps. Most owners are fully aware that the provision of better facilities is of ultimate benefit to all. These sites, unless well run and well equipped, are a potential source of danger to health. There is, in the second half of this report, a standard recommended by a conference of Devon Medical Officers of Health, which I think we should aim at.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOODS.

During the year, the Food Hygiene Regulations, 1955, came into operation. Part came into operation on 1st January, 1956, but certain provisions, involving substantial changes, did not come

into operation until 1st July, 1956. The Regulations apply to supply of food in the course of a business which includes canteens, clubs, schools and other institutions.

The principal extensions of the previous law are summarised in Ministry of Health Circular 17/55, as follows :—

- (i) specific requirements designed to prevent the contamination of food.
- (ii) provision of sinks or other facilities for washing food and equipment.
- (iii) the provision of a constant supply of hot water for sinks, wash basins, etc., in food premises and of a supply of hot water on stalls and vehicles.
- (iv) restrictions on the preparation and packing of food in or about domestic premises.
- (v) the conditions under which certain foods that provide a particularly favourable medium for food poisoning organisms are to be kept in food premises.
- (vi) a requirement to provide vehicles used for the transport of meat with duckboards and separate receptacles for offal, and, where the vehicles are not enclosed, a covering supported by a frame or poles.
- (vii) the circumstances in which persons carrying meat are required to wear overalls and head coverings.

These regulations give power to effect considerable improvement in the food hygiene of the district, which is of special importance where there are a large number of visitors, and therefore many people eating away from their homes. Unfortunately, owing to shortage of staff and the increased work thrown on them by the slum clearance programme, it has not been possible to tackle this matter at all thoroughly.

MEAT INSPECTION.

There has been some increase in number of units inspected during the year. The mileage travelled is 0.35 miles per unit. The Ministry have proposed, since the year covered by this report, that there should be a grant of half the cost of inspection of " export meat." It appears that in a district such as this where slaughterhouses are widely scattered, this grant will not even cover the cost of travelling to inspect this export meat, without considering the other costs involved.

The arrangement whereby the Inspector of Salcombe Urban District Council assists with the inspection of meat continues satisfactorily.

REFUSE DISPOSAL.

The Council provides a fortnightly collection of incombustible house refuse throughout the district. This is disposed of in five refuse tips within the district. The maintenance of a fortnightly

collection throughout the district remains a problem. Unfortunately, the collection of waste paper has had to be discontinued, as there is no longer a sale for it. The salvage of other materials continues.

PART II.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

Area—70,818 acres.

Population—11,990.

Rateable Value—£127,250.

Sum represented by a Penny Rate—Est. £514. 4s. 10d.

VITAL STATISTICS.

LIVE BIRTHS :

	Total	Males	Females	Birth rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population.
Legitimate	80	98	82	15.59
Illegitimate	7	6	1	
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	
	187	104	83	
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	

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

STILL BIRTHS :

1	1	—	5.32
---	---	---	------

Death rate per 1,000
of the estimated
resident population.

DEATHS :	153	78	75	12.76
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Deaths as recorded under heading 30 of the Registrar-General's Short List :

	Deaths	Rate per 1,000 rural live and still births.
No. 30 Pregnancy, Childbirth, Abortion	Nil	Nil
Death Rate of Infants under 1 year of age :—		
All infants per 1,000 live births	.....	21.38
Legitimate Infants per 1,000 legitimate live births		22.22
Illegitimate Infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births		Nil
Death Rate of Infants under 4 weeks of age :—		
All Infants per 1,000 live births	.....	16.04
Legitimate Infants per 1,000 legitimate live births		16.66
Illegitimate Infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births		Nil

CAUSES OF DEATH.

	M.	F.
1. Tuberculosis of the Respiratory System	—	1
2. Other forms of Tuberculosis	—	1
3. Syphilitic Disease	—	—
4. Diphtheria	—	—
5. Whooping Cough	1	—
6. Meningoccal Infections	—	—
7. Acute Poliomyelitis	—	—
8. Measles	—	—
9. Other Infective and Parasitic Diseases	—	—
10. Malignant Neoplasm, Stomach	1	2
11. Malignant Neoplasm, Lung, Bronchus	5	1
12. Malignant Neoplasm, Breast	—	2
13. Malignant Neoplasm, Uterus	—	—
14. Other Malignant and Lymphatic Neoplasms	15	9
15. Leukaemia, Aleukaemia	—	1
16. Diabetes	—	—
17. Vascular Lesions of Nervous System	6	12
18. Coronary Disease, Angina	9	4
19. Hypertension with Heart Disease	1	2
20. Other Heart Disease	7	13
21. Other Circulatory Disease	7	8
22. Influenza	1	—
23. Pneumonia	1	4
24. Bronchitis	4	1
25. Other Diseases of Respiratory System	2	1
26. Ulcer of Stomach and Duodenum	1	—
27. Gastritis, Enteritis and Diarrhoea	—	—
28. Nephritis and Nephrosis	—	2
29. Hyperplasia of Prostate	1	—
30. Pregnancy, Childbirth, Abortion	—	—
31. Congenital Malformations	1	—
32. Other defined and ill-defined Diseases	9	8
33. Motor Vehicle Accidents	3	—
34. All other Accidents	2	2
35. Suicide	1	1
36. Homicide and Operations of War	—	—
	<hr style="width: 100%; border: 0.5px solid black;"/>	<hr style="width: 100%; border: 0.5px solid black;"/>
	78	75
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PAROCHIAL DISTRIBUTION OF CASES OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE FOR YEAR 1956

DISEASES	Aveton Gifford	Bigbury	Blackawton	Buckland-tout-Saints	Charleton	Chivelstone	Churchstow	East Allington	East Portlemouth	Kingston	Loddiswell	Malborough	Modbury	Ringmore	Sherford	Slapton	South Huish	South Milton	South Pool	Stoke Fleming	Stokenham	Strete	Thurlestone	West Alvington	Woodleigh	Totals
WHOOPING COUGH	—	—	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	25	—	—	—	17	2	—	8	10	4	—	—	1	—	71
SCARLET FEVER	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	8
MEASLES	—	—	—	2	1	26	4	—	—	—	11	—	—	—	—	6	—	—	—	3	42	14	—	—	—	109
ERYSIPELAS	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
MENINGOCOCCAL INFECTION	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
PNEUMONIA	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	2

Houses erected during the year ended 1956 :—

	HOUSES		BUNGALOWS
	Traditional	New Tradition	Traditional
EAST ALLINGTON—Laburnum Way	10	—	6
MODBURY—St. George's Close	5	—	3
SOUTH HUISH—Galmpton	—	12 (CU)	—
STRETE—Hyne Town	7	—	7
STOKENHAM—Kernborough	4	—	—
	26	12	16

HOUSING, 1957—Houses in course of construction :

STOKE FLEMING—Bidders Close	—	—	6
MODBURY—Traine Villas	—	—	—

SLUM CLEARANCE.

HOUSING ACT, 1936, SECS. 11 AND 25.

Number of houses represented 1946—1955 .....	.....	.....	10
Number of houses demolished 1946—1955 .....	.....	.....	4
Number of families rehoused 1946—1955 .....	.....	.....	Nil
YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 1956.			
Number of houses represented .....	.....	.....	22
Number of houses demolished .....	.....	.....	6
Number of families rehoused .....	.....	.....	6

MOVEABLE DWELLINGS.

LICENSED SITES AND CARAVANS.

No. of sites.	No. of Caravans licensed.	Individual Caravans licensed.
12	785	10

PUBLIC HEALTH STANDARDS AS APPLIED TO SITES ON WHICH CARAVANS ARE SUBLET.

1. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS :

The difficulty of drawing up specified standards is accentuated by the fact that conditions which would be quite satisfactory for one or two nights will not necessarily be satisfactory for one or two weeks and would be impossible if they had to be tolerated on a residential caravan site for a whole year.

It is felt that the standards required for permanent residential caravans should be considerably higher than those outlined in the following, and they would not apply to the very small camp, containing, say, less than 12 caravans. Similarly, it is administratively impossible to impose them in respect of sites which, by reason of their use for less than 42 days in the year, require no licence under Section 269 of the Public Health Act, 1936.

2. WATER SUPPLY.

Quality.

A safe water supply is of paramount importance, since most holiday-makers come from urban areas, where they are accustomed to a pure water supply. Moreover, a caravan holiday is frequently a family holiday and there may be a large number of children at risk. An approved water supply should, therefore, be available.

Water Points.

A standpipe for every eight caravans should be provided and should be sited that it is not more than 50 yards from any caravan. A gully trap and a concrete surround should be provided beneath every tap.

3. SANITARY ACCOMMODATION

Type.

Only a water carriage system should be contemplated. Pail and chemical closets are satisfactory in theory, but in practice, it is not possible to give them the attention they require.

Provision of Water Closets.

There should never be less than two w.c.'s for any one site, one for males and one for females and, above that figure, one w.c. should be provided for six caravans. This standard approximates to that required under the Factories Act.

4. SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

Water closets should be drained either to a public sewer or to a small private sewage disposal works, which shall be of satisfactory design and performance, giving sedimentation and filtration treatment.

5. SULLAGE WATER.

A gully trap with a suitable curb should be provided for each caravan, unless the gully trap available beneath the standpipe is within a distance of 20 yards. All sullage water drains must be connected to the sewage disposal works or to the sewer, if available.

6. REFUSE DISPOSAL.

Refuse bins with a tightly fitting lid should be provided for every caravan, and should be emptied at least once a week, preferably on Saturday morning.

7. DISTANCE BETWEEN CARAVANS.

It seems generally agreed that there should be at least 20 feet distance between caravans and that the density of caravans per acre should not exceed 20. Possibly the latter requirement is usually imposed by the Planning Authority and might, therefore, be left to that Authority.

8. FIRE PRECAUTIONS.

Although this requirement is not, perhaps, a Public Health matter, it is felt that the Local Authority ought to concern itself with this problem. A common requirement is that there should

be a fire point every 100 to 150 feet in the larger camps, which would consist of a 100-gallon water container, preferably on wheels, and a number of fire buckets. The provision of sand and fire extinguishers would also be an advantage. A notice advising the action to be taken in the case of fire might well be pinned up in every caravan.

CONCLUSIONS. The regular inspection of caravan sites by the Public Health Department is essential during the six peak weeks of the camping season. This inspection is particularly important in the unlicensed camps and Local Authorities should be strongly recommended to consider action under Section 92 of the Public Health Act, 1936, if a Public Health nuisance should arise, at these or any other camps.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTIONS.

Complaints investigated	.....	.....	.....	.....	24
Infectious Disease	.....	.....	.....	.....	12
Inspections of Camping Sites	.....	.....	.....	.....	43
Houses inspected under Public Health Act	.....	.....	.....	.....	51
Houses inspected under Housing Acts	.....	.....	.....	.....	38
Factories	.....	.....	.....	.....	19
Food Premises	.....	.....	.....	.....	67
Slaughterhouses, Butchers' Shops, Farms, etc.	.....	.....	.....	.....	825
Dairies	.....	.....	.....	.....	5
Schools	.....	.....	.....	.....	4
Rodent Control	.....	.....	.....	.....	18
Water Supply	.....	.....	.....	.....	31

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOODS.

During the year, visits were made as follows:—

Slaughterhouses	747
Butcher Shops	21

TOTAL	768
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The following carcases were inspected:

Bulls	3
Cows	160
Heifers	276
Steers	491
Calves	369
Sheep	7406
Pigs	1463

TOTAL	10068
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The total weight of meat condemned was 8 tons 7 cwts. 3qrs. and 21 lbs.

Diseased meat, etc. is collected by arrangement and converted into glues and fertilisers

APPENDIX.

Carcases and Offal inspected and condemned in whole or in part.

	Cattle exclud'g Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs	Horses
Number killed (if known)	770	160	369	7406	1463	—
Number inspected	770	160	369	7406	1463	—
All diseases except Tuberculosis and Cysticerci :						
Whole carcases condemned	2	4	4	23	9	—
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	181	75	5	463	64	—
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis and cysticerci	23.76	49.37	1.35	6.56	4.98	—
Tuberculosis only :						
Whole carcases condemned	2	3	Nil	Nil	Nil	—
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	21	23	Nil	Nil	23	—
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis	2.98	16.25	Nil	Nil	1.56	—
Cysticercosis :						
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	8	—	—	—	—	—
Carcases submitted to treatment by refrigeration	8	—	—	—	—	—
Generalised and totally condemned	Nil	—	—	—	—	—

OTHER FOODS.

The following table indicates the number of food premises in the area, by type of business :

Bakehouses	6
Butcher Shops	11
Fishmongers and Fryers	1

Ice Cream Manufacturers	.....	.....	.....	1
Retailers	.....	.....	.....	46
General Stores	.....	.....	.....	59
Dairies	.....	.....	.....	2
Restaurants and Cafes	.....	.....	.....	18
Hotels, etc.	.....	.....	.....	74

REGISTRATION OF PREMISES UNDER SECTION 14 OF THE FOOD AND DRUGS ACT, 1938 :

Manufacture of Ice Cream	.....	.....	.....	1
Sale of Ice Cream	.....	.....	.....	46
Manufacture of Preserved Food	.....	.....	.....	8
Amount of food condemned during the year	.....	.....	.....	78 $\frac{3}{4}$
Number of new registrations under Section 14	.....	.....	.....	2

ICE CREAM SAMPLING :

Grade 1	.....	.....	10
Grade 2	.....	.....	3
Grade 3	.....	.....	5
Grade 4	.....	.....	1

FACTORIES ACT, 1937.

PRESCRIBED PARTICULARS ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE FACTORIES ACT, 1937.

PART I OF THE ACT.

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

Premises.	No. in Register.	Inspections.	Number of Written Notices.	Occupier Prosecuted.
(1)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	4	4	—	—
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Sec. 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	27	15	—	—
(iii) Other Premises in which Sec. 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out-workers' premises)	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	31	19	—	—

RODENT CONTROL.

	TYPE OF PROPERTY				
	NON-AGRICULTURAL			AGRICULTURAL	
	Dwelling Local Author's	All other Houses (inc. Council Houses).	(inc. Business Premises).	Total of cols. (1), (2) and (3).	
1. Number of properties in Local Authority's District	28	4053	394	4475	748
2. Number of properties inspected as a result of:					
(a) Notification	—	87	2	89	4
(b) Survey under the Act	—	363	6	369	9
(c) Otherwise (<i>e.g.</i> when visited primarily for some other purpose)	—	24	4	28	3
3. Total inspections carried out—including re-inspections	223	976	114	1313	111
4. Number of properties inspected (in Sect. 2) which were found to be infested by:					
(a) Rats—Major	3	—	1	4	3
Minor	25	361	5	391	8
(b) Mice—Major	—	16	—	16	12
Minor	—	43	6	49	3
5. Number of infected properties (in Sect. 4) treated by the L.A.	21	324	4	349	—
6. Total treatments carried out—including retreatments	28	420	12	460	—
7. Number of notices served under Section 4 of the Act:					
(a) Treatment	—	—	—	—	—
(b) Structural Work (<i>i.e.</i> Proofing)	—	—	—	—	—
8. Number of cases in which default action was taken following the issue of a notice under Sect. 4 of the Act	—	—	—	—	—
9. Legal Proceedings	—	—	—	—	—
10. Number of "Block" control schemes carried out	83				

I am, Your obedient Servant,

R. B. WALKER,

Medical Officer of Health.

September, 1957.

