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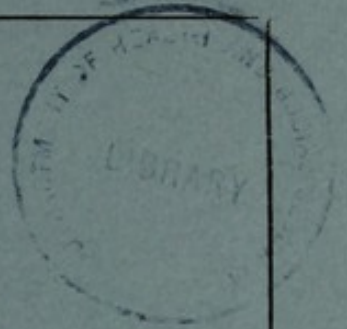
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KINGSBRIDGE
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL



REPORT
on the
Health of the Area
for the Year 1970

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Presented by
The Medical Officer of Health and
Public Health Inspector

K



Kingsbridge Urban District Council

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

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(Until October 1970)

ASSISTANT PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

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Public Health matters are dealt with by the Public Health
and Highways Committee

Report on the Health of the District for the Year 1970

PREFACE

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I present herewith the Annual Report of the health of the district during 1970, drawn up on the lines of Department of Health and Social Security Circular 1/71 dated January 1971. Included in the Report is the Report of your Chief Public Health Inspector.

In October 1970 Mr. L. J. Hill, Senior Public Health Inspector, relinquished his post to take on other duties, and Mr. P. Tedstone was upgraded to Public Health Inspector.

Vital Statistics

The Registrar General estimated the population to be 3,520 persons, an increase of 10 over the previous year. There were 52 births, giving a Standardised Rate of 17.3, which is well above the National Rate of 16.0. There were 42 deaths, giving a Standardised Rate of 10.6 per thousand population, which is less than the National Rate of 11.7. Most of the deaths were due to diseases of the heart and circulation, but one baby died from congenital defects.

General Health

Head lice: From January to March 1970 the School Health Service was dealing with a total of approximately 100 schoolchildren who had become infested with head lice. Your Public Health Inspector arranged disinfestation of cloakrooms at a school, and children and parents were offered treatment under the National Health Service. All ladies' and gentlemen's hairdressers in the area were visited and advice offered. Thanks to the co-operation of all concerned the outbreak was brought to an end.

Shellfish from Salcombe Estuary: In April application was made by two persons at Kingsbridge to the Kingsbridge U.D.C. and to the Kingsbridge and Salcombe Port Health Authority to gather up and sell shellfish from Salcombe Estuary. There is an Order dated 29th July, 1946, made by the Port Health Authority prohibiting sale for human consumption of cockles, winkles, limpets or mussels unless properly treated beforehand. Your M.O.H. consulted with the Port Medical Officer and recommended to the Urban District that provided proper heat treatment of the shellfish is carried out the scheme might be allowed to proceed. At the end of 1970 the Port Health Authority was still negotiating with the proposers of the scheme and was looking into the legal implications.

I wish to thank members of the Council and staff for their help and co-operation during the year.

JOHN WILDMAN

September 1971

Medical Officer of Health

SECTION A

VITAL STATISTICS AND GENERAL STATISTICS 1970

Table 1

Figures for 1969 are shown in brackets

POPULATION:

Estimated Mid-Year Population of Kingsbridge Urban District

3,520 (3,510)					
Natural increase or decrease	...	...	...	+10	(+1)
Migration in or out	...	...	...	Nil	(+169)
Total increase or decrease	...	...	...	+10	(+170)
Population at 1961 Census	...	...	...	...	3,287

GENERAL STATISTICS :**Area of Kingsbridge Urban District in Acres**

1,148

Number of Inhabited Houses according to the Rate Books

1,291 (1,278)

Number of Houses per acre ... 1.124 (1.113)

Number of Persons per acre ... 3.066 (3.049)

Number of Persons per house ... 2.727 (2.739)

Dwellings owned by the Council ... 369

Rateable Value of District at 1st April

£148,489 (£144,920)

Sum Represented by a Penny Rate

£596 (£590)

Table 2**Figures for 1969 are shown in brackets****BIRTHS :****Standardised Live Birth Rate per 1,000 population** 17.3 (14.4)**Area Comparability Factor for Births** ... 1.17 (1.17)**Number of Live Births**

	Males	Females	Total
Total	31	21	52
Legitimate	31	19	50
Illegitimate	0	2	2
Number of Still Births	0	0	0

DEATHS :**Standardised Death Rate per 1,000 population** ... 10.6 (10.8)**Area Comparability Factor for Deaths** ... 0.89 (0.90)**Number of Deaths :**

	Males	Females	Total
All ages—Total	25	17	42
Deaths of Infants under 1 year	1	0	1
Number under 4 weeks of age	0	0	0
Number under 1 week of age	0	0	0

Infantile Mortality Rate per 1,000 Live Births ... 19.0 (23.8)**Comparisons with Rates for England and Wales****Birth Rate** (16.0 (16.3)) **Death Rate** 11.7 (11.9)**Infantile Mortality Rate** 18.0 (18.0)

(Infants under 1 year of age)

CAUSES OF DEATH DURING 1970

		All ages		
		M.	F.	Total
B19(4)	Malignant Neoplasm, Intestine ...	2	3	5
B19(6)	Malignant Neoplasm, Lung, Bronchus ...	2	0	2
B19(9)	Malignant Neoplasm, Prostate ...	1	0	1
B19(11)	Other Malignant Neoplasms ...	1	0	1
B26	Chronic Rheumatic Heart Disease ...	0	1	1
B28	Ischaemic Heart Disease ...	10	3	13
B29	Other Forms of Heart Disease ...	0	1	1
B30	Cerebrovascular Disease ...	4	5	9
B46(6)	Other Diseases of Circulatory System ...	0	1	1
B32	Pneumonia ...	0	1	1
B33(1)	Bronchitis and Emphysema ...	3	1	4
B42	Congenital Anomalies ...	1	0	1
BE48	All Other Accidents ...	1	1	2
TOTAL ALL CAUSES ...		25	17	42

PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASES NOTIFIABLE DISEASES

Table 1

Disease	Age group in years						
	Total	Under 1	1-5	5-15	15-25	25-65	Over 65
Measles	3	0	3	0	0	0	0

Table 2

Disease	Incidence by Quarters				
	Total	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Measles	3	0	0	3	0

NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACTS 1948 and 1951

No action was necessary under the National Assistance Acts of 1948 and 1951 for the removal of persons in need of care and attention and no persons were buried in accordance with Section 50 of the 1948 Act.

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES

1. Hospitals.

A General Practitioner Hospital with 13 beds is situated at Kingsbridge. Other hospitals which serve the district are at Plymouth and Totnes.

2. County Council Health Services.

Under the National Health Services Act 1946, the Devon County Council provides the following services :—

Domiciliary midwives, home nurses, health visitors, supervisory care of expectant and nursing mothers and children under five, ambulance services, vaccination and immunisation procedures.

Full details can be obtained from the County Medical Officer at Exeter.

3. Social Services (Devon County Council)

The Area Director of Social Services at The Family Welfare Centre, Bridgetown, Totnes (Tel. Totnes 3665), is responsible for providing a Social Work Service under the Children's Acts, The Mental Health Act 1959 and the National Assistance Acts, to the elderly, the mentally ill, the physically handicapped and homeless persons and families. The Social Services Department also administers the Home Help Service, the Social Work Service to Schools, the Occupational Therapy Services and Residential Homes and Centres.

4. Laboratory Service.

Bacteriological examinations of pathological specimens and samples of milk, water and ice cream are carried out at the Public Health Laboratory at Plymouth. The chemical analysis of water is undertaken by public analysts at Exeter.

5. Medical and Dental Services.

There are four general medical practitioners and three dentists in the town.

6. Mass Miniature Radiography.

A Mass X-Ray Unit visits the town regularly once a fortnight and members of the public are encouraged to attend for a chest X-ray.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Report of the Public Health Inspector

In October 1970 Mr. Hill, having been appointed Clerk to the Council in addition to Engineer and Surveyor, resigned his duties as Public Health Inspector and the Council decided that I should succeed to the responsibilities. I am grateful for the trust and confidence

shown in me, especially after so relatively a short period since my initial appointment, and I shall endeavour to fulfill the Council's expectations.

I would like to thank Mr. Hill for the great help he has given me since my arrival in Kingsbridge and I hope I shall continue to benefit from his advice and experience. I also hope I will be able to carry out the duties of Public Health Inspector to Kingsbridge Urban District Council as well as Mr. Hill has done for so many years.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the members, my fellow staff and indeed all the kind people of Kingsbridge for the help and support I have received.

Here then is an account of the environmental hygiene of Kingsbridge during 1970.

Water Supply.

Generally the water supply for the area was maintained at its usual high standard of quality and quantity, but on one occasion during the year there was a period lasting a few hours when a section of the town received a rust red discoloured supply. This was explained as the dislodgement by unusual flows of normal accumulations in the mains pipes and the discoloured water was soon run off and a normal supply restored.

There were incidents of green discolouration due to installation of soft copper piping and also due to "dezincification," a process of disassociation of zinc from brass fittings, causing a build-up of a green deposit inside pipes. Good plumbing practice obviates these occurrences.

I was surprised to find a few cottages in the town still without an internal water supply but having a stand-pipe in a rear yard or outbuilding. I refer to this subject again in the Housing section.

Drainage and Sewerage.

After a further series of frustrations, there being an apparent lack of sympathy and understanding of the situation on behalf of the (now) Department of Environment and the Devon County Council with regard to the proposed sewage disposal scheme for Kingsbridge, the Council decided to agree to the demands of the County Council. In accordance with their wishes it was decided to provide a full treatment plant at higher cost than the originally envisaged proposals. Instructions were given for the acquisition of the site and the Consultant Engineers requested to prepare the scheme to go to tender.

And so another year has passed with little real progress towards starting work on the disposal scheme. Now pollution has become a fashionable topic for debate it is ironic that when a small town is prepared to incur heavy expenditure to play its part in preserving the environment, obstructions are placed in its path by the same sections of government urging action.

European Conservation Year came in with great expectations and went out with a whiff of effluent in Kingsbridge.

Housing.

Private house building continued steadily on existing planning permissions, but restrictions on further applications until adequate arrangements are made for sewage disposal prevented major new developments, and for the same reason no new council houses were built during the year.

There was evidence to suggest that there may be quite a large number of unfit dwellings in the town. While carrying out inspections of cottages, usually prior to the consideration of a rehousing application, many were found to be in a very poor state of repair, damp and often without kitchen or washing facilities or even an internal water supply, not to mention the ubiquitous water closet at the bottom of the garden.

One house inspected during the year had no electricity or gas supplies, lighting was by oil lamp and cooking by "Lidstone" solid fuel range. There was no sink nor washing facilities and water was obtained from a stand-pipe over a drainage gulley in a scullery. The whole house was in a poor state of repair and very damp. I suspect there may still be more dwellings like this in Kingsbridge.

There is no doubt the very low rent income from controlled tenancies is the main reason for the disrepair of dwellings, and fair rents would enable landlords to better maintain their property, but there does seem a general reluctance among local property owners to spend money on basic maintenance. Even owner-occupied houses and business premises suffer from this apparent lack of enthusiasm for routine repairs and negligence leads to greater expense in the long run.

I believe there is no room for complacency on our housing situation and that a policy of clearance, repair and improvement of unfit dwellings should be pursued together with the provision of new accommodation, particularly for older people who are more often found in these unfit cottages.

The Housing Act, 1969, introduced a procedure whereby owners of controlled rental properties may apply for a Qualification Certificate, which a local authority may issue if satisfied the property conforms with certain standards. These standards are that the dwelling is in good repair having regard to its age, character and locality and that the basic amenities are available for use by the occupier. The owner may, of course, be entitled to a Standard Grant to help provide these amenities. If the Qualification Certificate is issued the owner can apply to the Rent Tribunal for the conversion of the controlled tenancy to a regulated one, and for a proportionate increase in the rent.

In my opinion this is an excellent scheme, as it achieves better living conditions for the tenant, the provision of amenities, improvement in the state of repair of the housing stock and fairer rents for owners. It was therefore disappointing that only two applications for Qualification Certificates were made in Kingsbridge during 1970, and when the owners became aware of the minimum repairs necessary before issue of the certificates both applications were abandoned.

Much interest has been shown in this scheme throughout the country and it seems to work well in practice, so is this further evidence of a local lack of interest for maintenance of property?

Applications for improvement grants continued at the usual rate through the year, with a tendency for more interest to be shown in the new comprehensive improvement grants under the Housing Act 1969 as against the Standard Grant for basic amenities. Great emphasis is being placed on improvement and, when suitable, houses are saved from premature demolition under this policy. The appearance and character of a town is dictated by its buildings and the preservation of worthwhile dwellings should be encouraged, but it must be remembered there comes the time in any building's life when the sensible decision is demolition.

It was necessary to take legal action to secure compliance with statutory notices served in respect of three cottages when the owner failed to carry out repairs. Following successful prosecution, court orders were made and subsequently complied with.

Demolition orders were made on two cottages during the year and undertakings for their repair and improvement accepted. A County Court appeal made by the owner against the orders was dismissed.

During the year the Council decided to implement the much postponed Clearance Orders on Devon Square and negotiations to that end were commenced.

Number of complaints alleging house defects	...	...	...	170
Minor housing repairs dealt with	...	...	...	161
Notices served	...	...	...	8
Notices complied with	...	...	...	7
Standard Grants completed	...	...	...	7
Total number of inspections and visits made in connection with housing generally	...	...	...	468

Offices and Shops.

Working conditions for Kingsbridge office and shop staff can be generally assessed as poor. True there are a few employers, more

especially among the nationally operating companies, who provide good staff facilities, but further inspections made during 1970 confirmed the need for continuing effort in this field.

Lack of adequate sanitary accommodation and washing facilities, very low temperatures during winter months and dirty premises behind the scenes, coupled with this reluctance to carry out routine maintenance of property referred to in the section on housing, combine to give miserable working conditions for shop and office staff.

It may well be consideration will have to be given to taking legal action to ensure compliance with the Act should informal methods fail.

New registrations during 1970	...	...	...	...	...	26
Informal notices served	...	...	...	...	...	35
Informal notices complied with	...	...	...	...	...	11
Total number of inspections under this Act	...	...	...	...	...	93

NUISANCES, ETC.

Number of complaints received alleging nuisances	...	...	...	...	...	12
Other complaints	...	...	...	...	...	13
Notices served	...	...	...	...	...	11
Notices complied with	...	...	...	...	...	10
Other complaints remedied	...	...	...	...	...	9
Total number of general inspections and visits	...	...	...	...	...	382

No difficulties were encountered during the year in connection with pest control, and insect and rodent infestations reported were dealt with by the rodent operator or by way of advice as to suitable treatment. Test baiting of lengths of sewerage system were undertaken as routine by the rodent operator.

Notifications	...	...	...	...	...	45
Infestations treated	...	...	...	...	...	28
Total number of visits	...	...	...	...	...	110

FOOD

I am pleased to report a general improvement in the standard of hygiene in food premises in the town. Most proprietors of food businesses responded readily when shortcomings were drawn to their attention, and much good work of cleaning and redecorating was completed and washing facilities installed, without the need for formal action.

New Food Hygiene Regulations were introduced during 1970 which will apply higher standards particularly in respect of protection from contamination of food on display.

Following is a list of food premises grouped as far as possible into principal trades :—

Supermarkets/Grocers	...	...	...	...	...	13
Butchers	...	...	...	...	...	4
Bakers/Confectioners (2 bakehouses)	...	...	...	...	...	9
Wet and Fried Fish Shops (1 mobile)	...	...	...	...	...	4
Greengrocers	...	...	...	...	...	4
Restaurants and Cafes	...	...	...	...	...	6
Public Houses	...	...	...	...	...	9

In addition to the above there were various ice cream and refreshment stalls and mobile food vendors operating in the town.

Number of food premises registered under Section 16 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1955 :—

Manufacture and storage of ice cream for sale	...	...	...	...	28
Preparation or manufacture of sausages, etc.	...	...	...	...	8
Dairies registered under the Milk & Dairies Regulations	...	...	...	...	3

The total weight of food condemned as a result of voluntary surrender was 653 lbs., consisting mainly of damaged and defective canned products, frozen food from refrigerator breakdowns and wholesale meat joints.

Informal notices served	...	...	...	...	...	12
Informal notices complied with	...	...	...	...	...	6
Total number of visits to food premises	...	...	...	...	...	114

Meat Inspection.

Further efforts were made to keep the slaughterhouse up to the minimum legal requirements. There was a small increase in the number of lambs, but a decrease in cattle slaughtered during the year.

Strangely there was a big increase in the incidence of disease, etc., among cattle slaughtered but an equally large drop in incidence among sheep. As usual, fascioliasis accounted for by far the greater proportion of condemnations.

Carcases and Viscera inspected and condemned in whole or part :

	Cattle Excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs	Horses
Number killed	185	—	1	1015	—	—
Number inspected	185	—	1	1015	—	—
All disease except Tuberculosis and Cysticerci						
Whole carcasses condemned	2	—	—	—	—	—
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	120	—	—	85	—	—
Percentages of the number inspected affected with disease etc.	65.9%	—	—	8.4%	—	—
Tuberculosis only :			Nil			
Cysticercosis :	1	—	—	—	—	—

Total number of visits in connection with meat inspection : 247

FACTORIES ACT, 1961 PRESCRIBED PARTICULARS ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE FACTORIES ACT, 1961

Part 1 of the Act

1. INSPECTIONS for the purpose of provisions as to health (including inspections made by the Public Health Inspector)

Premises	Number in Register	Inspections	Number of Written Notices	Occupiers Prosecuted
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	2	—	—	—
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	41	6	—	—
(iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding outworkers' premises)	—	—	—	—
Total	43	6	—	—

2. Cases in which defects were found : NIL.

Part VIII of the Act OUTWORK

There are no outworkers.



