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RURAL DISTRICT OF MERIDEN

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Health of the District

For the Year 1948


— BY —

N. C. MACLEOD, O.B.E., M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.

Medical Officer of Health

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I, SPRINGFIELD,
COLESHILL,

30th JUNE, 1949.

To the Meriden Rural District Council.

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I have pleasure in submitting my report on the health of the District for 1948, together with the report of the Sanitary Inspector.

The most notable event of the year was the coming into operation of the National Health Service Act (1946). This resulted in many important changes, one of which was the introduction of a scheme of Area Medical Administration by the County Council and the combination of Area Medical Officer and District Medical Officer of Health in one appointment.

Under this arrangement the District Medical Officer of Health is responsible for the day-to-day administration of various services such as school health, maternal and child welfare and domiciliary nursing.

This allows close contact with the many health problems which arise from time to time and largely eliminates the overlapping as between County and District which was unavoidable under the old system.

Although only in its early stages, area health administration promises to provide a more personal and efficient service and I am confident it will prove of great benefit to the population of the district.

N. C. MACLEOD,
Medical Officer of Health.

MERIDEN RURAL DISTRICT

A. Extracts from Vital Statistics of the Year.

Population (estimated) Mid-year, 1948 ...	...	35,380
Birth Rate ...	...	20.2
Still Births—Rate per 1,000 total births ...	...	28.0
Death Rate ...	...	9.0
Deaths from Diseases and Accidents of Pregnancy and Child-birth	<div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"> <div style="font-size: 2em; vertical-align: middle;">}</div> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"> From Sepsis ... From other causes </div> </div>	nil nil
Death Rate of Infants under 1 year of age :-		
All Infants per 1,000 live births ...	...	39
Legitimate Infants per 1,000 legitimate live births ...	...	39
Illegitimate Infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births ...	...	nil
Deaths from Measles (all ages) ...	...	nil
„ „ Whooping Cough (all ages) ...	...	nil
„ „ Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)		nil

Population—The estimated population of 35,380 is 580 greater than that for 1947.

Birth Rate—20.2 per 1,000 is 2 per 1,000 lower than in 1947 but is still higher than the figure for England and Wales.

Death Rate—9.0 per 1,000 compares with 10.0 per 1,000 for the district in 1947 and with 10.8 per 1,000 for England and Wales in 1948.

Infantile Mortality. The rate of 39 per 1,000 live births is the same as in 1947 and is higher than the 1948 figure for England and Wales, 34 per 1,000.

Statistics for the last few years and also those for England and Wales in 1948 are given in Table I.

B. GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE DISTRICT.

(1) *Public Health Officers.*

Following the introduction of Area Medical Administration, referred to in my introduction, Dr. H. Gibbons Ward, who had been Medical Officer of Health of this district for 29 years, was appointed to the Central Area of the County as Area Medical Officer and Medical Officer of Health.

I took up my appointment on 1st September, 1948, in a similar capacity for the North Western Area, constituted by the Rural Districts of Meriden and Tamworth.

(2) *Laboratory Services.*

Bacteriological examinations during the year were as follows :-

	<i>Positive.</i>		<i>Negative.</i>		<i>Total.</i>	
Diphtheria ...	24	...	72	...	96	
Enteric Fever	—	...	—	...	—	
Tuberculosis ...	3	...	21	...	24	
					—	
					120	

The National Public Health Service Laboratory established at Coventry at the end of the year provides a free bacteriological service which should prove of great value in the diagnosis, prevention and control of communicable diseases.

C. SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.

I. *Water Supplies.*

(1) The supply has been generally satisfactory except, as mentioned in the report for 1947, at Chadwick End, Corley Moor and Four Oaks. Mains extensions to supply these areas have been completed during the year in the cases of Corley and Four Oaks and nearly completed at Chadwick End.

These extensions provide, as connections are made, a wholesome water supply for 312 houses and 55 dairy farms.

Samples of water were taken from 31 wells and of these 12 were condemned, 12 were unsatisfactory and 7 were approved.

(2) No bacteriological or chemical examinations were made of piped water.

(3) No complaint of plumbo-solvent action arose.

(4) Unsatisfactory wells were dealt with by cleaning and re-sampling where a piped supply was not available and in 65 instances wells were replaced by connections to mains.

(5) Particulars of piped supplies throughout the district are given in the Sanitary Inspector's report herewith and show that 78% of houses in the district now have piped supplies compared to 74% last year.

II. *Drainage and Sewerage.*

In the parish of Allesley a sewer extension to drain upwards of 30 houses was completed.

At Meriden village an extensive scheme for re-sewering and a new disposal works were begun and considerable progress made.

III. *Refuse Collection and Disposal.*

The system of refuse collection was somewhat unsatisfactory, the intervals between collections being irregular and rather prolonged. A regular weekly service is essential in order to prevent nuisance and, in particular, fly-breeding during warm weather.

Improvements have been carried out and it is hoped that, following a full investigation now being made by the Engineer and Surveyor, the service can be organised on a satisfactory basis.

Improvements in the control of refuse tips have also been effected.

D. HOUSING.

Progress on the provision of houses was excellent. At the end of 1947 the District Council had completed 153 houses

and 80 temporary bungalows since the war ; during 1948, 264 houses were built and let, making the total of Council-owned houses and bungalows 773, compared with 276 before the war.

The housing situation is, however, still difficult and many people have to live in unsatisfactory houses and in conditions of overcrowding which cannot but be detrimental to their health.

Demolition orders were made upon two very old cottages which were structurally unsafe.

E. INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

Particulars of action taken with regard to meat and other foods is given in detail in the Sanitary Inspector's report.

There is no Ministry of Food abattoir in the district and the carcasses inspected were therefore those of "emergency" slaughterings only.

Food Poisoning.

There were no cases during the year.

F. PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

Incidence of Commoner Infectious Diseases since 1939.

		Smallpox	Diphtheria	Scarlet Fever	Enteric Fever	Pneumonia	Encephalitis Lethargica	Puerperal Pyrexia
1940	...	—	34	62	2	55	1	7
1941	...	—	60	47	4	73	—	2
1942	...	—	33	55	—	56	—	4
1943	...	—	18	122	2	91	1	3
1944	...	—	16	60	—	51	—	9
1945	...	—	15	35	—	51	—	13
1946	...	—	9	46	2	48	—	5
1947	...	—	10	48	—	58	1	5
1948	...	—	27	78	1	61	—	5

Scarlet Fever. 78 cases were notified which is well above the average of 59 for the last 8 years. Of these 23

were notified from Arley, 15 from Castle Bromwich and 7 each from Keresley, Marston Green and Meriden.

Diphtheria. There were 27 cases, 4 of whom were adults. There was a history of immunisation in respect of 1 adult and 17 children and, in the case of 14 of the children, within the previous 5 years. Two infants aged between 9 and 12 months, not immunised, were infected.

Of the total, 16 cases occurred in an outbreak in Coleshill at the beginning of the year.

There were two deaths, both children not previously immunised. Five-hundred and thirty-six children under 5 years of age and 179 between the ages of 5 and 14 years, a total of 715, completed a full course of immunisation during the year.

In addition, 403 children were given a reinforcing or "booster" injection.

The large majority of these immunisations were carried out at Infant Welfare Centres and in Schools.

Acute Poliomyelitis. Two cases were notified, 1 adult and 1 child, who were father and son. They contracted the disease within a few days of each other. The father died but the child made a good recovery.

School Closures—Nil.

PREVALANCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, TUBERCULOSIS.

Age—Periods.	NEW CASES.				DEATHS.			
	Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.		Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—
5	2	—	2	2	—	2	—	1
15	10	5	—	2	2	—	—	—
25	6	2	2	—	2	—	—	—
35	3	1	1	—	—	—	1	—
45	1	2	1	—	1	1	—	—
55	2	—	—	1	2	—	—	—
65 and upwards	1	—	—	—	1	1	—	—
TOTALS	25	10	7	6	8	4	1	1

Treatment.—Facilities for the isolation and treatment of cases of respiratory tuberculosis are most unsatisfactory, largely due to the lack of staff for existing hospital beds.

Long delay in securing admission to a sanatorium reduces the patients chances of ultimate recovery and also exposes his family to the risks of infection. This is a very real danger when isolation at home is impossible, as is generally the case with many people living in homes which are unsatisfactory and often overcrowded.

The position in regard to non-respiratory tuberculosis is less difficult as such cases can be treated in general and children's hospitals.

The following table shows the incidence and deaths from Tuberculosis during the last 20 years :-

Tuberculosis.

		1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935
Cases	...	33	33	23	21	36	21	35
Deaths	...	23	16	9	5	18	12	16
		1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942
Cases	...	27	26	19	54	35	40	36
Deaths	...	7	12	6	17	18	18	19
		1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	
Cases	...	49	51	29	38	42	48	
Deaths	...	13	20	18	9	11	14	

FACTORIES.

The numbers on the registers are :-

(1) Factories in which sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 of the Factories Act are enforced by the Council—7.

(2) Factories not included in (1) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Council—84.

Two complaints regarding minor sanitary defects were received. Both were remedied as a result of informal action.

REPORT OF SANITARY INSPECTOR.

*To the Chairman and Members of the
Meriden Rural District Council.*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present my report for 1948.

WATER ANALYSIS.

Samples were examined by the analyst as follows :-

	<i>Passed.</i>	<i>Unsatis- factory.</i>	<i>Con- demned.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
Old wells	5	10	11	26
New wells	—	2	1	3
Springs	2	—	—	2
	7	12	12	31

FOOD INSPECTION.

147 Inspections were made and the following items condemned and surrendered for the reasons stated :-

carcase and organs of pig, moribund.
do. sheep, gangrenous pneumonia.
33 dozen eggs, unsound.
38 lbs bacon, tainted.
20 lbs prunes, mouldy.
2 pig heads, tuberculosis.
72 meat pies, mouldy.
282 tins various foods, blown or damaged.

Nine new registrations were made of premises under section 14 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938, four for fish-frying (3 refused) and 5 for Ice-cream (1 refused).

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Disinfections numbered 91. For scarlet fever 51, diphtheria 20, tuberculosis removals 3, deaths 3, meningitis 3, dysentery 1 and cancer deaths 10.

NUISANCES.

The following were dealt with :-

Accumulations of refuse	....	....	....	....	4
Ashbins dilapidated	....	....	....	....	38
Cesspools defective	....	....	....	....	1
Cesspools overflowing	....	....	....	....	11
Cesspools want of	....	....	....	....	2
Choked and defective drains	....	....	....	....	79
Damp walls	....	....	....	....	26
Dirty house	....	....	....	....	2
Foul ditches	....	....	....	....	10
Housing defects	....	....	....	....	246
Insufficient closet accommodation	....	....	....	....	3
Overcrowding	....	....	....	....	1

Pail closets defective	....	....	....	....	....	2
Privies defective	....	....	....	....	....	5
Rainwater conductors defective	....	....	....	....	....	28
Roofs defective	....	....	....	....	....	40
School closet accommodation defective	....	....	....	....	....	2
Vermin-infested houses	....	....	....	....	....	3
Water Supply unsatisfactory	....	....	....	....	....	15
Want of drainage	....	....	....	....	....	1
Want of a sink	....	....	....	....	....	1
Waterclosets defective	....	....	....	....	....	26
Dust from Power Station	....	....	....	....	....	1
Miscellaneous	....	....	....	....	....	2
						<hr/>
						549
						<hr/>

For the first time in the history of this Council conversions of pail-closets to waterclosets were assisted by the payment of half the cost by the Council under the provisions of section 47 of the Public Health Act, 1936. Eighteen were done at an average half-cost of £11 : 12 : 9 each.

Repairs were done in default of the owner to 2 houses and the cost £70 : 1 : 9 recovered from her.

Thirty houses at Hockley Lane, Eastern Green, Allesley, where the cesspools had for many years created unhealthy conditions, were connected to the sewer after extension by the Council.

RIVERS POLLUTION PREVENTION.

In June the river Blythe received a toxic discharge for the third time, with limited destruction of fish.

Complaints were dealt with of discharge of oil and plating-washings from a factory to a brook.

Representations were again made to the City of Birmingham about the unsatisfactory condition of the river Cole, apparently due to overloading of sewers within the City.

SQUATTERS.

Premises occupied by squatters during the year were :-

Deep Moor Camp, Fillongley,
 Cedars, Castle Bromwich,
 Park Road, Coleshill,
 Hams Gardens, Lea Marston,
 Frogmore Wood, Fen End,
 R.A.F. Emergency Station, Balsall,
 School, Kingsbury Road, Lea Marston,
 Sewage Works hut, Little Packington,

comprising 65 families. The Council has accepted responsibility for the first three only on this list, affecting 38 families. One site (Darlaston Hall, Meriden, 6 families) was vacated on action taken by the owners.

WATER SUPPLIES.

Two substantial schemes for water mains extensions at Corley Moor and Four Oaks, Berkswell were carried out during the year and a third, Chadwick End, brought near to completion.

The three schemes together comprise 12,625 yards of main, the estimated cost being £15,073 and the premises which ultimately will be supplied include 55 dairy farms and 312 dwellings.

Three other small extensions totalling 495 yards were done.

The situation throughout the district as to piped supplies is shown by the following table :-

<i>Piped Supplies.</i>				
<i>Parish.</i>	<i>Houses.</i>	<i>Birmingham</i>	<i>Coventry.</i>	<i>Other.</i>
Allesley	404	—	304	—
Arley	816	—	—	804
Astley	63	—	—	19
Balsall	632	—	237	—
Barston	130	—	87	—
Berkswell	559	—	273	—
Bickenhill	679	618	—	—
Castle Bromwich	1,241	1,124	—	—
Coleshill	1,346	1,174	—	—
Corley	205	—	123	—
Curdworth	130	84	—	—
Fillongley	397	155	—	—
Hampton	318	—	281	—
Keresley	685	—	637	—
Lea Marston	74	32	—	—
Maxstoke	70	—	11	—
Meriden	471	—	398	—
Packingtons	65	—	4	—
Shustoke	142	116	—	—
Water Orton	531	508	—	—
Whitacre, Nether	231	211	—	—
Whitacre, Over	105	63	—	—
Wishaw	49	—	—	—
	<u>9,343</u>	<u>4,085</u>	<u>2,355</u>	<u>823</u>

Total houses in district with piped supplies 7,263

Percentage 78

Practically all the supplies are direct to houses : very few indeed are by stand-pipes.

ATMOSPHERIC POLLUTION.

The Council, having in their district two electric-power stations which together form one of the largest energy-producing installations in the country, decided to set up recording gauges on lines advised by the Fuel Research Station, Greenwich (Department of Scientific and Industrial Research) and these were in operation by 1st September of the year under review.

There are three deposit gauges and nine lead peroxide instruments in the following positions :-

Deposit Gauges.

1. One mile N.E. of the power stations, at Lea Marston ;
2. Two and a half miles S. of the power stations (at Bacon's End) and expected to record the general influence on atmospheric pollution of the Birmingham area ;
3. At Berkswell, $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles S. of the power stations, as a "cleanest" control.

Lead peroxide gauges.—Seven around the two power stations and one each at sites 2 and 3 above.

The average results to the end of 1948 in tons of total solids deposited per square mile per month were Lea Maston 28.64, Bacon's End 10.04 and Berkswell 7.90. The four worst sites for sulphur gases (lead peroxide gauges) were Marston, Dunton Hall, Whitacre Heath and Lea Marston, in that order.

RODENT CONTROL.

A full-time rat-catcher (also to act as sanitary assistant for disinfections, etc.,) was authorised during the year and commenced duties in October.

I am, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

F. T. KENYON,

Senior Sanitary Inspector.

Town Hall,
Coleshill,
Birmingham.

31st May, 1949.

TABLE 1.

MERIDEN RURAL DISTRICT.

VITAL STATISTICS OF WHOLE DISTRICT DURING 1948 AND PREVIOUS YEARS.

YEAR.	Population estimated to Middle of each Year.	BIRTHS.		NETT DEATHS BELONGING TO THE DISTRICT.			
		Nett.		Under 1 Year of age.		At all ages.	
		Number.	Rate.	Number.	Rate per 1,000 Nett Births.	Number	Rate.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1941	34,210	564	16.5	35	59	377	10.6
1942	34,510	600	17.4	25	42	321	9.3
1943	34,310	667	19.4	30	45	321	9.4
1944	33,870	679	20.0	30	44	337	9.9
1945	33,110	649	19.5	30	46	309	9.3
1946	33,770	631	19.0	41	65	319	9.5
1947	34,800	773	22.2	30	39	348	10.0
1948	35,380	714	20.2	27	39	319	9.0

VITAL STATISTICS IN ENGLAND AND WALES, 1948.

ENGLAND AND WALES.

*Birth-rate, Death-rate, and Infantile Mortality during the year 1948.
(Provisional Figures).*

Annual Rate per 1,000 Population.

	Live Births.	Still Births.	Deaths.	Deaths under one year to 1,000 Births.
England and Wales	17.9	0.42	10.8	34
126 Great Towns, including London	20.0	0.52	11.6	39
148 Smaller Towns	19.2	0.43	10.7	32
London	20.1	0.39	11.6	31

TABLE II.
MERIDEN RURAL DISTRICT.

CASES OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE NOTIFIED DURING THE YEAR 1948.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE.	Number of Cases notified.								Total cases removed. to Hospital.	Total Deaths.
	At all Ages.	At Ages—Years.								
		Under 1.	1 to 5.	5 to 15.	15 to 25.	25 to 45.	45 to 65.	65 and upwards.		
Small-pox										
Plague										
Diphtheria (including Membranous Group)	27	2	8	13	1	2	1		18	2
Erysipelas	14			2			9	3		
Scarlet Fever	78		23	41	10	4			35	
Typhus Fever										
Enteric Fever	1						1			
Pneumonia	61	6	2	15	6	7	19	6		16
Malaria	1						1			
Dysentery	7		2	3		2			2	
Puerperal Pyrexia	5				3	2			4	
Cerebro-spinal Meningitis	2	1			1				2	1
Poliomyelitis	2		1			1			2	1
Encephalitis Lethargica										
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	2	2								
Polio-Encephalitis										
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	35			2	15	12	5	1	9	12
Other forms of Tuberculosis	13		2	4	2	3	2		6	2
Totals	248	11	38	80	38	33	38	10	78	34

TABLE III.
MERIDEN RURAL DISTRICT.

CAUSES OF DEATH DURING THE YEAR, 1948.

CAUSE OF DEATH.					MALES.	FEMALES.
All Causes					177	142
1	Typhoid and Paratyphoid Fevers				—	—
2	Cerebro Spinal Fever				1	—
3	Scarlet Fever				—	—
4	Whooping Cough				—	—
5	Diphtheria				1	1
6	Tuberculosis of Respiratory System				8	4
7	Other Forms of Tuberculosis				2	—
8	Syphillitic Diseases				—	—
9	Influenza				—	1
10	Measles				—	—
11	Ac. Polio-Myel. and Polio-Enceph.				1	—
12	Ac. Infant Enceph.				1	—
13	Cancer of B. Cav. and Oesoph (M) Uterus (F)				4	1
14	Cancer of Stomach and Duod.				8	5
15	Cancer of Breast				1	5
16	Cancer, other Sites				20	12
17	Diabetes				—	2
18	Intra Cran. Vasc. Lesions				18	20
19	Heart Disease				35	32
20	Other Dis. Circ. Sys.				5	3
21	Bronchitis				15	7
22	Pneumonia				5	11
23	Other Resp. Diseases				2	1
24	Ulcer of Stomach and Duod.				2	—
25	Diarrhoea (under 2 years)				—	—
26	Appendicitis				—	—
27	Other Digestive Diseases				2	3
28	Nephritis				2	4
29	Puer. and Post Abort Spesis				—	—
30	Other Maternal Causes				—	—
31	Premature Birth				4	1
32	Con. Mal., Birth Inj., etc.				8	6
33	Suicide				—	—
34	Road Traffic Accident				8	—
35	Other Violent Causes				8	8
36	All Other Causes				16	15

