

**[Report 1954] / Medical Officer of Health, Rhayader R.D.C.**

**Contributors**

Rhayader (Wales). Rural District Council.

**Publication/Creation**

1954

**Persistent URL**

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*Rhayader Rural District Council*



*Annual Report*  
of the  
*Medical Officer*  
of *Health*



*For the Year 1954*





# MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

YEAR 1954

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## Medical Officer of Health

J. POOLE, M.B., Ch.B.

## Sanitary Inspector

G. H. ROBERTS, M.R.S.I., M.S.I.A.

BRYNCOED

RHAYADER

8th September, 1955

THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE  
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL OF RHAYADER

Sirs,

I have the honour to present to you my Annual Report on the state of the Public Health in the Rural District of Rhayader, for the year 1954.

Weather conditions were bad and unseasonable almost entirely throughout the period, and the rainfall unprecedented for many years. Nevertheless the general health of the people remained at a high level; the incidence of infectious disease was low, and we had no epidemics.

As was to be expected, in the absence of any times of drought there was no experience of difficulties in the matter of water supplies.

Progress was made towards the installation of the complete Sewage Disposal Scheme for the town, and it is expected that the work will have commenced in the year 1955.

The Housing problem remained with us. This, however, became less acute owing to work accomplished in the provision of new dwellings, and it appeared that the prospect of further great improvement in the position was in sight.

I have appreciated the help and co-operation afforded me by all the Officials of the Council, and am grateful to you, Sirs, for all your assistance and encouragement at all times.

I remain, Sirs,

Your obedient Servant,

J. D. O.'M. POOLE, M.B., Ch.B.

*Medical Officer of Health*



## STATISTICS OF THE AREA

Area of District	...	...	...	...	91,240 acres
Estimated Population	...	...	...	...	4,330
Number of inhabited Houses	...	...	...	...	1,313
Rateable Value	...	...	...	...	£116,076
Product of Penny Rate	...	...	...	...	£480

The town of Rhayader itself is an ancient market town, standing about 700 ft. above sea level in the Cambrian Mountains. The 1,500 acres of lakes in the Elan and Claerwen Valleys and the wild beauty of the Wye Valley, are proving an increasing attraction, and the town is becoming more and more important as a centre for tourists.

Agriculture is the principal industry and its importance is indicated by the fact that about 58,000 acres are devoted to it, the farm population being about 40% of the total.

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## HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA

The district is served by one part-time Medical Officer of Health, a Surveyor and one Sanitary Inspector. A Rodent Operative is shared with Knighton Rural District Council.

Six nurses provide a home nursing service.

The Public Health Laboratory Service, Aberystwyth carry out free analyses of milk, water and histological examinations of diseased animals slaughtered at the local abattoir. I am grateful to Dr. Sudds and her staff for their ready assistance.

The County Analyst, Carmarthen is available for the chemical analyses of water and examination of milk for fat content.

Post-natal, mothers and childrens welfare clinics are held monthly.

Clinics are available at Llandrindod Wells for Tuberculosis and at Hereford for Venereal Disease. The Chest Physician holds a weekly clinic at Llandrindod Wells.

There are no hospitals in the district but hospital services were provided during the year at Knighton, Llandrindod Wells, Shrewsbury, Gobowen, Birmingham, Llanidloes and Aberystwyth. The facilities include the services of specialists in all branches of Medicine and Surgery.

## VITAL STATISTICS

### Births

		Male	Female	Rate per 1000 pop.	Rate for England and Wales
<b>Live Births</b>					
Legitimate	...	30	22		
Illegitimate	...	1	1		
Totals	...	31	23	15·96	15·2
<b>Still Births</b>					
Legitimate	...	1	0		
Illegitimate	...	—	—		
Totals	...	1	—	0·20	

### Deaths

All causes	...	28	28	11·19	11·3
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### Deaths of Infants

Under 1 month	2	—	0·41
Under 1 year	2	—	·41

### Causes of Deaths

			Male	Female
Tuberculosis, Respiratory	...	...	0	1
"    Other	...	...	0	0
Syphilitic disease	...	...	1	0
Malignant neoplasm, breast...	...	...	0	1
Other and Lymphatic Neoplasms	...	...	2	2
Vascular lesions of Nervous System...	...	...	1	3
Coronary disease, Angina	...	...	5	0
Heart diseases	...	...	7	9
Circulatory disease	...	...	1	2
Pneumonia	...	...	0	2
Bronchitis	...	...	1	2
Other respiratory diseases	...	...	1	0
Hyperplasia of prostate	...	...	2	0
Congenital malformations	...	...	1	1
Other defined and illdefined diseases	...	...	3	4
Motor-vehicle accidents	...	...	1	0
All other accidents	...	...	1	0
Suicide	...	...	1	0
Leucaemia aleucaemia	...	...	0	1



# PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OF DISEASES

## Notifiable Diseases

	No. of cases notified
Measles ... ..	2
Whooping Cough ... ..	2
Pneumonia ... ..	19
Scarletina ... ..	4
Diphtheria ... ..	1

## Tuberculosis

Number of fresh cases notified :

Pulmonary ... ..	1
Non-Pulmonary ... ..	1

## Immunisation—Diphtheria

	Number
Under 1 year... ..	10
Age 1 year ... ..	11
Age 2 years ... ..	1
Age 4 years ... ..	1
Age 5-9 years ... ..	2
Total	25

## Whooping Cough Innoculations

	Number
Under 1 year... ..	20
Age 1 year ... ..	8
Age 2 years ... ..	3
Age 3 years ... ..	4
Age 4 years ... ..	3
Age 5-9 years ... ..	11
Age 10-14 years ... ..	2
Total	51

## Vaccinations

	Number
Under 1 year... ..	21
Age 1 year ... ..	1
Age 15 years ... ..	7
Total	29



## SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

### Sanitary Inspection

The following table gives the number of inspections etc. made by the Sanitary Inspector during the year.

Visits re:—	Inspections	Re-visits	Total
Rural Housing Survey ...	2	—	2
Allocation of Council Houses	36	—	36
Sanitary Defects etc. ...	16	25	41
Infectious Diseases ...	2	—	2
Water Supply ...	24	49	73
Drainage Inspected or Tested	1	—	1
Rats and Mice ...	11	5	16
Interviews ...	38	—	38
Petroleum Acts ...	7	1	8
Slaughterhouse ...	153	—	153
Food Shops ...	6	—	6
Milk Samples ...	9	—	9
Water Samples ...	20	—	20
Hotels, etc. ...	12	—	12
Miscellaneous ...	33	1	34
	370	81	451

### Private Water Supplies

Many outlying farms are dependant on private sources for water, as it is not feasible to provide public mains throughout the district. Continued progress has been made with grant aided schemes and every assistance with sampling, and advice has been given. Twenty samples were taken for this purpose.

### Rivers and Streams

No action was taken as regards pollution.

### Moveable Dwellings

No action was necessary as regards caravans or moveable dwellings.

### Atmospheric Pollution

There are no industries in the area producing dust or smoke in quantity to cause a nuisance and no action was taken.

### Factories

No. of non-power factories ...	...	...	...	1
No. of power factories ...	...	...	...	22
No. of visits ...	...	...	...	NIL

## Housing and Public Health Acts

No. of properties in respect of which informal action was taken ... ..	28
No. of properties in which defects were remedied as a result of informal action ... ..	16
It was not necessary to take Statutory Action.	

The Clearance Area Scheme that was prepared under the Housing Act, 1936, for nine houses in Penisafydre was postponed pending the re-housing of the one person still occupying these houses. The remainder were re-housed during the year.

## Destruction of Rats and Mice

The Council shares a Rodent Operative with Knighton Rural District Council. From January to August he was employed in this district one week in four and from September to December one week in two

Statistics of his work are as follows :—

### Farms

No. of agricultural properties in the district ...	439
No. of farms on contract with the A.E.C. for rat destruction ... ..	29
No. of farms surveyed ... ..	320
No. of farms surveyed in which infestations were found ... ..	27
No. of farms treated by the Council's Operative ...	19
Total number of visits made to farms ... ..	407

### Business Premises

No. of business premises surveyed ... ..	17
No. of cases in which infestations were found ... ..	7
No. of treatments carried out ... ..	7
Total number of visits made ... ..	51

### Private Premises

No charge is made for the treatment of private premises	
No. of private premises inspected ... ..	73
No. of infestations found ... ..	6
No. of treatments made ... ..	6
Total number of visits made ... ..	85

### Council Property

No. of Council's property found to be infected ...	4
No. of visits made for treatment, etc. ... ..	28



## FOOD SUPPLIES—INSPECTION, ETC.

During the year the Ministry relinquished the local slaughterhouse and on the request of the butchers the Council acquired the lease and established one Public Slaughterhouse in Rhayader.

### Carcases Inspected

		Cattle	Calves	Sheep	Pigs	Goats
Number killed...	...	44	21	1,262	83	1

All were Inspected

### Condemnations

All diseases except T.B.:—

Whole carcases ...	...	1	1	9	—	—
Part carcases and those of which some organ was condemned ...	...	34	—	276	4	—
Percentage affected ...	...	80	5	23	5	—

### Tuberculosis

Whole carcases ...	...	—	—	—	—	—
Part carcases, etc. ...	...	2	—	—	2	—
Percentage affected by T.B. ...	...	5	—	—	2	—

Total weight of meat condemned 1,711 lbs.

### Milk

Nine samples were taken during the year. All were satisfactory.

### Ice Cream

Owing to a power cut ice cream supplies in Rhayader melted on one occasion. Inspections were made and the sale stopped.

### Other Foods

A number of visits were made and it was necessary to condemn 51 lbs. of various foods.

On one occasion information was received from the ministry to the effect that cases of illness had occurred in another part of the country following the consumption of a particular brand of tinned cream. As the result of this inspections were made of all stocks throughout the district and the particular brand withdrawn. No cases of illness occurred in the district as the result of the consumption of this commodity.



## GENERAL

### Refuse Collection

Refuse is collected throughout the district by direct labour serving most houses near principal roads. Collection is made in

Rhayader, Cwmdauddwr and Elan Valley--twice weekly;

Newbridge, Doldowlod, Llanyre, Crossgates, Fenybont and Nantmel—weekly ;

St. Harmon, Bwlchysarnau, Abbeycwmhir, Rhydoldog and Llangurig Road—fortnightly.

Refuse is tipped at The Gro, Cwmdauddwr, The Bog, Newbridge and in Gravel Road, Nantmel.

### Public Cemetery

Eight interments took place during the year. Progress was made on the construction of a stone entrance building having an office and mortuary and a small tool store with public conveniences.

### Public Conveniences

During the year a contract was let to convert the existing sanitary conveniences in Rhayader to 8 W.Cs. for women and to build new conveniences for men on a site in the Smithfield.

### Housing

Twelve houses were completed during the year and were occupied.

No further contracts were let during the year but preliminary work for the construction of a further 16 houses in Cwmdauddwr progressed well and should go to contract during 1955.

The Forestry Commission withdrew their application for houses in the Bwlchysarnau district and although a great deal of the preliminary work on roads, sewerage and water supply had been done, the Council had not acquired the land nor let any contracts and the schemes were abandoned.

No further decisions were made regarding new houses but progress has been slow because of the difficulty of acquiring suitable sites. The acquisition of land is the major problem of future housing development.

Four pre-war Council Houses have no hot water nor drainage. It was decided to modernise these and during the year three had a hot water system installed. Two small sewage disposal plants are being designed and will be installed during 1955.

Eight improvement grants to a total value of £3,059 were approved during the year.

## **Sewerage**

The sewerage scheme at Bwlchysarnau was postponed with the housing scheme as very few properties other than the new houses were involved. The schemes at Llanyre and Pantydwr depend on the acquisition of land for houses.

In Rhayader the Wye River Board continue to make representation to the Council regarding gross pollution of the River Wye but the scheme for renewal of sewers and sewage disposal works made considerable progress and the Council's Consulting Engineers, Messrs. Sir Herbert Humphries & McDonald hope to advertise for tenders in 1955.

The modern plants at Newbridge and Crossgates functioned satisfactorily during the year.

The scheme at Woodlands, Newbridge should go to tender early in 1955.

## **Public Water Supplies**

The rainfall during the year was exceptionally high and no difficulties of supply were experienced.

During the year Pantydwr and St. Harmon water scheme was completed. This scheme includes a reservoir, pressure filtration, chlorination and acidity correction of the water and approximately six miles of water main through a sparsely populated agricultural district.

The work of laying a main approximately three miles long from the Birmingham aqueduct to supplement the supply at Llanyre was almost completed during the year.

Preparatory work was started on extensions to the main at St. Harmon and Nantmel, provision of filtration and chlorination at Newbridge, a scheme for the Doldowlod area and a reservoir and additional works at Bwlchysarnau though the latter was postponed with the housing schemes.



The consumption continues very high in Rhayader, approximately 60 to 70 gallons per head per day being used. This is due mainly to leaks from the old incrustated mains. The Council have decided to renew the majority of mains in Rhayader and when this is done in conjunction with the new sewers, the problems attached to the Rhayader supply should be minimised.

Of the water samples taken only one was unsatisfactory, and in this case chlorination was increased immediately to sterilize the reservoir and mains and ensure a satisfactory supply.

Of the twelve supplies six are chlorinated as routine and a scheme is in hand to add the necessary plant to a seventh. The remaining schemes are so small that it is doubtful if the expence of chlorination would be justified. The supplies are invariably pure.











