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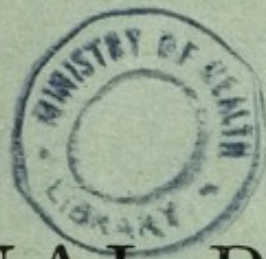
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Rhayader
Rural District Council



ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER
OF HEALTH

For the Year 1963

Members of the Council

Year 1963

Chairman : Alderman E. T. KINSEY MORGAN, J.P.

Vice-Chairman : R. P. L. HUGHES, C.C.

Councillors :

Abbeycwmhir : F. P. Hamer, A. R. Lewis

Cefnlllys Rural : J. T. L. Price

Llanbadarn Fawr : I. J. Lewis, R. T. Knill, C.C.

Llanfihangel Helygen : J. D. A. Thompson

Llansantffraid Cwmdeuddwr :

Maj. Gen. R. S. Lewis, C.B., O.B.E., V. Lewis

W. Scott, J.P., J. D. Williams

Llanyre : S. E. Lloyd, W. A. Probert

Nantmel : R. E. P. Jones, A. E. Oakley, I. Thomas

Rhayader : R. P. L. Hughes, C.C., G. D. Morgan, C.C.

St. Harmon : D. H. Bound, Ald. E. T. K. Morgan, J.P.

Committees :

Public Health and Housing : All members of the Council
Chairman : G. D. Morgan Vice-Chairman : V. Lewis

Finance and Rating : All members of the Council
Chairman : Maj. Gen. R. S. Lewis, C.B., O.B.E.
Vice-Chairman : J. T. L. Price

Medical Officer of Health :

JOHN DAVIES, M.B., B.Ch., B.Sc.

(Medical Practitioner and Part-time M.O.H.)

Telephone : Rhayader 31

Public Health Inspector :

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

(Certs. S.I.E.J.B. and Meat and Foods of R.S.H.)

Council Offices :

Dolgerddon Hall, Rhayader. Telephone : Rhayader 9

BRYNCOED,
RHAYADER.

1st December, 1964

To the Chairman and Members,
Rhayader Rural District Council

Sirs,

I have the honour to present to you the Annual Report for 1963.

The year was exceptional for the severity of the winter with its consequent hardship on the older people. The community as a whole should be alive to the harmful and dangerous effects of prolonged exposure to extreme cold on the young as well as the elderly. We should be mindful of the fact that some of the latter will neglect nutritional requirements to provide extra warmth during cold weather.

The introduction of a limited meals on wheels service contributes a little to the alleviation of this problem, and I hope that it can be extended. This service is greatly appreciated by those who participate.

Too often a false sense of poverty in the old determines a needlessly spartan existence.

Much of the catering for the old will be solved by the Council's provision of group bungalows in 1965 and the County Council's Part III accommodation in the town.

These and the completion of the new housing scheme will provide you with the opportunity of removing some, if not all, of the Category V houses.

No one will regret the closing of some of the older cottages whose low rent and small size are their only attractions. These in no way compensate for poor insulation and ventilation, inadequate light and an outside toilet which has to be shared. Fortunately their numbers are few.

There were no major outbreaks of illness during 1963 and the general health of the community remained satisfactory.

I wish to thank you and the members of the Council's staff for your help, and the Public Health Inspector for his work throughout the year and for the preparation of this report.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN DAVIES.

GENERAL STATISTICS

	1962	1963
Area of District	91,240	acres
Estimated Population	4,060	4,040
Number of Inhabited Houses:—		
In Parishes		
Abbeycwmhir	71	71
Cefnlllys Rural	26	26
Llanbadarn Fawr	152	151
Llanfihangel Helygen	14	14
Llansantffraid Cwmdeuddwr	163	157
Llanyre (Rural Ward)	80	80
Llanyre (Village Ward)	129	129
Nantmel	204	201
Rhayader	348	342
St. Harmon	136	135
	1,323	1,306

Total includes seven residential caravans

Rateable Value	£85,373	£169,620
Product of a Penny Rate... ..	£350	£685

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

The clean atmosphere, open spaces and tempo of life in what is still an unspoiled area is proving more and more attractive to people from crowded towns. There is a demand for houses for week-end use, with a view to possible retirement.

This trend has had several side effects; in housing, which has increased in value because of demand; in the population itself, for it tends to load the higher age groups.

Obviously the advantages of the district outweigh the disadvantages of a rainfall higher than the national average. Rainfall figures are as follows:—

	Kew 1963	Rhayader 1963
January	1.4 ins	0.97 ins.
February	0.2 „	1.56 „
March	2.3 „	6.87 „
April	2.1 „	4.66 „
May	1.3 „	3.50 „
June	1.7 „	3.65 „

July	...	...	2.0	„	1.26	„
August	...	...	1.7	„	3.09	„
September	2.3	„	3.38	„
October	1.8	„	2.15	„
November	4.2	„	9.22	„
December	0.6	„	1.03	„

Totals	21.6 ins.	41.34 ins.
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Rainfall in 1963 expressed as a percentage of long average,
i.e. 1963—1950—84.8%

The national average is generally taken as 30 inches

HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA

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

Bacteriological analyses of water are undertaken by the Public Health Service, Shrewsbury, and chemical analyses by the Public Analyst, Carmarthen.

Infant Welfare Clinics are held monthly at Rhayader and Newbridge-on-Wye.

There are hospital outpatient facilities at Llandrindod Wells, Llanidloes, Hereford, Aberystwyth, Shrewsbury and at hospitals farther afield.

The Nursing Services are administered by the Radnorshire County Council. At present there are four nurses resident in the district, the rest of the area is covered from outside. The service has been augmented by the appointment of a Health Visitor who specialises in the welfare of the old and young.

Ambulance Services are provided by the Local St. John's Voluntary Service. This arrangement works well and avoids the inevitable delays which would arise from a central service in such a sparsely populated area where distance and lack of local knowledge might prove to be unsurmountable obstacles.

VITAL STATISTICS

The value of statistics is that they can be taken as some measure of the 'healthiness' of an area or underline some weakness in public health. Unfortunately too much credence can not

be given where the population is very low, thus if the deaths from accidents increase by one then the rate goes up 50%. This is patently absurd, but by studying the figures for a number of years then a picture can be formed.

The new style of recording statistics are an improvement as they are now broken up clearly into age groups. It is therefore interesting to note that the group with the highest death rate is the last one—over 75 years. Perhaps this is a justification of the area as a place to retire to.

Live Births				1962	1963
Male—legitimate	...	...	...	29	28
—illegitimate	...	...	...	1	—
			Total	30	28
Female—legitimate	...	...	...	26	35
—illegitimate	...	...	...	3	—
			Total	29	35
			Totals	59	63
Rate per 1,000 Population (corrected)	...	...	...	16.51	18.09
Rate for England and Wales (approx.)	...	...	...	18.1	

Illegitimate Live Births

Per cent of total live births 6.8% Nil

Still Births

Male—legitimate...	...	...	...	1	1
illegitimate	...	...	...	Nil	Nil
Female—legitimate	...	...	...	Nil	Nil
—illegitimate	...	...	...	Nil	Nil
			Total	1	1
Rate per 1,000 total live & still births	...	...	...	16.63	15.6
Rate for England and Wales (1963)	...	...	...	17.3	

This still birth rate is a case in point of the unreliability of statistics involving small populations, since one more would have doubled the rate. However, taking the totals of the past fifteen years, these are:—

	Still Births	Total (Still & Live)	Rate per 1,000
1963	1	64	15.6
1959-1963	12	327	36.7
1954-1958	6	314	19.13
1949-1953	12	316	37.9
1949-1963	30	957	31.3

In view of these figures, there seems to be little doubt that the number of still births in this area is higher than the national average.

Total Live and Still Births

	Still	Live	Total
Males—legitimate	1	28	29
—illegitimate	—	—	—
Females—legitimate	—	35	35
—illegitimate	—	—	—
Totals	1	63	64

Infant Deaths

	Under:		
	one year	4 weeks	1 week
Males—legitimate	1	1	1
—illegitimate	—	—	—
Females—legitimate	—	—	—
—illegitimate	—	—	—
Totals	1	1	1

Infant Mortality Rates

Total Infant deaths per 1,000 live births	15.9
Legitimate infant deaths per 1,000 legitimate births ...	15.9
Illegitimate infant deaths per 1,000 illegitimate births	Nil

Neo Natal Mortality Rate

Deaths under four weeks per 1,000 live births	15.9
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Early Neo Natal Mortality Rate

Deaths under one week per 1,000 live births	15.9
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Perinatal Mortality Rate

Still Births and deaths under one week combined per 1,000 live and still births	31.8
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Maternal Mortality	Nil
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Births and Deaths compared

	Births	Rate per 1,000 population (Corrected)	Rate for England & Wales
1963	63	25.88	18.2
Average over ten years	—	19.37	16.56
	Deaths	Rate per 1,000 population (Corrected)	Rate for England & Wales
1963	46	10.60	12.2
Average over ten years	—	12.1	11.7

If it were necessary to prove depopulation, the following figures would be most useful. In the past fifteen years the natural increase, that is the excess births over deaths, is 93, but in the same time the population has fallen by 658, a total decrease of 751 to the present figure of 4,040.

Each year it seems that the position must stabilise itself and as a hope for the future it remains to be seen what is the effect of the infusion of new small industries into the district.

Causes of Death

	Male	Female
Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms ...	4	2
Vascular lesions of nervous system	1	4
Coronary disease, angina	9	—
Hypertension with heart disease	1	1
Other heart disease	1	2
Other circulatory disease	5	1
Pneumonia	4	1
Bronchitis	2	1
Other defined and ill defined diseases ...	2	2
All other accidents	—	2
Suicide	1	—
Total deaths all causes	30	16

As for the past few years nil returns from diseases are not listed, thus the omissions are as interesting as the figures shown. In this connection there are no deaths from lung cancer.

In the campaign against cigarette smoking, lectures are given in the schools. However, it seems that this can have only limited success against the wealth and experience of commerce. Perhaps, like so many other aspects of young peoples' discipline, too much is left to other persons, schools, police, etc., and not enough done by precept in the home.

Infectious Diseases

There were no epidemics of infectious diseases during the year, and notifications were as follows:—

Pneumonia ...	7
Erysipelas ...	1

Tuberculosis

	Male	Female
No. of cases notified (non pulmonary) ...	2	—
No. of cases on Register		
Pulmonary	4	3
Non-Pulmonary	5	3
Total	9	6

The number of cases still on the register are half those of ten years ago. Tuberculosis no longer involves the fear and dread it once did. Modern medicine has provided the cure, but it should not be overlooked that on the preventative side the improvement in housing and higher standards of living have played their parts.

National Assistance Act, 1948—Section 47

This Section of the Act gives power to remove persons who

are in need of care and attention to institutions.

No action was necessary during the year.

Housing

Human nature being what it is, the desire to keep up with the neighbours is marked in housing improvements. The upgrading or modernisation of one house or farm in one area is often followed by inquiries from adjacent premises.

There is no doubt that the relaxation of "red tape" in the Standard Grant Scheme has meant greater interest but some possible schemes are being held up because of the lack of appreciation of the higher costs in rural areas. Apart from higher drainage costs no regard seems to have been taken of higher transport costs, an overloaded building trade and weather hazards. Still, progress is being made, albeit slowly.

Since the original report on Rural Housing in 1959 the position is approximately as in the following:—

Parish	Grades					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
Abbeycwmhir						
1959	13	3	28	22	7	73
1963	24	2	24	19	2	71
Cefnlllys Rural						
1959	4	1	8	7	7	27
1963	9	—	6	8	3	23
Llanbadarn Fawr						
1959	58	2	51	25	20	156
1963	63	3	46	28	14	154
Llanfihangel Helygen						
1959	2	—	8	4	1	15
1963	2	—	8	4	—	14
Llansantffraid Cwmdeuddwr						
1959	86	1	46	27	21	181
1963	98	1	36	29	8	172
Llanyre						
1959	77	4	85	44	8	218
1963	93	7	74	41	—	215
Nantmel						
1959	43	10	86	51	30	220
1963	59	6	83	48	10	206
Rhayader						
1959	189	10	68	40	35	342
1963	219	5	70	26	27	347
St. Harmon						
1959	27	1	71	36	8	143
1963	40	2	61	36	4	143
Totals and Percentages						
1959	499	32	451	256	137	1,375
	36%	2%	33%	19%	10%	
1963	607	26	408	239	68	1,348
	45%	2%	30%	18%	5%	

It will be seen from this that the number of Grade 1 Houses has increased by 108 in four years, or expressed in percentages from 36 to 45%.

Since, however, most houses with bathrooms are in Grade 1, this means that over half the houses in the district are still without baths. It is hoped that, in an age and area where the car is regarded as essential, the means to personal hygiene shall not be considered a luxury.

In the same context, it will be seen from the following table that over a third of the population are still content with buckets, etc. Especially bad is Nantmel Parish where the principal method is a frame over the brook—a method much favoured by the Romans.

Sewerage

Parish	Column	1	2	3	4	5
Abbeycwmhir	—	23	48	71	—
Cefnlllys Rural	—	9	17	26	—
Llanbadarnfawr	54	39	61	154	18 new houses
Llanfihangel Helygen	—	2	12	14	—
Llans'tffraid Cwmdeudwr		92	37	43	172	—
Llanyre	124	35	56	215	24 plus 14 new
Nantmel	5	67	134	206	—
Rhayader...	...	338	3	6	347	6 plus 48 new
St. Harmon	2	36	105	143	12 plus 6 new
		615	251	482	1348	128
		46%	18%	36%		

Col. 1 is the number of houses with W.C's to main sewer

Col. 2 is the number of houses with W.C's to private disposal plants—almost entirely to the Council's 'standard design'

Col. 3 includes pails, middens and closets over brooks and streams etc.

Col. 4 are the totals

Col. 5 the number of existing and proposed new houses likely to be sewered in the foreseeable future

There are modern Council Plants at Rhayader, Crossgates and Newbridge-on-Wye. The Pantydwr scheme is now in progress and work is likely to start in the New Year on Llanyre. There are small plants for the Council Houses at Dolau, Seven Stars and Brynicholas.

Meat Inspection

In March, 1962, the slaughterhouse had reverted to private use but, failing to be brought up to the new standards, this was finally closed in March, 1963.

From the beginning of the year until its closure, some sixty-one visits were made for meat inspection. Killings had been small up until then and meat is now bought off the hook from Llandrindod Wells, Llanidloes, Builth Wells and farther afield.

There were no cases of cysticercosis or of tuberculosis during this time.

Other Foods

Numbers and types of food premises in the district are:—

Grocers	...	...	...	...	39
Butchers	...	...	...	...	5
Public Houses	...	...	...	...	22
Hotels	..	...	...	...	20
Cafes, Restaurants		...	...	...	3
School canteens	...	...	...	...	10

—
99

Not all the public houses are yet up to the standard demanded for toilets. With the aid of the licensing justices it is to be hoped that all will be persuaded to remedy this state of affairs.

Destruction of Rats and Mice

A rodent operator is shared between Rhayader and Knighton Rural District Councils. This works out on an average of eighteen weeks annually in each district.

The bulk of the infestations occur on farms as is natural in such an agricultural community. The service seems to be welcomed by occupiers and no difficulty has been encountered, in fact most treatments are arranged on a direct request.

So far there has been no case of warfarin resistance. I feel that this could be one result of good relations, for very few people do treatments themselves.

A number of different bait bases are used for specialised applications, but in the main, wheat meal is predominantly used in an effort to reduce costs.

Water Supplies

All water undertakings are owned by the Council and are under the control of the Surveyor and Water Engineer.

There are eleven separate works, seven of which are treated with chlorine before distribution. All the supplies are plumbo solvent but little or no lead pipes are used, nearly all services

being in copper and recently in alkathene.

The results of the ten bacteriological samples taken during the year are as follows:—

Supply	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Remarks
Abbeycwmhir ...	1	—	Partially treated inadequate
Bwlchysarnau ...	—	1	Untreated
Pantydwr ...	1	—	Fully treated
Penybont ...	1	—	" "
Rhayader ...	6	6	" "
	9	9	

The Council are by no means satisfied with their water supplies and distribution, and plans are suggested for a new supply for Newbridge-on-Wye and Llanyre, Gaufron and Nantmel with extensions at Crossgates and improvements for Rhayader.

As there have no major changes in distribution during the year, the number of houses supplied will be affected only by private improvements and the approximate figures are as below:—

Parish	No. of Houses	Public Mains		Private Sources	
		Piped	St'dpipes	Piped	★ Carried
Abbeycwmhir ...	72	20	—	33	19
Cefnllys Rural ...	26	—	—	14	12
Llanbadarnfawr ...	154	101	4	25	24
Llanfihangel Helygen ...	14	8	—	2	4
Llans'ffraed Cwmdauddwr	173	93	8	44	28
Llanyre ...	215	160	4	32	19
Nantmel ...	206	67	3	64	72
Rhayader ...	348	313	33	—	—
St. Harmon ...	143	50	1	52	40
Total	1,251	811	55	266	218
Percentages		60%	4%	20%	16%

★ Includes hand pumped supplies

Refuse Collection

Collection is made as follows:—

Rhayader, Cwmdauddwr and Elan Valley—twice weekly

Newbridge-on-Wye, Doldowlod, Llanyre, Crossgates, Penybont and Nantmel—weekly

St. Harmon, Pantydwr, Nantmel, Bwlchysarnau, Abbeycwmhir, Llangurig Road and Tylwch—fortnightly

Public Cemetery

Of the forty-six deaths in the year, five were buried in the Council's public cemetery.

Public Conveniences

The Council have public conveniences at Rhayader, Cwm-dauddwr and the Cemetery, whilst the Birmingham Corporation have three conveniences in the area of the lakes.

Public Swimming Pools

There is a small pool for infants in use in the Waun Capel park. It has an improvised chlorination plant but it would be more effective if it were allowed to pump and function without stop throughout the warmer months.

Factories

Premises (1)	Number on Register (2)	Number		
		Inspections (3)	Written Notices (4)	Occupiers prosecuted (5)
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 & 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	1	—	—	—
(ii) Factories not included in (i) which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	23	8	—	—
(iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out-workers' premises)	—	—	—	—
Total	24	8	—	—

Particulars (1)	Number in which defects were found				No. of cases in which prosecutions were instituted (6)
	Found (2)	Remedied (3)	Referred To H.M. Inspector (4) | By H.M. Inspector (5)		
Want of cleanliness (S.1)					
Overcrowding (S.2)					
Unreasonable temperature (S.3)					
Inadequate ventilation (S.4)					
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6)					
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)					
(a) Insufficient	1			1	
(b) Unsuitable or defective					
(c) Not separate for sexes					
Other offences against the Act not including offences relating to Outwork)					
Total	1	—	—	1	—

Public Health Inspections

An approximation of visits made during the years are as follows :—

Rehousing	...	...	...	...	65
Slum Clearance	...	...	...	...	12
Old people's welfare	...	..	...	...	2
Improvements—					
Hill Farming	...	...	...	...	39
Discretionary Grants	...	...	...	...	58
Standard Grants	...	...	...	...	99
Public Health Act—					
sewer connections	...	...	...	...	8
drainage	...	...	...	...	22
defects	...	...	...	...	22
animals	...	...	...	...	5
insects	...	...	...	...	4
rodents	...	...	...	...	10
others	...	...	...	...	2

Infectious diseases	...	...	...	...	10
Caravan and camping site	...	...	...	...	45
Caravan Sites—private	...	...	...	...	23
Water supplies—public	...	...	...	...	82
—private	...	...	...	...	18
Factories	...	...	...	...	8
Petroleum Acts	...	...	...	...	3
Swimming Pools	...	...	...	...	6
Food—meat inspection	...	...	...	...	61
butchers	...	...	...	...	19
bakehouses	...	...	...	...	6
grocers	...	...	...	...	3
public houses	...	...	...	...	25
cafes, etc.	...	...	...	...	3
Miscellaneous	...	...	...	...	23
Refuse	...	...	...	...	90
Conveniences	...	...	...	...	42
					—
Total					815

Other Matters

An interesting diversion during the year was that of obtaining foxes caught by the local pack for research into the incidence of hydatids. This was undertaken by a specialist operating from the slaughterhouse at Builth Wells.

