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ANNUAL REPORT

of the

Medical Officer of Health

R. S. McELROY,

M.A., M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O., D.P.H., D.T.M.

and the

REPORT

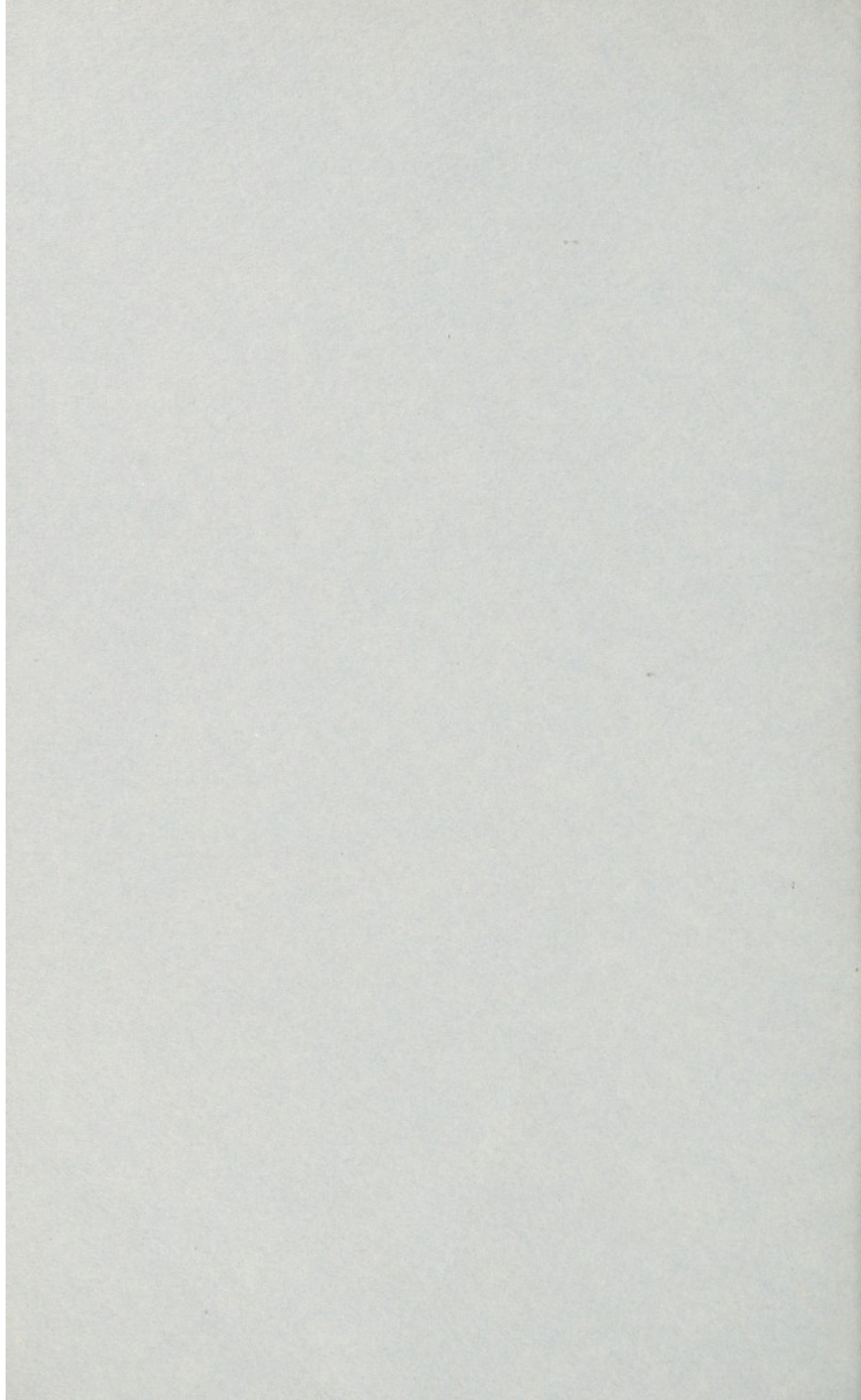
of the

**Chief Public Health
Inspector**

FOR THE YEAR

1955





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Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present the Annual Report on the state of the public health of the Meriden Rural District, together with that of the Chief Public Health Inspector, for the year 1955. In so doing, the many, valuable, different services for the community provided under County Council auspices are not specifically mentioned because details of them are included in the Annual Report of the County Medical Officer.

In October of the year under review, Dr. G. W. Knight, your Medical Officer of Health, accepted a post as Deputy County Medical Officer, Buckinghamshire, and took up his new appointment in January, 1956.

On the whole, the general health of the increasing population was satisfactory. With the exception of an outbreak of measles, no marked increased incidence of notifiable infectious diseases arose. The epidemic of measles was not unexpected and in keeping with its now familiar pattern of biennial periodicity. Cases of whooping cough were down compared with 1954 and, with the larger demand for immunisation, usually combined with that against diphtheria, the prevalence and the virulence of this distressing complaint should continue to diminish. Once again, it is reassuring to report that no case of diphtheria has been notified since 1949, a decline undoubtedly largely due to immunisation against this serious disease.

The absence of any cases of poliomyelitis during 1954 was shortlived in that, in keeping with the countrywide spread, six paralytic and three non-paralytic cases occurred.

Notifications of pulmonary tuberculosis decreased to 31 and of non-pulmonary tuberculosis to 5 for the year. Similarly, the incidence of food poisoning declined to 11 cases.

Deaths from cancer of the respiratory tract were halved, while mortality from this disease of the breast was almost doubled. There were no fatalities from this affection of the genito urinary system not uncommon in the female sex. A pronounced increase in mortality from coronary disease of the heart (Angina) almost equal in both sexes was noteworthy.

Detailed information of the over-all picture of factors affecting the life of the citizen will be found elsewhere.

As usual, the comprehensive Report of the Chief Public Health Inspector summarises within a small compass a large volume of work and a detailed study of it is well worth while. From this it will be seen that, while the number of visits and inspections decreased compared with the previous year, examination of foodstuffs, particularly meat inspection, was almost doubled with virtually no increase of staff. In fact, the decrease was chiefly due to a curtailment of rodent infestation work. Nevertheless, the number of complaints received and investigated rose by about 10 per cent.

The majority of the cases were related to defective dwellings while the number of verminous and filthy premises was negligible.

Regarding housing, it is noteworthy that the number of applications for tenancies on the Council's register decreased by 20% compared with the 1954 figure of 789. The completion and occupation of 87 new Council houses, coupled with the re-letting of 49 others, enabled 136 families to be rehoused. Thus, for the first time since the World War, the reduction in the number of applicants exceeded the houses allocated. Unfortunately, in the last quarter of the year new construction of Council houses had ceased but only pending sanction for other building projects. The proposals of the Council for slum clearance under the Housing Repair and Rents Act, 1954 were submitted to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government in July. These envisaged the demolition of some 280 dwellings within a period of 6 years.

During the year Tile Hill Hostel, Berkswell, was finally vacated.

While the percentage of houses supplied with piped water from the mains further increased from 81.6 to 83.7, many areas still lack ample, wholesome supplies. As would be expected, sampling of the Birmingham and Coventry Water Departments water continued to be satisfactory while the contrary was the case in respect of the majority of wells and springs examined. Approval for several schemes for the laying of water mains was received, particularly in the Berkswell parish and a long delayed project for a 4in. main in the Fillongley parish materialised. The inadequacy of the mains water supply to the village of Arley by the National Coal Board further increased and the adverse situation was partly relieved by raising the pressure. Other measures for rectifying matters were agreed and implemented by the Nuneaton Water Authority.

The implementation of the Council's policy of 100% meat inspection occasioned by the resumption of large scale slaughtering in 1954 necessitated the appointment of an additional Sanitary Inspector but, unfortunately, this was offset by the departure of a newly qualified pupil inspector to another Local Authority. Although this inevitably resulted in curtailment of some other departmental activities, it nevertheless reflects great credit on the inspectorate that the additional burden was shouldered so successfully. On the other hand, it is disappointing to have to record that, as in 1954, the survey of food premises could not be completed and an assessment of requirements under the Food Hygiene Regulations could not be made. However, from the 136 visits to food premises it was a relief to conclude that no serious defects were present and gratifying to note the co-operation of the majority of all concerned.

On the whole, milk supplies and premises were satisfactory and details of the biological examination of tubercle infected supplies are given in the body of the report.

The steady reduction in the number of moveable dwellings such as caravans continued and conditions on the 23 permitted sites were not unsatisfactory.

Measurement of deposited matter and sulphur from the air was expanded by one additional grit gauge at Coleshill so that four grit gauges and nine sulphur dioxide instruments were in operation in the vicinity of the Hams Hall Electricity generating stations.

I am indebted to your Surveyor and Engineer for the information regarding sewerage, sewage disposal and refuse collection.

In conclusion, I wish to record my appreciation of the work of the staff and the co-operation of the members of the other departments. At the same time, I would like to thank you for your encouragement and support throughout the year.

R. S. McELROY

Medical Officer of Health.

MERIDEN RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

1 9 5 5

Chairman of the Council :
FRANCIS STANLEY BUTLER

Vice-Chairman of the Council :
WALTER BERNARD NEAL

Clerk of the Council :
S. F. WOODHAMS

Public Health Committee :

Clifton, Mrs. F. M.	Butler, F. S.	Gee, D.
Gregg, Mrs. M.	Caines, B. G.	Harper, R. H.
Salt, Mrs. M.	Callwood, H. J.	Moore, R. E.
Wheatley, Mrs. C. M.	Cashmore, H. S.	Neal, W. B.
Antrobus, W.	Chater, R. H.	Prosser, D. W.
Brian, H.	Earle, R. J.	Schofield, E. R.
		Stewart, J. D.

Housing Committee :

Jackson, Mrs. V. L.	Ash, F.	Kelsey, E. J.
Lynall, Mrs. G. M.	Blennerhassett, F. T.	Neal, W. B.
Parry, Mrs. E. I.	Breeden, J. S.	Prosser, D. W.
Salt, Mrs. M.	Butler, F. S.	Shaw, W. J.
Wheatley, Mrs. C. M.	Caines, B. G.	Stewart, J. D.
Antrobus, W.	Chater, R. H.	Victor-Halford, C. A.
	Cooper, J.	Wyldebore-Smith, A. R.

**PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT STAFF
AS AT 31st DECEMBER, 1955**

Medical Officer of Health :

G. W. KNIGHT, M.D., D.P.H.

(Also Medical Officer of Health, Tamworth Rural District Council
and Area Medical Officer, North Western Area, Warwickshire
County Council)

Chief Public Health Inspector :

R. HAINES, M.R.S.H., M.S.I.A.

Deputy Chief Public Health Inspector :

G. B. STOKES, M.R.S.H., M.S.I.A.

Additional Public Health Inspectors :

R. D. BROWN, M.R.S.H., M.S.I.A.

A. C. GITTINS, M.R.S.H., M.S.I.A.

Chief Clerk :

J. D. MYNARD

Council Offices :

Old Bank House,
Church Hill,
Coleshill.
Telephone : Coleshill 3141.

Office of the Medical Officer of Health :

Area Health Office,
Park Road,
Coleshill.
Telephone : Coleshill 2331-2.

SECTION A.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Population (Estimated Mid. 1955).....	42,870
Area in acres	61,775
No. of inhabited houses (Dec., 1955).....	12,270
Rateable value (at 31st March, 1955).....	£270,189
Product of a penny rate	£1,057

VITAL STATISTICS

Births.

Live Births	Males	Females	Total
Legitimate	324	335	659
Illegitimate	17	16	33
Totals	341	351	692

Birth Rate.

16.14 per 1,000 estimated population.

1955	1954	1953	1952	1951	1950	1949	1948	1947	1946	1945
16.14	17.53	16.82	15.50	15.54	17.5	18.2	20.2	22.2	19.0	19.5

Still Births.

Still Births	Males	Females	Total
Legitimate	15	3	18
Illegitimate	—	—	—
Totals	15	3	18

Still Birth Rate.

25.35 per 1,000 total (live and still) births.

1955	1954	1953	1952	1951	1950	1949	1948	1947
25.35	16.99	19.81	28.1	32.2	18.2	19.5	28.0	19.0

Deaths.

	Males	Females	Total
Deaths from all causes ..	198	160	358

Crude Death Rate.

8.35 per 1,000 estimated population.

1955	1954	1953	1952	1951	1950	1949	1948	1947	1946	1945
8.35	8.26	8.8	8.3	10.3	9.2	8.7	9.0	10.0	9.5	9.3

Classified Causes of Death

	Cause of Death	Males	Females	Total
1.	Tuberculosis, Respiratory	3	2	5
2.	Tuberculosis, other	—	—	—
3.	Syphilitic disease	1	—	1
4.	Diphtheria	—	—	—
5.	Whooping Cough	—	—	—
6.	Meningococcal infections	—	—	—
7.	Acute Poliomyelitis	—	—	—
8.	Measles	—	—	—
9.	Other infective and parasitic diseases ..	—	1	1
10.	Malignant neoplasm, stomach	5	4	9
12.	Malignant neoplasm, breast	—	7	7
11.	Malignant neoplasm, lung, bronchus ..	6	—	6
13.	Malignant neoplasm, uterus	—	—	—
14.	Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	14	7	21
15.	Leukaemia, aleukaemia	1	1	2
16.	Diabetes	—	—	—
17.	Vascular lesions of nervous system ..	20	32	52
18.	Coronary disease, angina	49	18	67
19.	Hypertension with heart disease	6	5	11
20.	Other heart disease	17	33	50
21.	Other circulatory disease	6	6	12
22.	Influenza	1	1	2
23.	Pneumonia	10	9	19
24.	Bronchitis	8	4	12
25.	Other diseases of respiratory system ..	4	—	4
26.	Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	1	1	2
27.	Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea	3	2	5
28.	Nephritis and nephrosis	1	—	1
29.	Hyperplasia of prostate	3	—	3
30.	Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion.....	—	—	—
31.	Congenital malformations	5	3	8
32.	Other defined and ill-defined diseases ..	14	18	32
33.	Motor vehicle accidents	9	2	11
34.	All other accidents	10	4	14
35.	Suicide	1	—	1
36.	Homicide and operations of war	—	—	—
37.	All causes	198	160	358

Population and Birth and Death Ratio.

Year	Estimated Population	Total Live Births	Total Deaths	Birth and Death ratio
1942 ..	34,510	600	321	+279
1943 ..	34,310	667	321	+346
1944 ..	33,870	679	337	+342
1945 ..	33,110	649	309	+340
1946 ..	33,770	631	319	+312
1947 ..	34,800	773	348	+425
1948 ..	35,380	714	319	+395
1949 ..	36,160	656	313	+343
1950 ..	36,990	646	340	+306
1951 ..	37,950	590	390	+200
1952 ..	37,790	586	315	+271
1953 ..	38,220	643	339	+304
1954 ..	39,590	694	327	+367
1955	42,870	692	358	+334

Maternal Deaths .. Nil.

Infant Deaths (under 1 year of age)

	Males	Females	Total
Legitimate	9	12	21
Illegitimate	—	—	—
Totals	9	12	21

Infant Mortality Rate.

30.3 per 1,000 births.

1955	1954	1953	1952	1951	1950	1949	1948
30.3	28.8	35.7	32.4	34	46	26	39

Infant Deaths (under 4 weeks of age).

	Males	Females	Total
Legitimate	5	6	11
Illegitimate	—	—	—
Totals	5	6	11

Neonatal Death Rate .. 15.8 per 1,000 live births.

Comparative Birth and Death Rates per 1,000 population.

	Meriden Rural District	England and Wales (provisional)
Births		
Live Births ..	*15.81	15.0
Still Births ..	23.35(a)	23.1(a)
Deaths		
All causes	*10.02	11.7
Infant Mortality ..	30.3(b)	24.9(b)
Neonatal mortality	15.8 (b)	

* Using comparability factors (Births 0.98 and Deaths 1.20).

(a) per 1,000 total live and still births.

(b) per 1,000 live births.

Cancer.

	Male	Female	Total
Total Deaths all Forms	25	18	43

Cancer Death Rate = 1.00 per 1,000 estimated population.

Population.

The Registrar General's estimate of the population at mid-year is 42,870, an increase of 3,280 over the 1954 figure of 39,590. A further rise is to be expected with the large scale housing development particularly in the Parish of Kingshurst.

Births.

With 659 legitimate and 33 illegitimate live births the Birth Rate decreased compared with the two preceding years. The Rate for England and Wales for the year was 15.0.

Deaths.

The comparative Death Rate for the District continued lower than that for England and Wales, the figures being 10.02 and

11.7 respectively. The major causes of death showed little or no change in the pattern of heart disease, vascular lesion of the nervous system and cancer in that order.

The Death Rate from Cancer was 1.0 per 1,000 estimated population. Once again it is interesting to record the significant preponderance of males over females in connection with lung cancer—male 6, female nil—and, taking into account recent investigations, it is felt there is little doubt that tobacco smoking is harmful in excess.

No maternal death was reported for the fifth year in succession. It is also noteworthy that the Infant Mortality Rate increased slightly to 30.3 per 1,000 live births, the third lowest rate during the past nine years.

Deaths from infectious diseases were restricted to pulmonary tuberculosis and pneumonia.

National Assistance Act, 1948.

While several cases were investigated, it is pleasing to be able to record that no statutory action on my part under Section 47 of this Act was necessary and all agreed to being admitted to institutions for the chronic sick or aged and infirm persons.

SECTION B.

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Total number of cases of Infectious Diseases notified during the year 1955.

Notifiable Disease	Number of Cases Notified. (Comparative figures for 1954 in parenthesis) at Ages — Years								Total cases removed to Hospital	Total Deaths
	At all ages	Under 1	1-5	5-15	15-25	25-45	45-65	65 and up-w'ds.		
Measles	705 (155)	12	282	395	12	4	—	—	—	—
Whooping Cough	57 (173)	5	29	21	—	2	—	—	1	—
Diphtheria	— (—)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Erysipelas	3 (3)	—	—	—	—	1	2	—	1	—
Enteric Fever	— (—)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever	28 (20)	—	8	19	1	—	—	—	1	—
Pneumonia	40 (22)	1	4	3	1	5	17	9	2	19
Malaria	— (—)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dysentery	60 (8)	—	11	29	11	6	3	—	3	—
Puerperal Pyrexia	73 (97)	—	—	—	47	26	—	—	71	—
Meningococcal Infection	1 (1)	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Acute Poliomyelitis : Paralytic	6 (—)	—	1	2	1	2	—	—	4	—
Non-paralytic	3 (—)	—	1	1	1	—	—	—	3	—
Acute Infective Encephalitis	— (—)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Encephalitis Lethargica	— (—)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	7 (14)	7	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	31 (34)	—	—	1	6	16	5	3	18	5
Other forms of Tuberculosis	5 (11)	—	—	—	—	4	1	—	4	—
Food Poisoning	11 (19)	2	2	—	2	3	2	—	1	—
Totals	1030 (557)	27	339	471	82	69	30	12	113	24

General Comment.

Compared with 1954 notifications were almost doubled, the large increase being chiefly due to the increased incidence of Measles while cases of Whooping Cough fell by more than half. The occurrence of 9 cases of poliomyelitis was noteworthy, especially as none had been recorded in the previous year.

Measles.

The occurrence of 705 cases compared with 155 during 1954 constituted an epidemic. On the whole, the infection was of a mild nature with few complications and no deaths. Over half the cases were in the 5-15 years age group.

Whooping Cough.

A marked decrease of more than 60% took place and the 57 cases notified was the lowest during the past seven years. There were no deaths. Immunisation against this disease has been available for the past three years and from the relevant table it will be seen that the great majority of injections were given to infants under one year in which age group only 5 cases occurred.

Table showing Number of Children Immunised against Whooping Cough in 1955.

Age at Date of Injection				
0—1	1—2	2—5	5—15	Total
356	121	22	5	504

Diphtheria.

No cases were notified, the last being in 1949. This satisfactory state of affairs can well be attributed to the protection offered by immunisation against the disease, particulars, of which are given in the following table.

Table showing Number of Children Immunised during 1955.

	Age at date of injection							Total
	Under 1	1	2	3	4	5-9	10-14	
Primary	372	100	24	11	7	29	2	545
Reinforcing	—	—	—	1	25	521	150	697
Totals ..	372	100	24	12	32	550	152	1242

Scarlet Fever.

Twenty-eight cases were recorded, an increase of 8 over the previous year. The majority of the cases were of a mild nature with few complications—usually easily countered with the modern antibiotics. In fact, in recent years this disease has ceased to be of major epidemiological importance.

Pneumonia.

Compared with 1954 when only 22 notifications were received, 40 cases occurred of which 26 were in the over 45 age group and where the majority of the 19 deaths occurred, a high mortality rate largely attributable to heart failure in the older age groups.

Dysentery.

A small outbreak of Dysentery resulted in 60 notifications (8 in 1954) of which almost half (29) were in the 5—15 years age group. No infants (under 1 year) and only 3 persons over 45 years were affected. This was gratifying because, had any fatal cases occurred, they were more likely to have been in those sections of the community.

Puerperal Pyrexia.

Seventy-three incidents took place, a decrease of 24 compared with 1954. As usual, most of the cases were notified by Marston Green Maternity Hospital where they had been admitted from elsewhere and not solely from this district.

Acute Poliomyelitis

The incidence of this disease sharply increased throughout England and Wales and the occurrence of only 9, all non-fatal, cases was reassuring. Six of the patients were of the paralytic type, 4 in the 1—25 age groups and 2 in the 25-45 year group. In no case was there any residual paralysis sufficient to cause severe, permanent physical handicap. The 3 non-paralytic cases occurred in the 1-25 years age group.

Tuberculosis.

During the year 31 new cases of pulmonary tuberculosis and 5 cases of the non-pulmonary type of the disease were notified, a decrease of 3 and 6 cases respectively over the 1954 figures. Including 14 persons previously notified elsewhere who moved into this District during the year and excluding deletions on account of transfer and death, the number of cases remaining on the Register at the close of the year increased by 27 to 225 cases of the pulmonary type but remained unchanged with 48 cases of the non-pulmonary type.

	Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
	M	F	M	F
1. Total on register at 31st December, 1954	106	92	24	24
2. New Cases	19	12	1	4
3. Inward Transfers	16	13	1	2
4. Removals	18	15	4	4
5. Total on register at 31st December, 1955	123	102	22	26

The Chest Clinic opened at Coleshill in 1953 continued to afford valuable services with Dr. Zundel the Chest Physician who was pleased with the results. As mentioned in the 1954 Report, the radiographer kindly loaned by St. Gerard's Hospital remained throughout the year. The following table gives details of cases and attendances.

Cases attending Coleshill Chest Clinic at 31st December, 1955 :—

	Men	Women	Children	Totals
Pulmonary	55	54	12	121
Non-pulmonary	4	6	13	23
Totals ..	59	60	25	144

The B.C.G. Vaccination Clinic opened in February, 1955 and from the Table subpended it will be seen that 30 children were inoculated.

No. of persons vaccinated at Coleshill B.C.G. Clinic during 1955.

Men	Women	Children	Total
1	3	30	34

As in 1954, re-housing of tuberculous persons was largely confined to the Kingshurst Hall Estate which continued to expand. Supervision of cases and contacts was fully maintained and, on the whole, those concerned co-operated.

The sex incidence and age groups of the new cases is recorded in the following table and once again the highest incidence was amongst the 15—35 year age group. The Death Rate remained low with 5 fatal cases giving a figure of 0.11 per 1,000 population.

Sex Incidence and Age Grouping of New Cases.

Age Periods	New Cases				Deaths			
	Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary		Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5 ..	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
15 ..	4	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
25 ..	5	5	—	2	—	—	—	—
35 ..	4	2	1	1	—	1	—	—
45 ..	4	1	—	—	—	1	—	—
55 ..	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
65 and upwards ..	2	1	—	—	3	—	—	—
Totals ..	19	12	1	4	3	2	—	—

The further decline in the number of non-pulmonary disease usually arising from the ingestion of milk infected with the bovine strain of the organism is noteworthy and may well be associated with the designation of the district as a Specified Area in 1953 whereby all milk retailed therein must be either tuberculin tested, pasteurised or sterilised.

Infected milk supplies are investigated by the County Health Department and the position during the year was as follows :—

Tuberculous Milk Investigations—Routine Milk Samples for Biological Examination during the year 1955.

Designation of Milk	Total No. of Samples	No. Positive
Pasteurised	2	Nil
Tuberculin Tested (Pasteurised).....	1	Nil
Tuberculin Tested	7	Nil
Non-designated	45	2

Results of Investigations of Tubercle Infected Milk Supplies during the year 1955.

No. of :—	Cases found on routine sampling in the County	Cases reported by neighbouring County Authorities
1. Investigations	2	5
2. Cows examined	57	109
3. Milk samples for diagnostic purposes	12	30
4. Cows slaughtered under Tuberculosis order	2	5
5. Cows removed from herds during investigations and which may have been infected	—	—

Food Poisoning.

Cases of Food Poisoning decreased to 11 compared with 19 for 1954. With the exception of one case removed to hospital all were of a mild nature.

Report of the Chief Public Health Inspector

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I submit my report on the work of the department for the year ended the 31st December, 1955.

Meat inspection continued to take up a large proportion of the inspectors' time, and by July, when the new slaughtering arrangements had been operating a full year, it was beyond doubt that 100 per cent. inspection could only be maintained at the expense of other essential work. A request for extra staff was deferred by the Public Health Committee until their September meeting, when they recommended the appointment of an additional inspector. Meanwhile a pupil inspector, L. D. Cowell, who had recently qualified had left the Council's service. When the Staffing Committee considered the matter in October they deferred it again, as by that time another pupil, J. W. Bolton, had returned to the department after completing his National Service and was due shortly to sit for the qualifying examination. Subsequently he obtained the certificate, and was appointed an inspector as from the 1st January, 1956. This, however, created a vacancy on the clerical side which had not been filled by the end of the year. Throughout 1955, therefore, the meat inspection had to be covered with no extra staff, with a consequent interruption of activities in certain other directions.

R. HAINES,

Chief Public Health Inspector.

GENERAL INSPECTION OF THE DISTRICT.

Inspections and visits made during the year were as follows :

Housing	943
Overcrowding	68
Nuisances	1757
Air pollution	187
Food examination (including meat inspection)	2456
Slaughterhouses (with regard to premises)	84
Bakehouses	6
Dairies	9
Food premises generally	116
Food stalls and vehicles	20
Water supplies	231
Camping sites and moveable dwellings	461
Factories	36
Shops	13
Infectious diseases (including food poisoning)	118
Rodent control	1290
Miscellaneous	395
	—
	8190
	—

Complaints received and investigated totalled 827, an increase of 89 over the previous year.

NUISANCES.

The following nuisances were reported and dealt with :

Accumulations of refuse	21
Animals so kept	2
Cesspools overflowing	42
Closets defective and insanitary	55
Drains choked and defective	81
Dustbins defective or absent	169
Foul ditches.....	37
Smoke, dust and effluvia	5
Verminous and filthy premises	2
Housing defects :	
Dampness	40
Defective walls	15
„ roofs	25
„ chimneys.....	14
„ windows and doors	28
„ rainwater gutters and pipes	26
„ wall and ceiling plaster	44
„ floors	20
„ firegrates.....	11
„ paving	1
„ sinks	1
Unsatisfactory water supplies	14
Miscellaneous	6

659

Most of the housing defects were dealt with as nuisances under the Public Health Act, 1936. Informal approaches to owners were generally sufficient, but formal abatement notices had to be served in 14 cases.

Legal proceedings were taken for a nuisance order (which was made) in respect of a defective house at Fillongley. Subsequently, as certain of the work had still not been done satisfactorily, it was carried out by the Council, the cost, £54 15s. 8d. being recoverable from the owner. The Council did not ask for a penalty.

A house at Hampton-in-Arden, which was the subject of a notice under section 83 of the Public Health Act, 1936, was subsequently cleansed by the Council in default of the occupier at a cost of £25, which the Council decided not to recover.

The following is a list of the formal notices served during the year under the Public Health Act, 1936, in respect of nuisances and similar matters :

Section	Subject	No. of cases
93	Housing defects (various)	14
75	Dustbins defective or absent	4
24	Defective drainage	12
39	— do —	8
259	Foul ditches, etc.	2
83	Insanitary house	1
138 as amended	Absence of piped water	2

Twenty-seven pail closets were converted to water closets during the year, all without recourse to formal notices. Grants approved for payment by the Council towards the costs incurred, under section 47 of the Act, totalled approximately £404.

A defective length of sewer in private property, serving a row of 12 houses at Keresley, was re-laid by the Council after the service of notices under section 24 of the Public Health Act, 1936, the cost (£125) being recoverable from the owners.

Complaints of inadequate or defective dustbins were dealt with as time permitted, mostly by informal approaches to owners or occupiers. Four cases were referred to the Committee for determination of responsibility, and dustbins were subsequently provided after service of formal notices. The Public Health Committee again considered the introduction of a scheme for providing dustbins as a public service and making an annual charge, but were unwilling to recommend it.

The condition of the River Cole calls for special comment, on account of the very heavy pollution which it receives from the Birmingham area. The Council complained formally to Birmingham about it as long ago as 1942. Since then the position has further deteriorated, and the river is now so foul that in warmer weather it smells strongly of sewage, especially in the vicinity of a water-mill, where part of the river is by-passed and impounded. Here, the mill-pool and a quiescent stretch above it act as a large settling tank for sewage solids, which rise to the surface after partial digestion and are held up by the screens at the intake to the wheel-house, causing considerable nuisance. A request by the Council that Birmingham Corporation should have the mill-pool dredged, to afford some measure of relief pending completion of certain new sewers in the city, was still under consideration at the end of the year.

HOUSING.

Applications for tenancies on the Council's register at the 31st December, 1955, totalled 617, which was 172 less than the figure at the end of 1954. Eighty-seven new Council houses were completed and occupied during the year. In addition, 49 existing houses were vacated and re-let, so that altogether 136 families were re-housed. Thus, for the first time since the war, the reduction in the number of waiting applicants was greater than the number of houses let, due to

a general improvement in the housing situation which enabled some of the people to find their own accommodation. However, after September, 1955, there was an unavoidable break in the continuity of housebuilding, and at the end of the year no Council house was under construction anywhere in the Rural District. The rate of progress, therefore, is likely to be reduced, and the needs of priority cases such as tuberculosis, overcrowding and slum clearance can be expected to absorb more than the casual vacancies and leave nothing for people on the general list. This, however, should be a passing phase, as the Council have other building schemes in the course of active preparation.

The Council's slum clearance programme under section 1 of the Housing Repairs and Rents Act, 1954, based on the new legal standard of fitness, was prepared and submitted to the Minister of Housing and Local Government in July. It proposed the demolition of 55 houses which are already condemned, and the condemnation and demolition of a further 205 houses, over a period of six years. For this purpose it was estimated that during this period the Council would be able to allot, on average, about 40 houses a year for slum clearance needs. Ability to re-house the displaced families will almost certainly be the principal factor governing the actual rate of progress. Of the 55 houses already condemned, only 16 were then occupied, and it was intended to begin with the demolition of the vacant ones whilst preparations were made for the building of more new houses. Eighteen houses were in fact demolished by the end of the year.

The tenants of the three remaining squatters' huts were rehoused during the year and the huts removed, and vacation of the hutted camp at Berkswell, known as Tile Hill Hostel, was completed.

Overcrowding is not a serious factor in the housing requirements of the district. Only six houses are known to be overcrowded on the legal standard, including two new cases reported during the year. Two cases of overcrowding were relieved by the Council. The six overcrowded houses are occupied by a total of fifty persons, comprising ten families.

Information relating to housing progress is supplied to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government by quarterly returns, and detailed housing statistics are not therefore reproduced in this report.

WATER SUPPLIES

Samples taken and submitted for bacteriological examination during the year were reported on as follows :—

	Satisfactory	Doubtful	Unfit	Total
Old Wells	9	6	19	34
New Wells ..	14	4	8	26
Springs	6	2	9	17
Mains	2	—	—	2
	31	12	36	79

Seven samples from wells were submitted for chemical analysis, and two were reported satisfactory and five unsatisfactory.

Samples from old wells were chiefly in connection with surveys, carried out with a view to the provision of additional water mains. As is customary, unsatisfactory samples were followed by written advice to boil water before use for human consumption.

A scheme for providing approximately 3,860 yards of 4 inch main in the Kenilworth Road and Bradnocks Marsh area of Berkswell, at an estimated cost of £6,333, received Ministry approval in May, 1955. The order was placed with the Coventry Water Department, but the work had not been started by the end of the year.

Ministry approval was received at the end of the year for the laying of approximately 1,210 yards of 4 inch main in Benton Green Lane, Berkswell, and the order was placed with the Coventry Water Department.

The Council's scheme for providing a 4 inch main to Green End, Fillongley, was carried out during the year by the Birmingham Water Department. The matter had been under consideration since 1944, having been delayed because of unusual circumstances, including anticipated low pressures and the need for very long private services, some of which involved easements over private land. The length of new main was 1,270 yards and the estimated cost £3,250.

Two other serious cases of water shortage in the Fillongley area were investigated. The first involved 8 private houses and 2 dairy farms at Tippers Hill, where some of the private wells had failed completely and water had to be carted daily for farm stock. The other instance related to two farms at Wood End. Proposals for dealing with both cases were under consideration at the end of the year.

Ministry approval of a scheme for supplying mains water to the Square Lane area of Corley parish was received in November, 1955, the proposal having been submitted in October, 1954. The order was placed with the Coventry Water Department.

The position in the village of Arley remains unsatisfactory. Water is supplied by the National Coal Board, and the inclusion of the parish in the Nuneaton area of supply is still awaited. It is understood that the operation of the new arrangements is dependent on completion of certain major engineering works, which are in progress, to augment the Nuneaton supply. Complaints about shortage of water at Arley, particularly at Woodside and Gun Hill, were received during the dry period in July. Enquiries revealed that the quantity of water available was adequate, and that the local shortages were due to faults in the distribution system. The position at Woodside and at the Herbert Fowler School was subsequently improved by the National Coal Board, who provided a booster pump to increase the pressures. Arrangements were also put in hand by the Nuneaton water authority for the laying of a new link main between the Colliery yard and the corner of Station Road, to improve the supplies in the Old Village generally.

Information was received from the Birmingham Water Department in November that supplies were now available from the new Nuneaton trunk main for the houses in the Monwode Lea area of Over Whitacre.

The following table gives the position as regards piped water supplies at the end of the year. The percentage of houses provided with mains water supplies is now 83.7.

Piped Water Supplies.

Parish	Houses	Birmingham Water Dept.	Coventry Water Dept.	Others
Allesley	571	—	471	—
Arley	922	—	—	910
Astley	65	—	—	20
Balsall	774	—	385	—
Barston	138	—	99	—
Berkswell	586	—	309	—
Bickenhill	670	636	—	—
Castle Bromwich	2205	2193	—	—
Coleshill	2122	1892	—	—
Corley	218	—	141	—
Curdworth	155	109	—	—
Fillongley	408	183	—	14
Hampton-in-Arden	386	—	329	—
Keresley	910	—	862	—
Lea Marston	79	37	—	—
Maxstoke	88	—	29	—
Meriden	490	—	414	—
Packington	63	—	5	—
(Great & Little)				
Shustoke	142	119	—	—
Water Orton ..	557	534	—	—
Nether Whitacre	241	224	—	—
Over Whitacre..	111	71	—	—
Wishaw	62	—	—	26
Total	11963	5998	3044	970

FOOD INSPECTION.

Slaughterhouses and Meat Inspection.

The Council's resolution under section 4 (2) of the Slaughterhouses Act, 1954, that slaughtering facilities in the area were adequate for the time being, was duly confirmed by the Minister in April. Meanwhile, four applications for licences, which had not been decided at the end of 1954, were granted, including one for a slaughterhouse at Keresley which had been extensively reconstructed. The total number of slaughterhouses licensed at the end of the year was 17, of which two remained unused and one was used only occasionally.

Having regard to the uncertain effect of the new Prevention of Cruelty Regulations, which came fully into force on the 1st July, licences were issued in all cases to that date, to enable the position to be fully considered. Subsequent investigation showed that the slaughterhouse premises in the main complied with the Regulations but in seven cases where conditions were to some extent unsatisfactory the occupiers were warned in good time, and all were able to make the necessary modifications to enable their licences to be renewed to the end of the year. For the purpose of Regulation 3 (a), which requires a lairage to be "adequate in size and construction for the number of animals laired therein", the Council adopted a standard of floor space of 30 square feet for cattle and 6 square feet for calves, pigs and sheep, and occupiers of slaughterhouses were notified accordingly.

By making the meat inspection service the first call on the inspectors' time, 100 percent. inspection was maintained. The following table shows the number of animals inspected and the carcasses and offals condemned in whole or in part.

	Cattle excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs
Number killed	1,406	663	272	8,596	5,953
Number inspected	1,406	663	272	8,596	5,953
<i>All diseases except Tuberculosis and Cysticerci</i>					
Whole carcasses condemned	12	18	13	11	21
Carcasses of which some part or organ was con- demned	423	283	0	774	518
Percentage of the num- ber inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis and cysti- cerci	30.93	45.39	4.77	9.13	9.05
<i>Tuberculosis only—</i>					
Whole carcasses condemned	6	7	1	0	5
Carcasses of which some part or organ was con- demned	94	129	1	0	188
Percentage of the num- ber inspected affected with tuberculosis	14.06	20.51	.73	0	3.24
<i>Cysticercosis</i>					
Carcasses of which some part or organ was con- demned	9	0	0	0	0
Carcasses submitted to treatment by refrigera- tion	0	0	0	0	0
Generalised and totally condemned	0	0	0	0	0

Details of carcasses and offals condemned are given in the table below.

Whole Carcasses.

Animals. No.	Reason for condemnation	Approx. weight	
Beasts	13	Tuberculosis, generalized	7,685 lbs.
	1	Inefficient bleeding	440 lbs.
	1	Anaemia	600 lbs.
	4	Septicaemia	2,150 lbs.
	1	Emaciation	300 lbs.
	1	Injuries, multiple	200 lbs.
	1	Oedema, generalized	400 lbs.
	1	Pyaemia	400 lbs.
	1	Decomposition	600 lbs.
	2	Congestion	1,150 lbs.
	1	Gangrene, following injuries	500 lbs.
	1	Johnnes Disease	520 lbs.
	—	—	—
	28	—	14,945 lbs.
	—	—	—
Pigs	5	Tuberculosis, generalized	905 lbs.
	3	Oedema, generalized	360 lbs.
	3	Erysipelas	275 lbs.
	1	Septicaemia	90 lbs.
	1	Anaemia and emaciation	150 lbs.
	1	Pneumonia, gangrenous	90 lbs.
	1	Pneumonia, septic	100 lbs.
	1	Osteomalacia	60 lbs.
	10	Swine fever	610 lbs.
	—	—	—
	26	—	2,640 lbs.
	—	—	—
Sheep	4	Fever	222 lbs.
	4	Emaciation	123 lbs.
	1	Pneumonia, septic	60 lbs.
	1	Oedema	58 lbs.
	1	Dropsy	28 lbs.
	—	—	—
	11	—	491 lbs.
	—	—	—

Animals. No.	Reason for condemnation	Approx. weight
Calves 1	Tuberculosis, generalized	50 lbs.
4	Pyæmia, umbilical	183 lbs.
1	Fever	55 lbs.
1	Bruising	165 lbs.
2	Congestion	115 lbs.
1	Emaciation	45 lbs.
1	Decomposition	70 lbs.
1	Pneumonia, septic	80 lbs.
1	Immaturity	22 lbs.
—	—	—
13	—	785 lbs.
—	—	—

Part Cracases :

	Tuberculosis		Other Diseases	
	No.	Weight (lbs.)	No.	Weight (lbs.)
Beasts : Heads	102	2975	28	808
Trimblings	—	530	—	684
Pigs : Heads	104	1747	3	36
Trimblings	—	93	—	55
Sheep : Heads	—	—	5	15
Trimblings	—	—	—	91
Calves : Heads	—	—	1	3
Trimblings	—	—	—	146
		5345 lbs.		1838 lbs.

Offal :

		Tuberculosis		Other Diseases	
		No.	Weight (lbs.)	No.	Weight (lbs.)
Beasts :	Lungs	156	1415	53	484
	Livers	55	837	253	3718
	Part Livers	—	—	371	1904
	Hearts	6	20	15	40
	Spleens	10	15½	9	14
	Kidneys	3	3	9	9
	Mesenteries	63	252	2	8
	Skirts	5	10	4	8
	Tongues	—	—	1	3
	Tripes	1	8	—	—
Pigs :	Lungs	40	21	361	183½
	Livers	30	75	114	276½
	Part Livers	—	—	19	18½
	Hearts	5	2¼	52	27
	Spleens	1	½	3	1½
	Kidneys	1	¼	10	2½
	Mesenteries	24	12	—	—
Sheep	Lungs	—	—	19	9½
	Livers	2	4	438	906
	Part Livers	—	—	278	216
	Hearts	—	—	2	1
	Spleens	—	—	5	3
	Kidneys	—	—	2	1
	Mesenteries	1	½	—	—
		403	2676 lbs.	2020	7834 lbs.

The total weight of meat condemned was approximately 11 tons 12 cwts. 60 lbs.

The carcass of a calf condemned for generalized tuberculosis was notified to the Veterinary Officer of the Ministry of Agriculture, who traced the dam and had it slaughtered under the Tuberculosis Order, 1938. It was found to have tuberculosis of the uterus.

The maintenance of good relations between the butchers and inspectors did much to ease the burden of meat inspection, but week-end killing was continued throughout the year at two slaughterhouses (in one case on a considerable scale), necessitating regular Sunday visits.

The year's work was marred by one unfortunate incident. A chance visit to a retail butcher's premises revealed a series of apparently deliberate contraventions of the Food and Drugs Act, 1955, and of the Public Health (Meat) Regulations. Several animals had been slaughtered without notice, in a slaughterhouse which was then unlicensed. The carcasses had been moved to a room normally used for cutting-up, some of the meat had already been used, and

certain of the offals were diseased. The unfit offals were seized and submitted to a justice for condemnation. It was not thought that any unfit meat had in fact been sold, but the risk was apparent. Seven specific contraventions were reported to the Council, and after considering legal opinions they decided to proceed on four main counts, as follows :

- (1) failure to notify the existence of disease in two sheep livers ;
- (2) removal of the carcase of one sheep from the place of slaughter without authority ;
- (3) removal of the carcase of one beast, similarly, and
- (4) possessing unsound food intended for sale.

At the hearing before the justices the defendant, who was represented by a barrister, was ordered to pay fines and costs totalling £50 10s. 0d. on the first three charges. In dismissing the fourth, the chairman of the magistrates said they were not satisfied that the defendant intended selling unfit meat.

Inspection of other Food.

The following were condemned and voluntarily surrendered :

419 lbs. miscellaneous tinned food.....	Blown, rusted and damaged tins.
88 lbs. chuck steak	Decomposition.
36 lbs. bacon	— do —
286 lbs. beef	— do — and bone taint.
12 lbs. sausage	Decomposition.

841 lbs.

The items of meat recorded under this heading were dealt with otherwise than in the course of meat inspection at slaughterhouses.

Satisfactory arrangements exist for the disposal of condemned meat and other food. Small quantities are usually burnt. Larger amounts are collected by the department and buried on refuse tips, and whole carcasses, after staining, are sent to a by-products firm in a neighbouring area.

Slaughter of Animals Act, 1933 to 1954.

Licences have been issued to 40 persons, permitting in all cases the slaughtering of cattle, sheep and pigs by means of a captive-bolt pistol, and in five cases the slaughtering of pigs by electrical stunning apparatus.

Food Premises generally.

Only limited progress could be made with the survey of food premises, owing to the amount of time taken by meat inspection. Visits numbered 136, including re-inspections and inspections of

mobile shops. Lack of some of the basic requirements of hygiene, such as washing facilities, sinks and hot water, was recorded in a few cases, but requests to owners or occupiers as appropriate usually resulted in the requisite provision being made. No formal action was required. The general standard of cleanliness was relatively high, and it was encouraging to have food traders ask for a visit by the inspector when they knew he had been working in the locality. This happened several times.

There is no doubt that many more improvements could be obtained, by tactfully seeking the co-operation of food traders, if more time could be devoted to this important work.

Registered Food Premises.

Premises registered under section 16 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1955, at the end of the year were as follows :

Manufacture and sale of ice-cream	11
Sale only of ice-cream	106
Manufacture of sausage and/or cooked meat.....	13
Fish-frying	13

One new application for registration for the manufacture of sausage was adjourned following an adverse report on the premises, and the applicant after due notice appeared before the Council's Public Health Committee. He gave an undertaking to carry out the required improvements and subsequently did so, and the premises were duly registered.

The few ice-cream vendors who continue to make ice-cream use the "cold mix" method and have no heat-treatment plant.

Game Act, 1831 (section 18), as amended.

One game-dealer's licence was issued.

Milk and Dairies.

The following distributors of milk were registered at the end of the year :

Retail dairymen resident in the district	29
Retail dairymen from outside the area	20
Shopkeepers selling milk in bottles only	6
	—
	55
	—

Nine premises are registered as dairies other than dairy farms. The remaining 20 retailers buy bottled milk from wholesale dairies in other areas and sell it direct from motor vehicles, storing no milk on their own premises and using no utensils which would render their premises liable to registration. There were nine visits to dairy premises, and no cause for complaint arose.

Licences under the Milk (Special Designations) Regulations were granted or renewed as follows :

	Tuberculin Tested	Pasteurised	Sterilised
Dealers	17	21	11
Supplementary	15	18	12

SHOPS ACT, 1950.

The Council are responsible for enforcing section 10 (1) and (2), which relate to the provision of sanitary conveniences and the maintenance of ventilation and temperature. They have also accepted delegation from the County Council of enforcement powers under section 38 (3), (4) and (5), governing lighting, washing facilities and facilities for taking meals.

Thirteen visits were paid for purposes connected with these requirements, and attention was also given to them when visiting shops on other matters. Further activity in this sphere was impracticable owing to the more pressing needs of meat inspection.

The occupier of a food shop at Castle Bromwich, whose application for a certificate exempting him from providing a sanitary convenience was refused, declined to make the necessary provision and declared his intention to close the business. Enforcement action was therefore deferred.

RAG FLOCK ACT, 1951.

There are no licensed or registered premises in the district.

PET ANIMALS ACT, 1951.

There are no licensed premises in the district.

NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT, 1948.

There were four cases in which the Council were called upon to arrange the burial of deceased persons in the absence of responsible relatives, under section 50 of the Act. The total cost incurred was £89 6s. 0d., but certain sums were recoverable, *e.g.* by receipt of death grants.

MOVEABLE DWELLINGS.

There were 23 licensed sites in the district at the end of 1955, permitting a total of 183 caravans, 6 huts and 97 tents. In practice, very few tents are used, and then only for a few weeks during the holiday season. Most of the caravans and huts, however, are occupied more or less permanently.

Individual licences were also granted in respect of 47 caravans, these too serving mainly as permanent dwellings.

The number of licensed moveable dwellings continues to decline steadily. This may not be apparent from casual observation of the district, but enquiries indicate that many of the caravans seen are used only occasionally for holiday purposes, and are therefore exempt from licensing under section 269 of the Public Health Act, 1936.

No special problem arose during the year. One of the older licensed sites changed hands, and the new owners began an extensive improvement scheme, including the provision of drainage and a modern sanitary block with water-closets, showers and facilities for domestic washing.

RODENT CONTROL.

The following is a summary of work done by the department during the year.

Premises inspected	311
„ baited and poisoned—	
domestic	251
business	36 287
Second treatments	9
Third „	—
Premises cleared	266
„ not completely cleared	21
Dead rats found	355
Treatments of refuse tips	11
„ „ sewage works	6
Sewer manholes baited and poisoned—	
First treatments	309
Second „	— 309

The total number of rodent control inspections made was 1,315. Most of them were done by the ratcatcher, but the figure includes some investigations made by the sanitary inspectors, usually in the course of other work. No formal notice was served under section 4 of the prevention of Damage by Pests Act, 1949.

Other sanitary work done included the following:

Choked drains and sewers cleared	70
Articles of clothing and bedding disinfected....	77
Houses disinfected	9
„ disinfested	4

AIR POLLUTION.

The measurement of deposited matter and sulphur from the air was continued. An additional grit gauge was put into use at Coleshill on the 1st January, and the Berkswell gauge, which had been used for purposes of comparison, was moved to a new site at

Whitacre Heath at the same time. There are now four grit gauges and nine sulphur-dioxide instruments, at various points around the Hams Hall electricity generating stations. The results of analysis of the deposited material are given below, for each year since observations began.

Total solid deposit (expressed in tons per sq. mile per month).

	Lea Marston	Bacons End	Berkswell	Nether Whitacre	Coleshill
1948 (4 months only)	30.3	10.04	7.9	—	—
1949	22.99	14.23	10.67	—	—
1950	24.05	9.22	7.06	—	—
1951	26.12	11.03	8.4	—	—
1952	15.63	11.10	10.91	—	—
1953	17.14	10.89	9.06	—	—
1954	22.55	18.13	15.24	—	—
1955	13.92	13.61	—	12.93	12.63

Sulphur gases (expressed in empirical units).

	Lea Marston	Bacons End	Berkswell	Coleshill
1948 (4 months only)	0.91	0.79	0.36	—
1949	1.04	0.91	0.47	—
1950	1.02	0.99	0.51	—
1951	0.93	0.83	0.43	—
1952	0.94	1.11	0.51	—
1953	0.94	1.17	0.62	—
1954	0.84	0.92	0.64	—
1955	0.95	0.98	—	1.06

Annual rainfall (at Lea Marston).

1949	23.57 inches
1950	25.21 „
1951	32.59 „
1952	25.87 „
1953	22.60 „
1954	31.12 „
1955	22.30 „

The following report has been kindly prepared by the Engineer and Surveyor, B. Ll. Stephenson, B.Sc., A.M.I.C.E., A.M.T.P.I., M.I.Mun.E., M.R.S.I.

SEWERAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL

During the year the sewerage extension scheme in Coleshill was completed ; and the new pumping station at Castle Bromwich erected by the City of Birmingham in conjunction with the Council, was put into operation, thereby doing away with the land treatment works at Castle Bromwich, and providing up to date treatment at the works of the Birmingham Tame and Rea Drainage Board works.

The construction of a sewage disposal works for the village of Fillongley was commenced and good progress made by the end of the year.

A tender for the construction of a sewerage system and sewage disposal works for the village of Shustoke, received the approval of the Ministry at the end of the year.

A scheme for the sewerage of Berkswell village, including the provision of a sewage disposal works was prepared and submitted to the Ministry for technical consideration.

REFUSE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL

The number of houses to be serviced increased rapidly during the year, and the labour force available for the work diminished, owing to the more attractive prospects obtaining in industry and building work.

The Council followed the position closely and by the end of the year formulated positive action designed to attract more labour.

