

[Report 1956] / Medical Officer of Health, Oswestry Borough.

Contributors

Oswestry (England). Borough Council.

Publication/Creation

1956

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BOROUGH OF OSWESTRY

ANNUAL REPORT

ON THE WORK OF THE

Public Health Department

FOR THE YEAR

1956





OSWESTRY

Oswestry is an ancient market town situated very close to the Welsh Border, and is a shopping centre serving a population of 40,000-50,000; Welsh is widely spoken in the town. The Smithfield is one of the leading stock markets in the country. Some light industry is developing in the town, and in the past the advent of the railways brought a little of the Industrial Revolution, but in the main Oswestry retains its long-developed character of a market town in the Border Country.

Area (acres)	2,180
Population	10,960
Inhabited Houses (Rate Book)	3,263
Rateable Value	£155,712
Product of Penny Rate	£641.0.0

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF

DR. C. B. McARTHUR, M.B., B.S., D.P.H.,

Medical Officer of Health to Oswestry Borough and Rural
District Councils.

Assistant County Medical Officer.

R. J. LEWIS, M.A.P.H.I., Cert. Meat Insp., Dip. R.I.P.H.H.,

Public Health Inspector.

T. H. POWEL, M.A.P.H.I.,

Additional Public Health Inspector (Resigned 31.3.56).

MISS L. WILLIAMS,

Clerk to the Department and to the Medical Officer of Health for
Oswestry Rural District Council.

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Photographs taken by John Wade, Additional Public Health Inspector
during 1957.

Public Health Office,
8, Oswald Road,
Oswestry,
Shropshire.

To The Mayor, Aldermen, and Councillors of the Oswestry Borough Council.

Mr. Mayor, Aldermen, and Councillors,

I have the honour to present for your perusal my Annual Report for 1956.

The Contents include the information requested by the Minister of Health.

Annual Reports are often received and quickly laid down on the table (or in the waste paper basket). I plead guilty to giving such treatment to some reports which consist largely of tables or the drawing up of accounts. I have therefore reduced the tables to a minimum, and trust that you will read the prose.

We are all convinced that Oswestry is a delightful town, I need not say that to Oswestrians born and bred.

Our estimated population remains at 10,960. Included in this figure are 181 Little Strangers we so gladly welcome to the family circle, and among them the town was so popular that they came at the rate of 16.5 per thousand, whereas Shropshire attracted 14.78, and England and Wales as a whole 15.7. Fortunately only five of these were called away before reaching their first birthday, and three out of the five were with us less than a month.

Taken as a whole Oswestry is a town where people live long, and the age attained by the townspeople is noteworthy. As I mentioned five

infants died, then there was not a single death from the age of six months until the 4th and 5th decades were reached (6 deaths). Most deaths were recorded in the 8th decade for both men and women, but in the 9th decade the old ladies beat the men, though the men had three stalwarts who exceeded 90 years before passing to their rest.

With a population which includes so many elderly people the causes of death are preponderantly lesions of heart and the circulatory system, and cancerous growths in various situations. In these groups the total mortality has been very similar to the figures obtained last year.

An old lady who was losing her sight once said to me "I guess my eyes is just worn out". What a pity that many people by bad habits of diet, rush and worry wear themselves out ten or twenty years too soon. In many of the primitive countries natives used to show healthy hearts and arteries, with a low blood pressure. Since civilization, with its processed foods, richer diet, and pressure of work has engulfed them they show the same premature ageing as the white man.

Infectious disease reached a very low level, no epidemics being reported, and the total number of cases was small, the only deaths from infectious disease being two cases of pneumonia (in elderly people). There was no death from Tuberculosis and the new cases were 8 (9 last year).

Just about half the children born were immunised against Diphtheria and Whooping Cough before their first birthday - and a further number were immunised during school life. Nearly all parents are anxious for this protection yet barely 40% will have the baby protected against

Smallpox, usually a more serious disease than diphtheria. Booster doses for diphtheria immunisation are accepted as a routine, but vaccination of school children is only asked for when compulsory before going abroad. Oswestry has very few townspeople with an effective degree of immunity against smallpox - only 40% of the youngest children and those young people who have recently been in the services! What gaps in our defences!

I am glad to report that in October a Public Inquiry was held in respect of the Clearance Area declared the previous year covering the area bounded by Castle Street, Beatrice Street, Albert Road and Cripplegate. Recently our hearts have been gladdened by the news that the scheme may proceed, and one of Oswestry's worst slums will presently be a thing of the past. The site will be redeveloped in stages to provide modern homes for those people who live in the area.

Another black spot has also been removed by completing the rehousing of families living in Mile End Camp; in this the Rural District Council took a share.

From time to time individual unfit houses are closed under Section 11 of the Housing Act and the occupants are rehoused without delay.

Many inspections of shop premises have been made, and the Health Inspectors are always ready to advise Shopkeepers how best to comply with the requirements of the Food Hygiene Regulations.

The Clean Air Act gives Local Authorities power to control dark smoke, and grit and smoke from furnaces. They may also establish Smoke Control Areas.

Entering Oswestry from Gobowen or Whittington as evening falls in autumn and winter this town is veiled in smoke from many domestic

chimneys. The colouring might make an artist loving greys and Yellows long to paint the scene. But what does the housewife say to dirty curtains, & wallpaper, or her husband to the necessity of repainting the house so frequently if it is to be their pride? How little they know that the lungs of dwellers in smoky areas grow blacker day by day.

It is encouraging to see more factories changing over to smokeless fuels, and taking steps to have their stokers instructed in efficient (and consequently economical and almost smokeless) use of the new types of furnaces available. Housewives also could be helped by the provision of grates using smokeless fuel in new houses or where replacements are required.

The water supply of the town continues to be satisfactory in quality, but in dry summers we rely on a considerable intake from the Liverpool supply.

In conclusion I would like to thank my colleagues in all Departments of the Council for help given throughout the year, and for the sections they have contributed to this report. I greatly appreciate the willing and capable assistance of all members of the staff of the Public Health Department.

I have the honour to remain,

Your obedient Servant,

C. B. McARTHUR,

Medical Officer of Health.

September, 1957.

EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 1956.

<u>Live births.</u>	Male	Female	Total
Legitimate	84	90	174
Illegitimate	1	6	7
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	85	96	181

Birth rate per 1,000 population 16.5

Birth rate after correction by comparability factor 16.3

<u>Deaths.</u>	Male	Female	Total
	56	59	115

Death rate per 1,000 population 10.5

Death rate after correction by comparability factor 10.5

<u>Still births.</u>	Male	Female	Total
Legitimate	1	2	3
Illegitimate	-	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	1	2	3

Still birth rate per 1,000 population 0.27

Deaths of Infants under 1 year of age.

Number of children under 1 year of age who died in 1956. . . 5
 Deaths of Infants under 1 year of age per 1,000 births . . . 27.6

Number of women dying in consequence of child birth.

Maternal mortality rate per 1,000 births 0.00

	Male	Female	Total
Deaths from Measles (all ages)	-	-	-
Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages)	-	-	-
Deaths from Diarrhoea	-	-	-

BIRTHS, DEATHS, STILL BIRTHS, INFANT MORTALITY, MATERNAL MORTALITY
FOR THE YEAR 1956.

	Total Births	Birth Rate	Total Deaths	Death Rate	Still Births	Still Birth Rate Per 1,000 Population	Infant Deaths	Infant Mort.	Maternal Deaths	Maternal Mort. Per 1,000 Live Births
OSWESTRY M.B.	181	16.5	115	10.5	3	0.27	5	27.6	-	-
COUNTY OF SALOP 1955.	4,398	14.78	3,316	11.14	107	0.36	111	25.25	4	0.90
ENGLAND AND WALES	699,059	15.7	521,402	11.7	16,431	0.36	16,471	23.8	401	0.57

CAUSES OF DEATH

CAUSES	OSWESTRY M.B.	1955
Tuberculosis, respiratory	-	1
Other forms of Tuberculosis	-	-
Syphilitic disease	-	-
Diphtheria	-	-
Whooping Cough	-	-
Meningococcal infections	-	-
Acute Poliomyelitis	-	-
Measles	-	-
Other infective and parasitic diseases	-	1
Malignant neoplasm, stomach	1	5
Malignant neoplasm, lung, bronchus	1	2
Malignant neoplasm, breast	2	-
Malignant neoplasm, uterus	1	-
Other malignant & lymphatic neoplasms	13	12
Leukaemia, aleukaemia	1	1
Diabetes	2	1
Vascular lesions of nervous system	13	17
Coronary disease, angina	10	24
Hypertension with heart disease	4	4
Other heart disease	30	19
Other circulatory disease	6	8
Influenza	-	1
Pneumonia	2	1
Bronchitis	5	7
Other diseases of the respiratory system	1	2
Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	4	-
Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea	-	-
Nephritis and nephrosis	4	1
Hyperplasia of prostate	1	1
Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion	-	-
Congenital malformations	1	2
Other defined and ill-defined diseases	8	9
Motor vehicle accidents	-	2
All other accidents	3	2
Suicide	2	1
Homicide and operations of war	-	-
All causes	115	124

INFANT MORTALITY

District	Under 1 day		1 - 7 days		7 days - 1 month		1 - 3 months		3 - 6 months		6 - 9 months		9 - 12 months		Total		Combined total	Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 Births	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.					
OSWESTRY	1	-	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	3	2	5	27.6	
M.B.																			

NEO-MORTALITY

District	Deaths of infants under 1 month			Percentage of total infant deaths	Rate per 1,000 live births
OSWESTRY	M.	F.	Total		
M.B.	2	1	3	60	16.6

CANCER

District	Deaths		Total	Rate per 1,000 Population
	M.	F.		
OSWESTRY M.B.	10	8	18	1.64
COUNTY OF SALOP (1955)	274	276	550	1.848
ENGLAND & WALES	48,932	43,769	92,701	2.07

INFECTIOUS DISEASE TABLE

Disease .	Dysentery	Deaths	Food Poisoning	Deaths	Measles	Deaths	Meningo-coccal Inf.	Deaths	Pneumonia	Deaths	Polio-myelitis NP	Deaths	Scarlet Fever	Deaths	Whooping Cough	Deaths
OSWESTRY M.B.	1	-	1	-	4	-	1	-	3	2	3	-	5	-	7	-

MONTHLY INCIDENCE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Disease .	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Dysentery	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Food Poisoning	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Measles	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Meningococcal Inf.	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pneumonia	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Polio-myelitis NP	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-
Scarlet Fever	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	2	-
Whooping Cough	2	2	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-

NOTIFICATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Ages.	Dysentery		Food Poisoning		Measles		Meningo- Infection		Pneumonia		Polio- myelitis (Non-para- lytic)		Scarlet Fever		Whooping Cough	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
1-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	3	1
3-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	1
5-	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	3	1
10-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
25-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
45-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
65 & over	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Not known	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	-	1	1	-	3	1	1	-	3	-	1	2	1	4	4	3

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATIONS, 1956

District	Under 5	5-14	Total	Re-inforcing injections
OSWESTRY M.B.	95	34	129	223

VACCINATIONS, 1956

District	Percentage of children under the age of 1 year vaccinated	Under 1	1 yr.	2-4	5-14	Over 14	Total	Re-vaccinations
OSWESTRY M.B.	39.8	70	4	6	7	6	93	27

WHOOPING COUGH IMMUNISATIONS, 1956

District	Total Number Immunised in 1956
OSWESTRY M.B.	92

INFECTIOUS DISEASE AND IMMUNISATION

Apart from an isolated case of Diphtheria in 1952 this disease has not occurred in Oswestry since immunisation was introduced: Immunisation is now accepted by the vast majority of parents as a safeguard to their children's health, and few have to be pressed to bring their infants for immunisation and for a booster dose when starting school.

Unfortunately I find that the small number of school entrants who have not been immunised is increasing, and that this is due in the majority of cases to indolence on the part of the parents, who readily consent to immunisation once the child has started school when it can be done without causing them any trouble.

Among cases of diphtheria in certain areas many of those infected were children in the 1 - 5 year age group who had not yet been immunised.

Immunisation against Whooping Cough is being asked for by many parents.

Those cases of whooping cough who had previously been immunised were mild in severity, and in most cases occurred when the child was over 3 years old, and so better able to stand the strain of the disease.

VACCINATION

It is a matter of regret that, whereas immunisation is sought after, vaccination against smallpox is only performed in less than half the infants.

Now that air travel from the East and Middle East, where smallpox is endemic, is so common, the unvaccinated members of the population are vulnerable should a case of smallpox develop in this district.

VACCINATION (Cont.)

Vaccination performed in early infancy causes a minimum of disturbance and renders revaccination at a later age less likely to evoke marked general effects.

TUBERCULOSIS

Unfortunately the Mobile Mass X-ray Unit based on Stoke-on-Trent was not able to visit Oswestry this year.

The importance of good housing and an adequate diet in the prevention of this disease has been mentioned in earlier reports.

To this I would add the desirability of adequate rest in the group of young people aged 15 - 30 which is the common age of onset.

Education is given at the Chest Clinic and Sanatoria by doctors and nurses in the hope of preventing further cases arising in the patient's family or visiting friends. Unfortunately where the patient cannot have a bedroom to himself, passage of infection becomes more probable.

B.C.G. vaccination to protect young children and infants where there is a family history of tuberculosis is being used in certain cases under the care of the Chest Physician; and the disease itself is being treated by the drugs introduced during the past 10 years.

TUBERCULOSIS

Notifications during 1956.

	Respiratory		Non-respiratory		Total	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Civilian cases	1	2	-	4	1	6
Service cases	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers	1	3	-	-	1	3
TOTAL	2	5	-	4	2	9
Cured	-	-	-	1	-	1
Left district	-	-	-	-	-	-
Deaths	-	-	-	-	-	-

Number of cases on Register at the end of the year.

Respiratory		Non-respiratory		Total	
M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
51	30	3	7	54	37

Number of Primary Notifications during the year.- 8

Death Rate per 1,000 population (Respiratory Tuberculosis).

ENGLAND AND WALES 0.108

CLINICS AND HOSPITALS IN THE DISTRICT

TUBERCULOSIS: The Physician attends at:-

The Clinic, Upper Brook Street, Oswestry, every Friday
from 1.30 p.m. to 4 p.m.

The Chest Clinic, Copthorne Hospital, Shrewsbury every
Wednesday from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

VENEREAL DISEASES: Facilities for treatment.- Clinics.

No.1 Belmont, Shrewsbury, as follows :-

Females	:	Mondays	-	3.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.
		Thursdays	-	5. 0 p.m. to 7. 0 p.m.
Males	:	Tuesdays	}	- 6. 0 p.m. to 8. 0 p.m.
		Fridays		

The aforementioned clinics and the following hospitals are administered by the Birmingham Regional Hospital Board which was constituted in accordance with the National Health Service Act.

Oswestry and District Hospital.

Copthorne Hospital, Shrewsbury, treats cases of Enteric Fever, Meningitis, Acute Poliomyelitis or Acute Encephalitis.

Monkmoor Hospital, Shrewsbury, admits other cases of Infectious Disease such as Scarlet Fever, Diphtheria, Measles, Whooping Cough, etc.

Other hospitals which provide accommodation are :-

The County Council Hospital, Cross Houses, Shrewsbury.

The Royal Salop Infirmary, Shrewsbury.

The Eye, Ear, and Throat Hospital, Shrewsbury.

The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital, Oswestry.

AMBULANCE SERVICES

Under the National Health Service Act it became the duty of the County Council, the Local Health Authority under the Act, to make provisions for securing that ambulances and other means of transport are available for the conveyance of persons suffering from illness or mental defectiveness and expectant mothers or nursing mothers, from places in their area to places in or outside their area.

LABORATORY FACILITIES

These are available at the Public Health Laboratory, Royal Salop Infirmary, Shrewsbury. Telephone : Shrewsbury 4389.

The Bacteriologist is Dr. A. C. Jones, and the Pathologist Dr. G. Grant.

This Service is based on the Royal Salop Infirmary and undertakes work for Local Authorities free of charge in so far as it is relevant to diagnosis. It is invaluable particularly in the expeditious dealing with the bacteriological examination of food samples.

NATIONAL BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICE

The National Blood Transfusion Service Unit based on Birmingham visits Oswestry twice each year when a large number of public spirited citizens attend.

New volunteers are constantly required to take the place of those leaving the district or reaching "retiring age", and to keep pace with the increasing demand for blood transfusion as a part of Hospital treatment.

The Shrewsbury Office has kindly supplied the following figures :-

	Attended	Bled
Oswestry 1956	234	221

This includes donors resident in the Rural District.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

WATER SUPPLY

I am indebted to the Water Engineer for the following notes on water supply, etc.

Rainfall at the Penygwely Reservoirs for the year was 35.10 inches.

Consumption for the year 154,652,000 gallons.

During February, March, April, May and June the rainfall was 6.68 inches compared with the average of 15.44 inches.

August was the wettest month with 6.08 inches.

(1) Number of dwellinghouses supplied from public water:-

(2) Number of population supplied from public mains:-

(a) direct to premises (1) 3,829

(2) 10,850

(b) by means of stand pipes (1) 17

(2) 65

Nature of supplies to remaining houses:

13 houses supplied by private systems

11 houses supplied by wells

4 houses supplied by Liverpool supply

1 house supplied by Rural District supply

The houses supplied by wells are isolated dwellings on the outskirts of the town some considerable distance from the mains.

The water has been satisfactory both in quality and quantity.

The Corporation gathering grounds and impounding reservoir at Penygwely, together with the storage reservoirs at Mount Road do not normally provide a sufficient supply for the requirements of the town, but it is possible to augment this by drawing 250,000 gallons per day from the Liverpool Corporation Lake Vyrnwy Aqueduct, this latter supply being obtained under powers granted by an Act of Parliament.

The treatment given consists of an average period of seven days storage followed by rapid filtration with the prior addition of lime and coagulant, lime and calgon after filtration, and chlorination by the Chloramine system.

The water supply to all parts of the town is constant and more than 99 per cent. of all dwelling houses have direct supplies or stand pipes within easy reach.

REPORTS OF ANALYSIS

Ref. L/NA/68 (Tap Water)

CHEMICAL RESULTS IN PARTS PER MILLION.

Appearance: Faint opalescence with few mineral particles.

Turbidity: 3

Colour: filtered: 8 Odour: Faint earthy

pH: 7.7 Free Carbon Dioxide: trace

Electric Conductivity: 75 Total Solids: 50

Chlorine present as Chloride: 8 Alkalinity as Calcium Carbonate: 12

Hardness: Total: 28 Carbonate: 12 Non-carbonate: 16

Nitrate Nitrogen: 0.0 Nitrite Nitrogen: approx. 0.1

Ammoniacal Nitrogen: 0.005 Oxygen absorbed: 0.85

Albuminoid Nitrogen: 0.026 Residual Chlorine: absent

Metals: Iron: 0.14, Manganese: 0.04, Other metals absent.

BACTERIOLOGICAL RESULTS

Number of Colonies developing on Agar Presumptive Coli- aerogenes Reaction Bact. coli. (Type I) Cl. welchii Reaction	{ { { { { { {	1 day at 37°C. 0 per ml. Present in - ml. - ml. - ml.	2 days at 37°C. 0 per ml. Absent from 100 ml. 100 ml. 100 ml.	3 days at 20°C. 0 per ml. Probable number 0 ml. 0 ml.
---	---------------------------------	--	--	---

This sample is reasonably clear and bright in appearance, the turbidity being noticeable but not marked. The water is on the alkaline side of neutrality, very soft in character, has a comparatively low content of mineral constituents in solution and is free from metals apart from minute traces of iron and manganese. It is free from noticeable colour, of very satisfactory organic quality and of a high standard of bacterial purity.

These results are indicative of a pure and wholesome water suitable for drinking and domestic purposes.

Ref. L/NA/68 (Raw Water)

CHEMICAL RESULTS IN PARTS PER MILLION.

Appearance: Bright with flocculent deposit and few crustacea. Microscopic examination shows amorphous mineral and organic debris, diatoms, few chlorophyceae and protozoa.

Turbidity: 3

Colour: filtered: 13

Odour: Slight earthy

pH: 7.1

Free Carbon Dioxide: 2

Electric Conductivity: 85

Total Solids: 55

Chlorine present as Chloride: 8

Alkalinity as Calcium Carbonate: 18

Hardness: Total: 29 Carbonate: 18 Non-carbonate: 11

Nitrate Nitrogen: 0.0

Nitrite Nitrogen: less than 0.01

Ammoniacal Nitrogen: 0.072

Oxygen absorbed: 1.5

Albuminoid Nitrogen: 0.16

Residual Chlorine: ...

Metals: Iron: 0.03, Manganese: 0.04, Other metals absent.

BACTERIOLOGICAL RESULTS

Number of Colonies	{	1 day at 37°C.	2 days at 37°C.	3 days at 20°C.
developing on Agar	{	4 per ml.	4 per ml.	36 per ml.
Presumptive Coli-	{	Present in	Absent from	Probable number
aerogenes Reaction	{	50 ml.	20 ml.	5 per 100 ml.
Bact. coli. (Type I)		50 ml.	20 ml.	5 per 100 ml.
Cl. welchii Reaction		- ml.	100 ml.	

This sample is bright in appearance and carries only a trace of matter in suspension. The water is neutral in reaction, very soft in character, has a comparatively small content of mineral constituents in solution and is free from metals apart from minute traces of iron and manganese. It shows only a trace of colour and is of satisfactory organic quality for this raw water. Similarly bacterial impurity indicative of contamination by matters of excremental origin is confined to the presence of Bact. coli. in small numbers. No exceptional difficulty would be expected in the treatment of this water for the production of a public supply.

16th July, 1956.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE

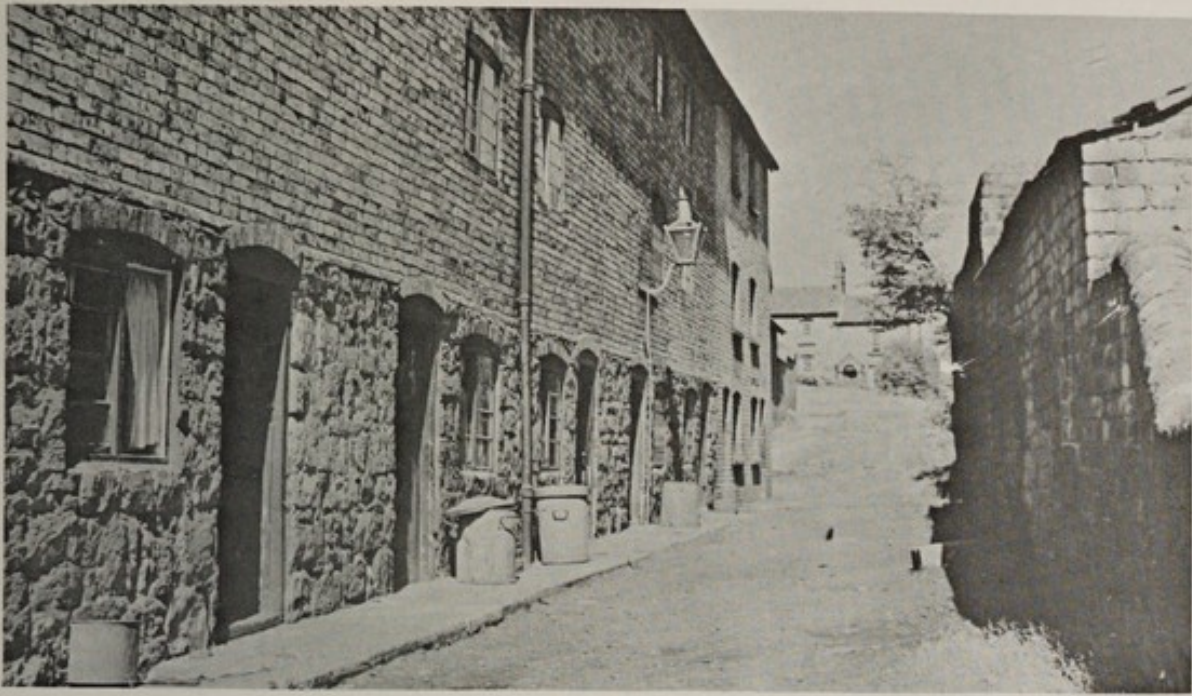
Number of premises connected to public sewers	3,793
Number of premises connected to satisfactory private sewage disposal or treatment works	41
Number of houses without satisfactory means of sewage disposal	12

REFUSE DISPOSAL

Number of wards in the town	6
Number of wards where refuse is collected	6

Method of collection: By direct labour.

Method of disposal: Controlled tipping.



GOING! Rope Walk Cottages, part of the No. 1 Clearance Area.



GOING! In Middleton Road, 12 houses are closed. When the 13th is vacated the site will be cleared.



GONE! Site of 28—46 Roft Street after demolition.



NEW HOMES FOR OLD. The building of houses is an essential part of the Slum Clearance Programme.

Your Worship, Aldermen, Councillors,

I beg to present my part of the Department's report, which this year contains illustrations for the first time. The following pages give some information on the work performed as routine by myself and, at the beginning of the year, by Mr. Powel. The No.1 Clearance Area and the related Public Inquiry held by the Minister of Housing and Local Government was a major item. Details of the Area and the result of the Inquiry are given in the Housing section of the report. Work associated with the production and sale of food, and meat inspection, was maintained at the previous levels, new legislation giving more effect to the Department's work.

I am grateful to Mr. Powel for all his work on the Clearance Area, to Miss Williams for her tact and courtesy as receptionist and reliability as clerk, and to the other officers of the Council for their cooperation. I would ask the members of the Council to accept my appreciation of their support and encouragement at all times. Finally, may I say that this whole report is indicative of the happy relationship existing between Dr. McArthur and myself - our duties interlocking without frictional overlapping.

I remain, Sirs,

Your obedient Servant

Ronald J. Lewis
Public Health Inspector.

HOUSING

CLEARANCE AREA NO.1.

Declared as an area July, 1955.

Compulsory Purchase Order declared February, 1956.

Public Inquiry held October 2nd, 3rd & 4th, 1956.

Comprising

90	Houses	Marked Pink.
31	Houses	Cross Hatched Yellow.
2	Shops	" " "
1	House	Marked Grey.
3	Shops	" "
1	Bakehouse	Cross Hatched Yellow.
1	Sunday School Room	Cross Hatched Yellow.
1	Technical School Canteen	" " "
1	Technical School Workshop	" " "
7	Vehicle Garages	" " "
1	Firewood Store	" " "

Number of persons living in the area 220.

Area 3.7504 acres.

Rehousing.

At the Inquiry it was divulged that the Council's proposal was to rehouse the occupants in flats on the site and on the nearby Swan Lane site. The redevelopment would also include a part of a Ring Road.

The Ministerial decision, received in August 1957, confirmed the Order save for the following minor adjustments

- (1) 2 houses shaded pink to be cross hatched yellow.
- (2) The technical school buildings to be coloured grey.
- (3) Two chapels and a public house with four adjoining cottages, originally included but later withdrawn by Council, to be excluded.

This was the first Clearance Area to be declared in Oswestry, and was a large one for a small Department. There is a great deal of work to be done by other Departments of the Council before this area of substandard housing is no more than a memory and a filed map.

In addition to the No.1 Clearance Area, during the year the following action was taken

- 9 houses were demolished.
- 1 house was closed and converted to other uses.
- 10 houses were closed pending demolition.
- 59 houses were repaired.

The clearance of certain blocks of closed properties has been delayed by the difficulty of providing suitable alternative accommodation for single persons.

HOUSING

HOUSES IN CLEARANCE AREAS AND UNFIT HOUSES ELSEWHERE RETURN FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 1956.

A. HOUSES DEMOLISHED

In Clearance Areas (Housing Act, 1936, and Housing Repairs and Rents Act, 1954)	Houses Demolished	Displaced during year	
		Persons	Families
(1) Houses unfit for human habitation	-	-	-
(2) Houses included by reason of bad arrangement	-	-	-
(3) Houses on land acquired under Section 27, Housing Act, 1936	-	-	-
Not in Clearance Areas			
(4) As a result of formal or informal procedure under Section 11, Housing Act, 1936	9	-	-
B. UNFIT HOUSES CLOSED			
	Number		
(5) Under Section 11, Housing Act, 1936 and Sections 10 (1) and 11 (2), Local Govt. (Misc. Prov.) Act, 1953 ...	11	36	11
(6) Under Sections 3 (1) and 3 (2), Housing Act, 1949 ...	-	-	-
(7) Parts of buildings closed under Section 12, Housing Act, 1936	-	-	-

C. UNFIT HOUSES MADE FIT AND HOUSES IN WHICH DEFECTS WERE REMEDIED

	By Owner	By Local Authority
(8) After informal action by local authority	48	//
(9) After formal notice under (a) Public Health Acts ...	11	-
(b) Housing Act, 1936 ...	-	-
(10) Under Section 5, Housing Repairs and Rents Act, 1954 ...	-	//

HOUSING (Continued)

D. UNFIT HOUSES IN TEMPORARY USE (Housing Repairs and Rents Act, 1954)

Position at end of year	Number of houses (1)	Number of separate dwellings contained in column (1) (2)
(11) Retained for temporary accommodation		
(a) under Section 2 ...	-	-
(b) under Section 3 ...	-	-
(c) under Section 4 ...	-	-
(12) Licensed for temporary occupation under Section 6	-	//////

E. PURCHASE OF HOUSES BY AGREEMENT

	Number of houses (1)	Number of occupants of houses in column (1) (2)
(13) Houses in Clearance Areas other than those included in confirmed Clearance Orders or Compulsory Purchase Orders, purchased in the year ...	-	-

SHOPS ACTS

In addition to the 114 food shops listed in the Food section, there are 169 other shops on the office registers. There is no official half-day for closing, and though most of the shops closed on a Thursday, many of the street corner general stores make use of the exemption clauses in the Shops Acts to stay open every day. Sunday trading had reached quite heavy proportions and shops staying open were given lists of the items which they could sell. This did reduce the amount of weekly grocery shopping that was being done on a Sunday.

PET ANIMAL ACT

There are 2 Pet Shops licensed in the Borough.

FOOD HYGIENE

The year 1956 saw the introduction of the Food Hygiene Regulations which were added to the increasing legislation for cleaner food. The work of improving food premises continued steadily, and I must place on record the continued cooperation of food traders. The Department was asked to assist the local press in the production of a "Food Hygiene" supplement to the weekly paper during the summer. The list of the various food premises is as follows :-

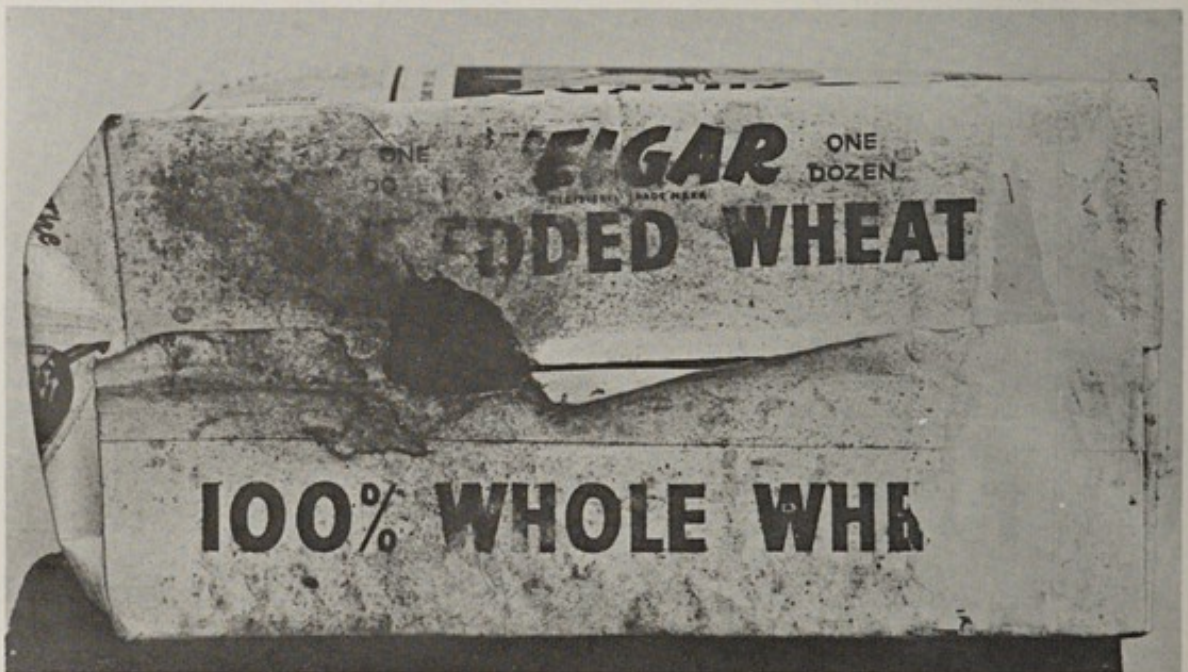
10 Bakehouses	17 Greengrocers
19 Cafe's	20 Sweet Shops
9 Fish Friers	52 Grocers
4 Wet Fish Shops	2 Wholesale Premises
39 Licensed Houses	21 Butchers Shops



FOOD HYGIENE. Zinc-meshed Bacon Store and Refrigerator for cooked meat storage, provided by grocer at the request of the Public Health Inspector.



FOOD HYGIENE. The lip smear on a badly washed cup can be shown up by finger-print powder.



FOOD DAMAGED BY MICE in a shop. Rodent Operators afterwards cleared the infestation.

FOOD HYGIENE (Cont.)

Bakehouses.

6 of the bakehouses produce bread, 4 producing confectionery only.

Catering premises.

Most of the cafe's are family businesses and rely on regular custom from people working in the town or country folk shopping; this factor is conducive to well ordered premises. Modernisation of premises and equipment is steadily progressive, even though floor area available is often limited. Sterilisation of crockery by double-unit sinks, washing machines or chemicals is generally practiced. Refrigerated storage is available in all of them, and was so before Regulations made it essential.

Licensed Houses.

Although a complete and uniform inspection has not yet been achieved, improvements have been effected where this was found to be necessary. Nevertheless, a comprehensive survey is needed and must be made as soon as possible.

Butcher's Manufacturing premises.

As food poisoning organisms can so easily be spread by manufactured meats these premises can never be too good, and so, of course, can always be better. In one instance a butcher agreed to give up using poor premises and substituted smaller but better premises. Others carried out general or specific improvements.

Ice Cream.

The only manufacturing premises (Cold mix) ceased production.

Grocers.

Three multiple companies carried out major alterations and improvements to premises, and two other companies were planning improvements. In the three shops altered the companies agreed to provide a staff room, a provision made by other types of shops but less frequently by grocers.

Wet Fish Shops.

Three wet fish shops have refrigerated covered units for display, the fourth has a full glass window. There are no traditional wet fish slabs in shops or in the market.

Market Hall.

The Council and Market Superintendent have been cooperative in raising the standard. All butchers are in a tiled butcher's market, with a sink with hot and cold water. Counters have a screen that rises vertically and then goes backward at a rising angle. Butter and cheese is sold behind similar screens. Only fruit and vegetables are sold on the open market, all other foods being inside. The end of the Powis Hall was opened, and a sink and hot and cold water provided to accommodate food sellers previously on the Bailey Head. Markets on a Wednesday and Saturday are regularly visited.

Magisterial Proceedings.

A Prosecution was taken by the Council against a grocer for (1) failure to protect food from risk of contamination; (2) failure to prevent infestation by rodents; (3) allowing refuse and filth to collect in food room. The case was found proved and a fine of £2 was levelled on each count.

MEAT INSPECTION

The table on the opposite page gives details of the number of animals slaughtered for human consumption in the Borough. Premises at Willow Street are operated by a Company formed by local butchers, and the Oswestry Rural District Council through its Chief Public Health Inspector continues to share meat inspection duties, for which I am most grateful. Two other premises operate in the Borough, and the total figure is made up as follows :-

Animals killed at Willow Street and inspected by R.D.C. :-

597 Cattle, 28 Cows, 68 Calves, 4349 Sheep, 1777 pigs.

Animals killed at Willow Street and inspected by Borough :-

510 Cattle, 27 Cows, 56 Calves, 3806 Sheep, 2096 Pigs.

Animals killed at 2 other premises and inspected by Borough :-

315 Cattle, 2 Cows, 112 Calves, 2659 Sheep, 112 Pigs.

The contradictory trends of past Governmental edicts on slaughtering policy and the indeterminate Working Parties and White Papers on slaughter-house standards have caused indecision and only the most optimistic can hope for any early approach to utopian standards of slaughtering. Local slaughtering standards need improvement, but the butchers are hesitant until they know what the future has in store, and the officers of the Council cannot advise them on official standards until those standards have been firmly stated.

Slaughtering hours still extend beyond office hours considerably, and meat inspection has often to be done in the evenings and early mornings, and some Sundays. In many authorities this commonly means office hours plus

MEAT INSPECTION

	Cattle excluding cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs
Number killed	1,422	47	236	10,814	3,985
Number inspected	1,422	47	236	10,814	3,985
ALL DISEASES EXCEPT TUBERCULOSIS.					
Whole carcasses condemned	-	-	-	2	-
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	347	19	471		43
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than Tuberculosis	24.4	40.4	-	4.4	1.8
TUBERCULOSIS ONLY.					
Whole carcasses condemned	-	-	-	-	2
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	55	4	-	-	123
Percentage of the number inspected affected with Tuberculosis	2.0	8.5	-	-	3.1

RODENT CONTROL

The Borough Council and Rural District Council continue to operate a joint committee for carrying out duties under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act, 1949. Two operatives are employed by the Committee and are available for work in either district as indicated by the Public Health Inspectors; although generally work in the Borough is carried out by the one operator. Contracts are held with the Committee, the fee for a financial year being based on the number of hours worked at a premise during the previous calendar year.

In the Borough during the year the rodent control operations were further co-ordinated by the control of sewer treatments for rats being relinquished by the Borough Surveyor in favour of the Public Health Inspector.

The refuse tip is treated regularly and infestations kept to the minimum under the conditions prevailing.

Generally speaking, rat infestations are low and complaints are few. Mice are reported more frequently and at premises under contract most treatments are for these smaller but none the less destructive and unhygienic pests.

VERMINOUS PREMISES

It is pleasing to report that these are conspicuous by their absence. Occasionally infestations of cockroaches occur in various parts of the town but perseverance and modern insecticides will eliminate these and all other vermin - except the humble ant.

CINEMAS

The Cinemas were inspected and certificates issued for the guidance of the licensing magistrates.

The Cinema management have been helpful in showing health education slides and are at all times most cooperative.

HEALTH EDUCATION

The present office of the Department has been converted from shop premises, and the window is useful for the Health Education displays, with the opportunity to interest the public in one subject at a time. In addition, seasonal matters such as measles control in the spring, food hygiene in the early summer etc. can be dealt with at the right time. Various Government Departments have quite good set displays suitable for placing in windows.

In the summer, a catering detergent Company organised a film show for food handlers, which was followed by a "question-time" on the Food Hygiene Regulations, the President of the Chamber of Trade taking the Chair and the Medical Officer of Health and the Inspectors for the Borough and Rural District Councils forming the panel.

PETROLEUM ACTS

Forty premises are licensed for the storage of a total of 79,250 gallons of petrol. Five premises are licensed for the storage of petroleum mixtures (i.e. Cellulose) and three for the storage of calcium carbide.

SMOKE ABATEMENT

Although Oswestry is a market town, it has its share of smoke pollution from domestic premises and from the railway. In recent years one main source of complaint regarding industrial pollution related to a small factory; during the summer this plant installed an automatic bottom-feed stoker. The other main source of complaint - the chimney of the Public Baths - has not yet been remedied, but some action now seems likely during the next year or two. At present there is no filtration plant, the pool is emptied and refilled on Saturday night, the water having to be warmed ready for Sunday morning. Reduction of smoke, with the present boiler, means reduction of water temperature on Sunday morning, and the Baths Superintendent has to choose between displeasing local residents and displeasing Sunday morning bathers! The Ministry having indicated after a Local Inquiry that new baths should be built but a filtration plant and a new boiler would be loan-aided as an expedient, it is now only a question of time until this chimney also is crossed off the "black list".

FACTORIES ACTS, 1937 & 1948

PART I OF THE ACT

1.- INSPECTIONS for purposes of provisions as to health (including inspections made by Public Health Inspectors)

Premises	Number on Register	Number of		
		Inspections	Written Notices	Occupiers Prosecuted
(i) Factories in which Sections 1,2,3,4, and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	20	5	1	-
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	94	36	16	-
TOTAL	114	41	17	-

2.- CASES IN WHICH DEFECTS WERE FOUND.

(If defects are discovered at the premises on two, three or more separate occasions they should be reckoned as two, three or more "cases").

Particulars	Number of cases in which defects were found				Number of cases in which Prosecutions were instituted
	Found	Remedied	Referred To H.M. Inspector	By H.M. Inspector	
Want of Cleanliness (S.1)	13	11	-	-	-
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)-					
(a) Insufficient	2	-	-	1	-
(b) Unsuitable or defective	3	2	-	2	-
TOTAL	18	13	-	3	-

FACTORIES ACTS

The return opposite gives details of factory numbers and inspections. In the town there is a modern mass-production clothing factory employing 200 girls and there are a few small factories employing 20 - 50 workers; the British Railways works employs about 250 men, the remainder of the 'factories' being small units such as garages, shop workrooms and other small businesses.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

DATE: [Illegible]

The following report was received from [Illegible] on [Illegible] regarding [Illegible].

The report states that [Illegible] has been [Illegible] in [Illegible].

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