

**[Report 1925] / Medical Officer of Health, Liskeard Borough.**

**Contributors**

Liskeard (England). Borough Council.

**Publication/Creation**

1925

**Persistent URL**

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The  
**Annual Report**  
of the  
Medical Officer of Health  
for the  
**Borough of Liskeard**  
for the Year 1925.

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LISKEARD  
SNELL AND COWLING, PRINTERS.









*To the Mayor and Members  
of the  
Corporation of the Borough of Liskeard*

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GENTLEMEN,

Herewith I beg to submit to you my Report on the health and sanitary condition of the Borough for the year 1925, arranged according to the instructions of the Ministry of Health.

The population of the District at the last Census (1921) was 4,326, and is estimated at the present time to be about the same.

The area of the District is 2,704 acres.

The District is situated in the eastern part of the County of Cornwall, between the moor and the sea, being bounded on the one side by the moors leading to the Caradon hills, and on the other by the valley which lead to Looe and the English Channel.

The town is built partly on rocky hills and partly in a valley. Geologically, the surface soil consists of killas, with dykes of trap rock.

The climate is mild and humid, and the rainfall abundant, but no official meterological records are kept.

Agriculture and dairy farming occupy some of the inhabitants, whilst others are engaged in the ordinary occupations found in communities, *e.g.*, carpenters, masons, etc. Granite cutting and polishing works employ a number of men, and a wool-combing factory both men and girls. None of these occupations appear to have any direct influence on the public health.

Both the Cottage Hospital and the Workhouse Infirmary are largely used. The former is going to be enlarged, and is well equipped for both surgical and medical cases.

### VITAL STATISTICS.

The number of Deaths registered was 87 ; of these 38 were males and 49 females, giving a death-rate of 17.79. The birth-rate was 23.65.

#### CLASSIFICATION OF CAUSES OF DEATH.

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	6	3
Organic Heart Disease	10	8
Bronchitis	3	4
Appendicitis	2	0
Congenital Debility	1	0
Other Defined Diseases	16	34

### SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.

#### WATER.

The District is abundantly supplied with wholesome water by the public service. The water arises from uncultivated upland sources, and is distributed by gravity through iron pipes from the service reservoirs to all parts of the District. The supply is constant, and, judged by chemical analysis, is of satisfactory organic purity. It is soft and entirely free from lead. The total solids are very small in amount, and on this account the water is unusually soft, its total hardness being a little over one degree. The whole of the system has been frequently inspected



during the year, including the leats, streams, and the surrounding ground at the source.

#### RIVERS AND STREAMS.

The only streams in the District are the small ones which run down the valleys and join the Looe river, and into these streams, at some distance down, a portion of the sewage of the town discharges. The streams are fairly rapid, and their ordinary volume is much greater than that of the sewage entering them.

#### DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

The town portion of the District is well sewered, the sewage being conveyed either into water courses or on to the land, and so disposed of by irrigation. The older sewers are constructed of brick, and the newer ones of socketed pipes. In the higher parts of the town the sewers are ventilated by upcast shafts. The sewers are self cleansing, and have properly constructed man-holes at points of change of direction.

The following Wall Sewers have been re-constructed—

Portion of sewer from West Street to Dean Street through grounds of Dean House replaced by 9 inch pipes.

New sewers have been provided as given in the Report for 1925.

The following Wall Sewers are still in existence—

Portion of sewer from West Street to Dean Street through the grounds of Westbourne.

Sewer in Dean Street from Varley Lane to Dean Terrace.

Sewer in Pond Bridge Hill and to Gut Lane.

There are at present three main sewer outfalls—Gut Lane, Lanchard Lane, and a point in the valley close to the Liskeard and Looe Railway Station; in addition there are four smaller outfalls from blocks of houses in the rural part of the district, *i.e.*, Clifton



Terrace, Wadeland Terrace, Moorswater and Trevecca Cottages.

### CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

The water carriage system for the disposal of excrement has been adopted practically throughout the whole of the town. The closets are flushed from separate cisterns in most instances, and in but few cases does one closet serve for more than one family. The closets of the houses of small rateable value are usually out of doors, and the ventilation of both in and outdoor closets is usually provided for by extending the soil pipe above the level of the roof. The house drains are for the most part constructed of socketed pipes.

### SCAVENGING.

This is undertaken by the Council under the supervision of the Borough Surveyor. The house refuse is collected weekly by the public scavengers in moveable receptacles, and the contents are removed by the Contractor, and is dumped on to land just outside the town. No complaint has been received as to the adequacy of this arrangement. A covered sanitary cart has been provided but another is urgently required. All ash bins should be provided with proper covering. The dump, of course, is a harbour for rats and mice, and a breeding ground for flies, and the ideal method for disposing of it would be by burning it in an incinerator.

### PREMISES AND OCCUPATIONS WHICH CAN BE CONTROLLED BY BY-LAWS AND REGULATIONS.

There is one Common Lodging-house in the District, which, however, is a very old building, and not at all modern in its arrangements. It has been frequently inspected during the year. The Council possess powers with By-Laws applicable to such



places, and every effort is made to see that they are obeyed. The place is kept fairly clean.

There are no underground Bake-houses or Lodging-houses in the District.

## FOOD.

**MILK SUPPLY.**—The milk supplied in the town is generally of good quality, and the arrangement for the supply and distribution are adequate for the needs of the population. All the dairies and cowsheds in the District (43 in number) have been frequently under inspection, and the former have been found to be in a fairly satisfactory condition, but the latter vary greatly. Regulations with respect to Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops are in force, dealing with such matter as lighting, ventilation, air space, cleanliness, drainage and water supply. A considerable quantity of the milk consumed in the District is brought in from outside, and the dairies and cowsheds in the town are under periodical inspection, and every effort is made to see that the regulations are strictly carried out. The public generally, that is the milk consumers, are gradually becoming aware that while milk is one of the most wholesome, as it is one of the most necessary articles of diet, it is capable, if produced under adverse conditions, of doing incalculable harm. The milk sellers must therefore be made to understand that milk is more sensitive to contaminating influences than any other article of food, and that therefore unclean buildings, uncleanness in the process of milking, and large heaps of manure right up to the door of the cowshed are prolific sources of contamination. A clean milk supply cannot be attained without due regard being given to the suitable housing of the animals. What is required above all things is cleanliness, but this is hardly likely to be attained if cows wade knee deep through a manure yard before they are milked and if the floor of the sheds are left uncleaned, or if the



walls and inside of the roof are kept in a dirty condition.

### MEAT.

There are eight Slaughter-houses in the District, and they are all registered or licensed. They have all been visited and inspected regularly, both by myself and the Sanitary Inspector, and they have been found for the most part in a satisfactory condition. The floors are nearly all in a proper state and consist either of concrete or of stone flags with cement joints laid on concrete. Offal is collected in receptacles as a rule, and removed promptly. There is no Public Slaughter-house in the District. The houses are frequently visited at the time of slaughtering, but during the year no carcasses have been observed to be tuberculous. Under the Meat Shops Act, 1924, it is now necessary for all shop fronts to be covered. This should be enforced. It is important that an incinerator should be provided for destroying condemned meat.

The number of Slaughter-houses in use in the District at the date mentioned is as follows:—

	1914	Jan., 1920	Dec., 1920	1925.
Registered	2	2	2	2
Licensed		4	4	6

### OTHER FOODS.

There are five Bakehouses in the District, and particulars are kept as to the lighting, ventilation, flooring and cubic space. Their condition is, as a rule, satisfactory. No case of food poisoning has come under notice during the year.

### FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

The total number on the Register is now 39. Each one has been visited, and no prosecutions have been found to be necessary. Generally speaking the workshops have been kept in a satisfactory condition and the standard of cleanliness being gradually raised.



## OFFENSIVE TRADES.

No By-Laws are in force with respect to offensive trades, only one business of that character being in the District, viz., a Knacker's yard. It is situated at some distance from the town, and is not complained of.

## HOUSES LET IN LODGINGS.

No By-Laws are in force with respect to houses let in lodgings, and none appear to be necessary, the number of such being small, and they are in good hands and well looked after.

## SCHOOLS.

The Public Elementary Schools have been under frequent inspection during the year. The offices have been found to be in fair order, the water supply being from the town mains is abundant, and the closets and urinals are flushed automatically. The existing sanitary arrangements are of the old trough type and should be modernized. When a case of Infectious disease is notified, notice is at once sent to the head teacher requesting that all scholars from the infected house be excluded until he hears from me that the house has been declared free from infection.

## PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Twenty-six cases of Infectious disease were notified during the year, viz., 4 cases of diphtheria, 3 of erysipelas, and 1 of enteric fever. All the diphtheria cases were promptly treated with anti-toxin, and only one death occurred. Every case notified was tested bacteriologically. I keep a supply of diphtheria anti-toxin ready for use by the medical practitioners in the District.

No cases of malaria, dysentery, or trench fever were notified.



No primary vaccinations or re-vaccinations were performed by the Medical Officer of Health under the Public Health (Small Pox Prevention) Regulations, 1917. There is, I regret to say, a gradual declension in the number of vaccinations performed, and parents take advantage of the legal opportunities of evading vaccination.

### ISOLATION HOSPITAL.

There is no Isolation Hospital in the District. This is urgently required. Already hundreds of pounds have been expended in providing temporary measures during outbreaks of infectious disease. The matter is an urgent one, and I sincerely trust that when it is next discussed efficiency will be thought in a matter of this kind superior to economy.

### TUBERCULOSIS.

During the year twelve cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis were notified. Each case as notified was given instructions as to the mode of life the patient should adopt. The requirements as to notification of tuberculosis are well observed by the Medical Practitioners in the District. There is at present no tuberculosis dispensary in the District, but most of the patients are willing and anxious to avail themselves of the advice of the County Tuberculosis Officer. They are visited by the Health Visitor, and her advice and suggestions have proved very helpful.

### VENEREAL DISEASES.

As regards Venereal diseases, almost the whole of the patients from this District avail themselves of the Clinic at the South Devon and East Cornwall Hospital at Plymouth. One Medical man in the District is qualified to receive free supplies of Salvarsan substitutes.

### CHILD WELFARE.

A voluntary scheme is at work in the District and is doing good work. From 15 to 20 mothers



assemble each fortnight and receive instruction as to how the children should be brought up, fed and clothed. Each child is weighed each fortnight, and a record is kept, so that it can be easily seen whether the child is thriving or not. One certified Midwife is resident in the District, and there is also a Health Visitor, who is active in visiting and inspecting new-born children and giving advice to the mothers.

No case of puerperal fever or ophthalmia neonatorum was notified during the year.

### SANITARY ADMINISTRATION.

The staff consists of the Housing Committee, the Medical Officer of Health and the Sanitary Inspector. All chemical and bacteriological matters are examined and reported on by the "Clinical Research," London.

### HOUSING.

#### GENERAL HOUSING CONDITIONS IN THE DISTRICT.

The general standard of houses in the District is fairly good with the exception of those in the Courts mentioned in the last report, viz: Quiller's Court, Smith's Court, Andrew's Court, Gut Lane, Cook's Row, Heathlands Lane, and some houses in Pond Bridge. Several of these are damp, they are not satisfactorily lighted or ventilated, and some are overcrowded. In the past five years 49 houses have been erected, 14 of which are under the Housing Scheme. It is hoped to commence building more new houses in the near future, and when they are completed it is hoped the overcrowding that now exists will in a great measure be abated.

### PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS AND BY-LAWS

Made and adopted during the last five years.

The 1907 Public Health Act Amendment Act has been adopted.



By-Laws made and put in force—

By-Laws for the Good Rule and Government of the Borough and Building By-Laws.

The Public Health Act, 1925, has not yet been adopted.

Public Health Act Amendment Acts and By-laws in force prior to 1920—

Public Health Act Amendment Act, 1890.

By-Laws relating to Dairies and Cowsheds, Slaughter-houses, and Common Lodging Houses.

### INSPECTIONS, ETC.

The following are the results of Inspections of the Borough carried out during the year 1925 —

#### *Notices Served under the Public Health Act, 1875.*

Statutory Notices for defective Roofs	...	4
Informal Notices for defective Roofs	...	1
Statutory Notices for defective Drains	...	1
Informal Notices for defective Drains	...	6
Statutory Notices for defective Water-closets	...	4
Statutory Notices for insanitary Dwelling-houses		1
Informal Notices for insanitary Dwelling-houses		1
Statutory Notices for dampness to Dwellings	...	3
Statutory Notices for other nuisances	...	1
Informal Notices for other nuisances	...	2
Informal Notice for House without water supply		1

#### *Notices under the Public Health Act Amendment Act 1907.*

Statutory Notice to repair Drains	...	2
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#### *Notices under the Factory and Workshop Acts.*

Informal Notice to cleanse Workshop	...	1
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With the exception of one case all the above Notices have been carried out. No action has been taken by the Council with reference to two cases of dampness in dwelling houses, or in a case of overcrowding reported.



### *Inspection of District under the Housing Acts.*

No inspections have been carried out under the above-named Act, but Notices have been made as below :—

Statutory Notices to Repair	...	7
Houses Repaired	...	4
Houses to be Closed when vacant	...	3
Houses in which no action was taken	...	1

### *Infectious Diseases.*

Persons removed to temporary Isolation Hospital	10
Premises disinfected	... 21
Schools disinfected	2

The removal of infectious cases has been made by means of a carriage hired from the local stables, the carriage being disinfected with formalin after use.

Bedding used at the Isolation Hospital has been sent to Plymouth to be treated in the steam disinfecter, no steam disinfecter having been provided by the Council.

### *Slaughter Houses.*

Number of Registered Slaughter-houses	...	2
Number of Licensed Slaughter-houses	...	6
Statutory Notices to Cleanse	...	1
Informal Notices to Cleanse	...	5
Statutory Notices to Alter	...	1

All orders relating to the above have been carried out.

Licenses for slaughter-houses are granted from year to year on the 9th of November, under the Public Health Act Amendment Act, 1890.

### *Meat Inspection.*

Number of carcasses Inspected	...	1530
Number of cases of Emergency slaughter	...	10
Number of Diseased carcasses	...	9

In addition to the above a considerable number of pig carcasses have been brought into the Borough for sale and have not been inspected, it being impossible to inspect every carcass sold unless a clearing house is constructed where all carcasses should be deposited for inspection.



### *Cowsheds and Dairies.*

Number of Producers of Milk who retail	20
Number of Producers who sell Milk wholesale	19
Number of Retail Dealers who Purchase milk	4
Number of Notices served to Cleanse Cowsheds	4

The general conditions of the above are fair; in some cases there is a great deal of room for improvement, both in the cowsheds and methods of handling the milk.

### *Water Supplies.*

There is still a shortage of water in certain parts of the town owing to choked water pipes; improvements have however been made to Church Street, Cannon Hill, Gut Lane, Pound Street, Doctors Lane, and Greenbank Lane during the year, and it is hoped to complete the cleaning of the smaller mains this year. The leats, etc., are inspected at regular intervals during the year, and have been cleaned of all growth and settlement during the year.

### *Sewers.*

A new sewer has been laid in the Station Road to take the drainage of Barnfield and Carwinion Terraces, it also provides for the drainage of any new houses that may be built below Victoria Terrace.

A new sewer has been laid to take the drainage of three new houses and a garage at the Old Road.

The sewer outfalls have been cleared of weed and sludge twice during the year.

### *New Houses. Housing Act, 1923.*

Four houses have been erected by private enterprise under the 1923 subsidy scheme.

### *New Houses. Housing Act, 1924.*

Fourteen houses are in course of erection by the Council under the above scheme.

I remain,

Yours faithfully,

**H. N. HEARLE.**







