

[Report 1938] / Medical Officer of Health, Ross-on-Wye U.D.C.

Contributors

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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE

ROSS-ON-WYE URBAN DISTRICT.

1938.

ISSUED JUNE, 1939.





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Ross-on-Wye Urban District Council.

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL.

Chairman : Mr. Councillor J. Metcalfe, J.P.

Vice-Chairman : Mr. Councillor C. W. Shawcross, M.A.

Mr. Councillor B. G. Abel.

Mr. Councillor W. P. Bevan (Chairman of Housing Committee).

Mr. Councillor E. Butterworth.

Mr. Councillor R. E. P. Davies.

Mr. Councillor J. H. Hart.

Mr. Councillor R. E. G. Johnson.

Mr. Councillor E. J. Rowberry.

* Mr. Councillor E. H. Soles (Chairman of Public Health Committee).

Mr. Councillor J. C. Vine.

Mr. Councillor R. G. Webb.

* County Councillor, Herefordshire County Council.

Ross-on-Wye Urban District Council.

LOCAL ACTS, ADOPTIVE ACTS, AND BYELAWS IN FORCE IN THE DISTRICT.

The Ross Improvement Act, 1865.

The Public Health (Amendment Act), 1890.

The Public Health (Amendment Act), 1907.

The Public Health (Amendment Act), 1925—became operative
in early part of 1930.

Byelaws relating to New Streets and Buildings—adopted in 1925

Byelaws relating to Slaughter Houses—adopted 1874.

Byelaws relating to Nuisances—adopted in 1885.

Byelaws relating to Water Closets—adopted in 1895.

Byelaws relating to Removal of House Refuse—adopted in 1900.

Slaughter of Animals Act, 1933—Applications of Section I to
sheep, ewes, wethers, rams and lambs.

ROSS-ON-WYE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Staff of the Public Health Department.

Medical Officer of Health :

LEO FAY, M.D., D.P.H. (Resigned 31st March, 1938).

WILLIAM HOGG, M.B., B.S., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H.,
(Appointed 1st April, 1938).

Clerk to the Medical Officer of Health :

P. G. HANCOX, A.R.S.I., M.S.I.A.

County Council Offices,
Alton Street, Ross-on-Wye.

Telephone—Ross 214.

*Sanitary Inspector, Sanitary Surveyor and
Housing Designated Officer :*

FRANK RICKETTS, M.R.S.I., M.S.I.A. (Resigned 30th
September, 1938).

R. SHAW BATCHFORD, M.R.S.I. (Appointed 1st October,
1938).

Council Chambers,
Broad Street, Ross-on-Wye.

Telephone—Ross 62.

Ross-on-Wye Urban District Council.

*Public Health Department,
Alton Street,
Ross-on-Wye.
January, 1939.*

*To the Chairman and Members of the Ross-on-Wye Urban
District Council.*

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my first Annual Report on the Health Services of the District for the Year ended 31st December, 1938, which is drawn up on the lines indicated in Circular 1728 of the Ministry of Health.

It will be appreciated that I was not responsible for the direction of your health services throughout the entire year, as I commenced duties on the 1st April, 1938.

In reviewing the work of the Council during the year, I feel that considerable progress has been achieved. The Three Crosses Housing Estate has been completed, and the necessary steps have been taken for dealing adequately with the furniture and belongings of rehoused tenants from bug-infested condemned dwellings.

An attempt has been made to secure the better management of your Mortuary, and a slight extension of the facilities for dealing with notifiable Disease has been made.

I take this opportunity, however, of reminding the Council that Official Representations were submitted in the early part of the year with respect to a number of unfit dwellinghouses in the district, and at the time of writing the Council has not yet taken these into consideration.

There is still much to be desired in the system of refuse collection, and I hope that in the present year these problems will be dealt with by the Council in an adequate manner.

I wish to take this opportunity of acknowledging my indebtedness to Mr. W. I. Nash, Clerk of the Council, and Mr. C. H. Caddick, Surveyor, for their help and co-operation. My thanks are also due to Mr. N. Blake for information regarding the water supply, to Mr. F. J. Parsons, Meteorologist-in-Charge, The Observatory, Ross-on-Wye, who has kindly prepared an annual report on the meteorological conditions prevailing throughout the year, and to the Manager of the Labour Exchange for information on unemployment.

I also wish to thank my colleagues and members of the staff for the co-operation and support they have given me during the difficult period of becoming conversant with the problems of a new appointment; in particular, I desire to record the great assistance given me in this respect by your former Sanitary Inspector, Mr. Frank Ricketts.

I am, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

WILLIAM HOGG,
Medical Officer of Health.

ROSS-ON-WYE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR THE YEAR 1938.

SECTION A.: STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

Area (in acres) : 1,004.

Registrar-General's estimate of resident population, mid-1938:
4,607.

Number of inhabited houses (end of 1938) according to Rate
Books: 1,282.

Rateable Value: £29,445.

Sum represented by a penny rate: £116 14s. 8d.

The Urban District of Ross-on-Wye is a small market town, situated on the River Wye. The mid-year population for 1931 was 4,735.

Ross-on-Wye is chiefly a residential town and exists by supplying the demands of its residents and those of the surrounding rural districts. No large scale industries exist, but there are a brewery, two grain mills, a timber yard and a boot factory which provide some employment. The town has a considerable reputation as a holiday centre for the Wye Valley, and there are several large hotels which are well patronised from April until the beginning of October. Catering for the needs of the visitors provides employment during the summer months. A cattle market is held in the town every fortnight.

Unemployment.

The amount of unemployment in the district is still somewhat high, although during the year there was a decrease in the number of persons unemployed. This decrease was partly accounted for by men being engaged at the Royal Ordnance Factory at Hereford, and by the abnormal amount of public work which has been proceeding in Ross and district in the course of the year. As this public work is now mostly completed, and the Royal Ordnance Factory would appear to be up to establishment, a further decrease in unemployment is unlikely to occur.

There is, however, no direct evidence to show that unemployment has exercised any significant influence on the health or physique of either adults or children.

Extracts from Vital Statistics of the Year:—

Live Births

	Total.	Male.	Female.	
Legitimate	55	25	30	Birth Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population: 13.9
Illegitimate	9	6	3	
Stillbirths	Nil	Nil	Nil	Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births: Nil.

Deaths	69	39	30	Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population: (crude) 15.
--------	----	----	----	--

Adjusted Death Rate (Factor: 0.77) 11.5.

Deaths from puerperal causes (Headings 29 and 30 of the Registrar-General's Short List):—

	Deaths.	Rate per 1,000 total (live & still) births.
No. 29.—Puerperal Sepsis	Nil	Nil
No. 30.—Other puerperal Causes	Nil	Nil
Total	...	Nil

Death Rate of Infants under one year of age:—

All infants per 1,000 live births: 62.5.

Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births: 72.7.

Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births: Nil.

Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	13
„ „ Measles (all ages)	Nil
„ „ Whooping Cough (all ages)	Nil
„ „ Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)	Nil

SECTION B.—GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.

Public Health Officers.

A list of the officers of the Public Health Department is given on Page 4.

Laboratory Facilities.

A laboratory service for the district is provided by the Herefordshire County Council at the County and City Public Health Laboratory, County Offices, Hereford, to which medical practitioners may send specimens for examination without charge. In addition to the usual specimens, the Laboratory also undertakes the chemical and bacteriological examination of water on behalf of the Council. I regard the laboratory facilities as a most valuable part of the Public Health Service.

When necessary, swabs for virulence tests in connection with diphtheria outbreaks are sent to the Bacteriological Department of the University of Birmingham, as the County Laboratory as yet cannot undertake these tests.

The following is a summary of the number of specimens examined at the Public Health Laboratory, Hereford, during the year :—

Swabs for Diphtheria	88
Swabs for Streptococci	5
Sputa	84
Blood	2
Cerebro-Spinal Fluid	1
Fæces	2
Urine	1
Water:—	
Chemical	13
Bacteriological	13
	—
TOTAL	209

Last year, the total number of specimens examined was 95, the increase this year being due to the number of swabs examined for diphtheria, i.e., 88 as compared with 17 in 1937. Water analyses have increased during the year also.

Ambulance Facilities.

The Council does not provide or maintain an ambulance. Infectious cases are removed to hospital by the motor ambulance stationed at the Hereford Rural District Council Isolation Hospital at a charge of one shilling per mile, this charge being paid by the Urban District Council.

For non-infectious cases, the St. John Ambulance Brigade provide and maintain a modern motor ambulance which is available at all hours for the use of the inhabitants, on the following terms:—

For an annual contribution of 1/-:—

Removal to hospital and return to home of any one person within a radius of seven miles.

For an annual contribution of 2/6:—

Removal to hospital and return to home of any member of household.

For non-contributors:—

A charge of 6d. per mile is made, the cost of the return journey being charged at the same rate. Accident cases are removed to hospital or their homes without charge.

Throughout the year the vehicle has been stationed at a garage within the district, but the St. John Ambulance Brigade are erecting new headquarters and ambulance station in Edde Cross Street, and when these premises are completed the motor ambulance will be stationed there.

In my opinion, the ambulance facilities are adequate for the requirements of the area.

Nursing in the Home.

Two nurses of the Herefordshire County Nursing Association are established at 17, Church Street, and are available for attendance in the homes of patients in maternity cases and for general nursing.

Treatment Centres and Clinics.

Within the Urban District, the Herefordshire County Council provide a number of clinics, particulars of which are given below:—

The Ross Infant Welfare Centre is held at the Congregational Church Room, Gloucester Road, on alternate Thursday afternoons. During 1938, 26 sessions were held with an average attendance of 38 per session. A Medical Officer of the County Staff is present at each session in addition to the Health Visitor, Mrs. Turner.

An Ante-Natal Clinic is held at 15, Church Street, Ross, fortnightly on Thursdays.

The Tuberculosis Dispensary continues to be held at 2, Church Street, on alternate Thursday mornings preceding the Infant Welfare Centre.

Cases of Venereal Disease are referred to the County Clinic at Hereford for diagnosis and treatment.

Hospitals.

When necessary, cases of notifiable disease are removed to the Isolation Hospital of the Hereford Rural District Council at Stretton Sugwas, Hereford, by the motor ambulance stationed at the Hospital.

The Council have agreed to pay for the treatment of cases of Acute Anterior Poliomyelitis admitted by the Medical Officer of Health to the Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital, Oswestry, such liability of the Council to be limited to ambulance charges and to a period of six weeks, i.e., for the period during which the disease is regarded as being infectious.

The Herefordshire County Council's Camp Meadow Hospital for Tuberculosis is situated within the Urban District, and the Public Assistance Institution, situated in Alton Street, has a hospital section and maternity wards.

The Ross Cottage Hospital is a small voluntary Hospital, with 16 beds. The work of the Hospital during the year may be briefly summarised as follows:—

In-Patients	252
Out-Patients and Casualties	466
Surgical Operations	164
X-Ray Treatment	107

The average number of beds occupied daily during the year was 9.18.

Mortuary.

A small Mortuary with two chambers is provided by the Council at the Council's Yard.

During the year the Council have drawn up certain rules for securing the better management of the Mortuary, although such rules have not quite the same significance as Byelaws made under the Public Health Act.

SECTION C.: SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

Water.

The water for the district is supplied by the Ross Water Undertaking. There are two kinds of supply: a drinking water supply which is available throughout the district, and a river water supply.

The drinking water supply is pumped from boreholes in the Old Red Sandstone at the Ross Water Undertaking's pumping station situated within the Urban District. The supply is constant and the water is pure, bright and clear, though somewhat hard, as is usual in waters derived from deep wells.

There have been three extensions of mains during the year, viz:—

Eight-inch main from reservoir to Gloucester Road.

Four-inch main to Gresleys Housing Estate.

Four-inch main to Three Crosses Housing Estate.

With the appointment of a whole-time Sanitary Inspector in October, 1938, samples of the drinking water supply are now being taken each month and sent to the County Laboratory for chemical and bacteriological examination.

During the year, four chemical and four bacteriological analyses were carried out, and these show the water to be of a most excellent standard of purity.

The following are typical reports, other samples submitted being practically identical:—

Chemical Examination.

<i>Determination.</i>	<i>Result in parts per 100,000.</i>
Chlorine as Chlorides	1.9
Total Hardness	23.0
Free Ammonia	Nil.
Organic Ammonia	0.003
Nitrites	Absent
Nitrogen as Nitrates	0.166
Oxygen absorbed at 98° F. in 3 hours ...	Trace

Bacteriological Examination.

Micro-organisms in one cubic centimetre capable of growing on Agar at 37° C. in 48 hours	1
B. Coli	Absent in 100 c.cs.

There was no shortage of water during the year, nor is this to be anticipated, as the supply appears to be unlimited. The year 1938 was markedly deficient in rainfall; nevertheless, the boreholes stood up to the strain well. The lowest pumping in the main borehole to which the water fell was 45 feet, in October. This compares very favourably with 43 feet, which is the usual drop for October in a normal year.

The river water supply is available in a part of the district as a soft water supply in addition to the drinking water supply. The pumping plant for this system is adjacent to the Hope and Anchor Inn, and is driven by a water turbine, the water being raised to a tank situated at the upper end of St. Mary's Street near the Fire Station, from which it gravitates into the mains. This water is, of course, very variable in character, but is much softer than the drinking water supply. The result of a chemical and bacteriological examination carried out during the year is given below as a matter of interest:—

Chemical Examination.

<i>Determination.</i>	<i>Result in parts per 100,000.</i>
Chlorine as Chlorides	2.1
Total Hardness	13.5
Free Ammonia	Nil
Organic Ammonia	0.018
Nitrites	Absent
Nitrogen as Nitrates	0.041
Oxygen absorbed at 98° F. in 3 hours ...	0.136

Bacteriological Examination.

Micro-organisms in one cubic centimetre capable of growing on Agar at 37° C. in 48 hours	570
B. Coli	Present in 1cc.

Drainage and Sewerage.

The sewerage system can be regarded as a combined one, and during the year extensions were made in Eastfield Road to deal with the drainage of newly-erected dwellings, and at Brampton Road for the 56 houses erected by the Council on the Three Crosses Estate. There are only 27 houses in the district which are not connected to the Sewerage System.

The sewage from the district is passed directly into the River Wye without any treatment, at three separate outfalls. When the river is in flood, difficulty is sometimes caused by the river backing up the outfalls.

Rivers and Streams.

The River Wye forms part of the boundary of the Urban District, and its small tributary, the Rudhall Brook, has a short course within the district immediately before joining the Wye. In spite of the fact that the crude sewage is discharged into the River Wye at the three outfalls, there appears to be no gross pollution of the river.

Closet Accommodation.

There are now only six dwelling houses which are not on the water-carriage system, and of this number three have a sewer available. No conversions were carried out during the year, but these will be dealt with as soon as circumstances permit.

Public Cleansing.

A system of weekly collection of refuse is in operation throughout the district, the refuse being disposed of by tipping. Much is to be desired in the method of collection.

I am pleased to report that the Council are about to take action to secure the provision of properly covered dustbins for all premises in the district. At present, various types of receptacles such as buckets, old oil drums and wooden boxes are being used for this purpose. Such containers are most insanitary, as they are invariably inadequate in size, they are not of impervious material, have no cover, and are difficult to handle. As a result, refuse is spilled and the contents of receptacles become sodden and adhere to the sides, creating nuisance, especially during warm weather.

The refuse carts at present used have no covers, and as a result refuse falls and is blown from the vehicles into the streets during collection.

I am of opinion that the Council should provide covered vehicles for this purpose, as all alleged difficulties in hilly districts can easily be overcome by the use of motor traction which has the added advantage of much more rapid collection.

The Town Tip is situated immediately outside the district boundary, in the Rural District of Ross and Whitechurch. During the year, as a result of building operations taking place within the district a considerable amount of excavated material was available for covering the Tip, which enabled a great improvement to be secured. The factor which has prevented controlled tipping being practised in the past has been the inability to obtain sufficient supply of covering material. An employee of the Council is permanently in charge of the Tip, and is responsible for its proper management. I consider that tipping is the best practical means of disposal, and that the Council have taken all possible steps to prevent nuisance arising.

Sanitary Inspection of the Area.

At the end of September, Mr. Frank Ricketts, who held the office of Sanitary Inspector for many years, retired, and the Council lost the services of a highly efficient officer.

I am pleased to report that the Council appointed a whole-time Sanitary Inspector to succeed Mr. Ricketts, and I consider this action displayed much wisdom, as I am convinced that if the duties of the Sanitary Inspector are to be properly carried out, and the high standard achieved by your former Inspector is to be maintained, a whole-time Sanitary Inspector for the district is essential.

TABULAR STATEMENT OF THE WORK OF THE SANITARY INSPECTOR FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1938.

I am indebted to Mr R. Shaw Batchford, Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor, for the following Report furnished under Article 27 (Sub-section 18) of the Sanitary Officers (Outside London) Regulations, 1935:—

Inspections :—

Bakehouses	...	...	...	...	46
Common Lodging Houses	...	...	...	...	40
Cowsheds	...	...	...	...	30
Factories with Mechanical Power	...	...	...	...	70
Factories without Mechanical Power	...	...	...	...	60
Housing and Nuisances	...	...	...	...	126
Housing Consolidated Regulations	...	...	...	...	164
Infectious Diseases	...	...	...	...	19
Markets	...	...	...	...	196
Outworkers' Premises	...	...	...	...	3
Slaughterhouses	...	...	...	...	2,400
Workplaces	...	...	...	...	6
Miscellaneous	...	...	...	...	390
Total					3,550

Notices Issued :—

Informal	...	...	...	...	26
Statutory, re Housing	...	...	...	...	Nil
Statutory, under other Acts	...	...	...	...	Nil
Total					26

Summary of Defects Remedied :—

New Drains provided	...	...	...	...	15
New W.C.s provided	...	...	...	...	16
Stopped Drains cleared	...	...	...	...	14
Defective Drains improved	...	...	...	...	8
Nuisances abated	...	...	...	...	9
Proper Food Stores provided	...	...	...	...	46
Housing Defects remedied	...	...	...	...	17

Total ... 125

Verminous Houses disinfected	...	...	...	15
Rooms disinfected re Infectious Disease	...	...	...	19
Shelter disinfected, re Tuberculosis	...	...	...	1

Drains Tested:

(1) Hydraulic Tests	...	...	363
(2) Smoke Tests	...	...	88
Number of Water Samples taken	...	...	16

Common Lodging Houses.

There are three registered common lodging houses in the Town. These are regularly inspected, and are kept in a satisfactory state.

The keepers send in daily returns of the lodgers, and these show the beds to have been occupied 16,710 times during the year, this figure being less than that for the previous year by 2,580.

Petroleum Act.

There were 17 licences granted for the storage of petroleum spirit, and 7 for the storage of carbide of calcium.

Factories, Workshops and Workplaces.

The following tables give particulars of the work carried out in the district during the year in connection with the administration of the Factory and Workshop Act, 1901, and the Factories Act, 1937 (which superseded the Act of 1901 on 1st July, 1938).

1. Inspections for purposes of provision as to health.

(Including Inspections made by the Sanitary Inspector).

Premises. (1)	Number of		
	Inspections (2)	Written Notices (3)	Occupiers Prosecuted (4)
Factories with mechanical power	70	—	—
Factories without mechanical power	60	—	—
Other Premises under the Act (including works of building and engineering construction but not including outworkers' Premises)	—	—	—
TOTALS	130	Nil	Nil

2. Defects Found.

Particulars (1)	Number of Defects.			Number of defects in respect of which Prosecutions were instituted. (5)
	Found (2)	Remedied (3)	Referred to H.M. Inspector (4)	
Want of Cleanliness (S.1) ...	1	1	—	—
Overcrowding (S.2) ...	—	—	—	—
Unreasonable temperature (S.3) ...	—	—	—	—
Inadequate ventilation (S.4) ...	—	—	—	—
Ineffective Drainage of floors (S.6) ...	—	—	—	—
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7) { insufficient unsuitable or defective not separate for sexes	—	—	—	—
Other offences (not including offences relating to Home Work or offences under the Sections mentioned in the Schedule to the Ministry of Health (Factories and Workshops Transfer of Powers) Order, 1921, and re-enacted in the Third Schedule to the Factories Act, 1937.)	—	—	—	—
TOTALS ...	1	1	Nil	Nil

Outwork in Unwholesome Premises.

(Section 108 of Act of 1901; Nil
Section III. of Act of 1937).

Shops and Offices.

No action was taken during the year under the Shops Act, 1934, or the Public Health Act, 1936, in connection with these premises.

Camping Sites.

No. of sites in the district which were used for camping purposes during 1938 2

No. of camping sites in respect of which licences have been issued by the Local Authority under Section 269 of the Public Health Act, 1936 Nil

Estimated number of campers resident in the district at one time during the summer season, 1938 100

Smoke Abatement.

No action was necessary for smoke abatement.

Swimming Baths and Pools.

There are no (a) public (b) privately owned swimming baths or pools open to the public, in the district.

Eradication of Bed Bugs.

	Number Infested.	Number Disinfested.
Council Houses	1	1
Other Houses	14	14

During the year, the attention of the Council was drawn to the existence of fifteen houses in the district infested with bed bugs. Of the fifteen, one house was the Council's own property, and the infestation was almost certainly due to a former tenant moving in furniture from a bug-infested house. The house was treated by the Sanitary Inspector with Cimex after the internal woodwork had been stripped and opened up. The work was carried out in the early summer, and so far no further complaint has been received.

The remaining fourteen houses were not the property of the Council, and were discovered during the course of a careful inspection of the houses of families to be provided with accommodation at the Council's Three Crosses Estate.

The Council, therefore, arranged for the treatment of the contents of these dwellings (including bedding) with hydrogen cyanide on vacation and prior to entering the houses provided by the Council. This work of fumigation was carried out by a contractor. Unfortunately, it was not possible to treat the houses themselves with hydrogen cyanide, as owing to their structure they could not be rendered gas-tight. However, the best possible action was taken by the Sanitary Inspector, who sprayed each dwelling with an insecticide—Zaldecide and Fum-inol being the preparations used.

The Council have given instructions that the whole of the new houses on their Three Crosses Estate are to be inspected at frequent intervals by the Housing Manager, who will draw the attention of this Department to any case of infestation.

I am of the opinion that further cases of infestation with bed bugs will, no doubt, be discovered in the older parts of the town, and that in an old town such as Ross the infestation has probably been in existence for well over a century. It is difficult to use hydrogen cyanide, which I regard as being the only certain remedy, as much of the property is very old with thin walls containing a high proportion of timber, and such property is frequently closely interlocked. Also, the Old Red Sandstone which has in bygone days been commonly used as building material is a very porous stone. It will, therefore, be seen how impossible it is to render such houses properly gas-tight, although it is in this type of house that the problem arises.

Schools.

The Ross Junior and Senior Council Schools, whilst being structurally sound, are old-fashioned buildings, and the accommodation falls very short of that of a modern school.

The Grammar School is a modern building, and very satisfactory in every way.

All schools are connected to the Ross Water Undertaking's mains.

There were no school closures on account of infectious or other diseases during the year.

SECTION D.—HOUSING.

In December, the Council's Three Crosses Estate of 56 houses was completed. This is a particularly fine estate, and is an important advance in the improvement of the housing accommodation of the district.

I take this opportunity, however, of reminding the Council that all the houses in their district are still not reasonably fit for human habitation, and official representations with respect to some 30 houses were submitted in the early part of the year. At the time of writing, the Council have not considered these representations, and I consider that by failing to do so the Council are not properly discharging their duties under the Housing Act.

Much is talked of so-called "derelict sites," but these sites are only derelict because the Council have not taken advantage of the provision in the Act to acquire and develop them when the owner fails to do so, and I am glad to report that the Council have, by instructing their Architect, Mr. Evan C. Davoll, to prepare a report upon the redevelopment of these areas, begun to give consideration to the matter.

Three houses were rendered fit during the year with the aid of grants made under the Housing (Rural Workers) Acts.

1. Inspection of Dwelling-houses during the year.

- | | |
|---|-----|
| (1) (a) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) | 86 |
| (b) Number of inspections made for the purpose | 126 |
| (2) (a) Number of dwelling-houses (included under sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925 and 1932 | 59 |
| (b) Number of inspections made for the purpose | 164 |
| (3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation | 30 |
| (4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation | 15 |

2. Remedy of Defects during the year without Service of Formal Notices.

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers	14
--	----

3. Action under Statutory Powers during the year.

(a) Proceedings under Sections 9, 10 and 16 of the Housing Act, 1936:—	
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	Nil
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices:—	
(a) By owners	Nil
(b) By Local Authority in default of owners	Nil
(b) Proceedings under Public Health Acts:—	
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	Nil
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices:—	
(a) By owners	Nil
(b) By Local Authority in default of owners	Nil
(c) Proceedings under Sections 11 and 13 of the Housing Act, 1936:—	
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	4
(2) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders	Nil
(d) Proceedings under Section 12 of the Housing Act, 1936:—	
(1) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made	Nil
(2) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit	Nil

4. Housing Act, 1936, Part IV.—Overcrowding.

(a) (i) Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year	9
(ii) Number of families dwelling therein	9
(iii) Number of persons dwelling therein	61
(b) Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year	3

- (c) (i) Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year 17
 (ii) Number of persons concerned in such cases 123
 (d) Particulars of any cases in which dwelling-houses have again become overcrowded after the Local Authority have taken steps for the abatement of overcrowding:—

There were no cases of overcrowding recurring after abatement had been secured by the Local Authority.

At the commencement of the year, there were 23 cases of overcrowding, and during the year 3 further cases were recorded. Remarkable progress has been made in securing the abatement of 17 cases involving 123 persons. This abatement has been entirely due to the provision of new housing accommodation by the Council at the Three Crosses Estate.

SECTION E.: INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

Milk Supply.

There are 5 wholesale purveyors and 16 retail purveyors of milk registered. Of the 16 retailers, 9 are from the Rural District.

All premises within the Urban District are regularly inspected, and on the occasion of each inspection during the year have been found to be satisfactory.

The Herefordshire County Council is the Authority charged with the administration of the Milk (Special Designations) Order, and the Sanitary Inspector takes samples on behalf of that Authority for bacteriological examination once every three months. Apart from these tests, no samples of milk were submitted for examination for bacterial content or for tubercle bacilli.

There are no pasteurisation plants within the district.

Meat and other Foods.

The carcasses of all animals slaughtered within the district for food for human consumption are inspected, as is also all meat brought from other districts (except chilled and frozen meat).

The Sanitary Inspector regularly attends the markets, and supervision is exercised during the whole time the markets are in progress, 521 rabbits and 1,872 dressed poultry being examined during the year. Other foods offered for sale at the Poultry Market and the Town Hall are inspected.

There are three registered slaughterhouses and three licensed slaughterhouses within the district. In my opinion, all of these slaughterhouses are unsatisfactory, being very old buildings, badly situated, with narrow approaches, and far too close to dwelling-houses. I am convinced that centralised slaughtering is the remedy for these unsatisfactory premises, and recom-

mend the Council to consider the provision of an abattoir in a suitable part of the town.

The Sanitary Inspector visits all slaughter houses daily for the inspection of meat and the premises. There is no ante-mortem examination of animals, and no meat-marking scheme is in operation.

There are 13 bakehouses in the district, all of which are regularly inspected.

Carcases Inspected and condemned.

	Cattle, excluding Cows.	Cows.	Calves.	Sheep and Lambs.	Pigs.
Number killed (if known) ...	596	—	74	2504	930
Number inspected ...	596	—	74	2504	930
ALL DISEASES EXCEPT TUBERCULOSIS.					
Whole carcases condemned ...	—	—	—	6	4
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ...	65	—	—	7	10
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis ...	10.90%	—	—	0.52%	1.50%
TUBERCULOSIS ONLY.					
Whole carcases condemned ...	—	—	—	—	—
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ...	—	—	—	—	1
Percentage of the number inspected affected with Tuberculosis ...	—	—	—	—	0.10%

Adulteration, Etc.

The Food and Drugs (Adulteration) Act, 1928, is administered by the Police.

Chemical and Bacteriological Examination of Food.

The County and City Public Health Laboratory, Hereford, is prepared to undertake a certain amount of bacteriological examination of food, e.g., milk for tubercle bacilli, and food in suspected cases of food poisoning.

Nutrition.

No special effort has been made during the year to disseminate information on the subject of nutrition to the inhabitants of the district. Advice on nutrition is, however, given to those attending the Clinics of the Herefordshire County Council.

Shell-Fish (Molluscan).

There are no shell-fish beds or layings within the district, and no action was taken under the Public Health (Shell-Fish)

Regulations, 1934, or the Public Health (Cleansing of Shell-Fish) Act, 1932.

There is only one purveyor of shell-fish in the District, the kind sold being almost entirely relayed blue point oysters purchased from Whitstable. Mussels and cockles are very seldom sold, and the small quantity sold to order only are purchased from Liverpool.

SECTION F.: PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES.

During the year, 25 notifications of infectious disease were received, this number being one less than that for the previous year. Of these, 12 cases were on account of Scarlet Fever, of which 7 cases were removed to the Isolation Hospital. All cases of Scarlet Fever were of a mild type, and there were no deaths. There was one return case, i.e., contracted within a period of not less than 24 hours and not more than 28 days in the same household on the return of a case from hospital.

There were 4 cases of Diphtheria, all of which were removed to Hospital, and no deaths occurred. This was an increase of three cases compared with the year 1937.

There were only 5 notifications of Pneumonia, which is exactly half the number received in 1937. Two cases of Erysipelas were also removed to hospital, and the total number of cases removed to hospital on account of infectious disease was 14.

During the year, notice was received from other areas of a typhoid contact and of a typhoid carrier moving into this District. Both were, however, temporary residents, and all necessary action was taken to protect the health of the inhabitants of the District.

The Council provides Diphtheria anti-toxin for the use of medical practitioners for cases within the District. Supplies are kept at this Office, and may also be obtained from a pharmacist in the district. 4,000 units of Diphtheria anti-toxin were supplied to medical practitioners during 1938.

The Council also provide immunisation against Diphtheria free of charge to those inhabitants who desire it. This is carried out by the Medical Officer of Health. During the year, only one enquiry was received, and this was refused when the parent of the child learned that the material was injected. There seems to be no demand for this service, probably because Diphtheria does not frequently occur in the district. No doubt intensive propaganda might create some demand, or if a fatal case occurred enthusiasm would develop.

All Diphtheria contacts are swabbed whenever possible.

There is no disinfecting station in the area, nor have the Council any agreement with any neighbouring authority. Bedding is fumigated by the Sanitary Inspector with formaldehyde in the course of the usual terminal disinfection.

When necessary, cases of notifiable diseases are removed to the Isolation Hospital of the Hereford Rural District Council, situated at Stretton Sugwas. The Council's agreement with this Authority provides that two patients suffering from Smallpox, Diphtheria or Scarlet Fever will be received by the Hospital for treatment, provided always that should the hospital be required for a case of Smallpox, all patients suffering from other diseases shall be liable to be discharged forthwith, and the Ross-on-Wye Urban District Council shall then be entitled to send only patients suffering from Smallpox.

The primary object of hospital accommodation is that it is a means of providing skilled medical treatment and nursing for serious cases, which cannot be provided in the home. I consider that the present agreement is inadequate for the needs of the area, as a town with the population of Ross, which experiences an influx of visitors extending over half the year, should have a minimum of three beds available. Furthermore, the the accommodation should be available for all notifiable infectious disease, as it is of far more importance that hospital facilities should be available for diseases such as Typhoid and Spotted Fevers than for the treatment of the present prevailing type of Scarlet Fever.

I am also of the opinion that hospital accommodation for Smallpox should be additional to the existing accommodation, and not alternate. At present, if Smallpox did occur in the area, admission to hospital might mean that severe cases of Diphtheria requiring skilled nursing and attention would be immediately returned to their homes at a critical stage of their illness.

The treatment of Puerpal Pyrexia and Ophthalmia Neonatorum is provided by the Herefordshire County Council as part of the Maternity and Children Welfare Scheme.

Cases of Pneumonia are sometimes sent to Ross Cottage Hospital by the doctor in attendance, and in such cases the cost of treatment is not provided by the Council.

During 1938, the cost of treatment of patients at the Stretton Sugwas Isolation Hospital was £192 14s. 8d. (including ambulance charges), which is equivalent to an average cost per case of £17 10s. 5d. The average cost per patient per day was 9s. 5d., which is an inclusive figure. In addition to the cost of treatment, the Council pay a retaining fee of £30 per annum.

The Council have now agreed that the Medical Officer of Health may admit cases of Acute Anterior Poliomyelitis to the Orthopaedic Hospital at Oswestry, and are prepared to meet the cost of treatment for a period of six weeks, i.e., for the period during which the disease is usually isolated. It is hoped that any further treatment such cases may require would be provided by the Herefordshire County Council under the Orthopaedic Scheme. I regard this as a welcome advance in the facilities for the treatment of infectious disease.

Notifiable Diseases during the Year 1938.

Disease.	Total Cases Notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital.	Total Deaths.
Smallpox	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever	12	7	—
Diphtheria	4	4	—
Enteric Fever	—	—	—
Puerperal Pyrexia	—	—	—
Pneumonia	5	—	4
Erysipelas	3	2	—
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	1	—	—

Analysis of the Total Notified Cases According to age.

Disease	AGE GROUPS.												65 and over Totals.
	Un- der 1	1—	2—	3—	4—	5—	10—	15—	20—	35—	45—		
Scarlet Fever	—	—	—	2	1	4	4	1	—	—	—	—	12
Diphtheria	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	2	—	—	—	—	4
Pneumonia	—	—	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	2	1	5
Erysipelas	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	2	—	—	—	3
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
TOTALS	1	—	1	2	2	6	5	3	2	—	2	1	25

Prevention of Blindness.

The Council have not utilised any powers under Section 176 of the Public Health Act, 1936, but provision for the treatment of Ophthalmia Neonatorum arising in the district is made by the Herefordshire County Council as part of the Maternity and Child Welfare Scheme.

Tuberculosis.

At the end of 1937 there were 26 cases of Tuberculosis on the Register: of these, 19 were pulmonary and 7 non-pulmonary.

During the year, 5 notifications were received, 3 being for pulmonary disease, and 2 for non-pulmonary disease.

There were, however, 10 cases removed from the Register, 5 on account of death, 4 having moved out of the district, and one being removed as cured.

21 cases remained on the Register at the end of the year, of which 12 were pulmonary, and 9 non-pulmonary.

Tuberculosis—New Cases and Mortality During 1938.

		New Cases.				Deaths:			
		Respiratory.		Non-Respiratory.		Respiratory.		Non-Respiratory.	
		M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0-	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1-	...	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
5-	...	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
15-	...	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	—
25-	...	1	—	—	—	2	2	—	—
35-	...	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
45-	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
55-	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
65 & upwards		—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTALS		2	1	1	1	3	3	—	—

The total number of deaths due to Tuberculosis during the year was six, of which five cases had been notified before death. The remaining case died in the District, but was not on the District Register.

The notification of cases of Tuberculosis is carried out very efficiently by the medical practitioners in the District.

Causes of Death.

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Influenza	—	1	1
Tuberculosis of Respiratory System	3	3	6
Cancer	7	6	13
Diabetes	1	—	1
Cerebral Hæmorrhage	5	1	6
Heart Disease	10	5	15
Other Circulatory Diseases	1	1	2
Bronchitis	1	3	4
Pneumonia (all forms)	1	2	3
Other Respiratory Diseases	1	1	2
Appendicitis	—	1	1
Cirrhosis of Liver	—	1	1
Other Digestive Diseases	—	1	1
Acute and Chronic Nephritis	2	1	3
Congenital Debility, Premature Birth, &c.	1	1	2
Suicide	—	1	1
Other Violence	2	1	3
Other Defined Diseases	4	—	4
All Causes	39	30	69

Health Education.

No special action was taken by the Council for the promotion of interest in the prevention of ill-health.

Pamphlets provided by the Herefordshire County Council were, however, distributed from this Department and from the Clinics held in the town. Posters were exhibited at the Clinics and at this Department.

METEOROLOGICAL REPORT.

I am indebted to Mr. F. J. Parsons, Meteorologist-in-Charge, the Observatory, Ross-on-Wye, for the following Meteorological Report for the year 1938:—

The many unusual features of the year 1938 may be summarised thus :

1. *A Frostless January*, for the first time since records of temperature began in 1874, the temperature never being below 33°F.
2. *Driest and Warmest March* on record.
3. *Driest and Sunniest April* on record.
4. Combined rainfall of February, March and April, the lowest on record for *any three consecutive calendar months* (total 0.77 inch).
5. *Warmest November* on record.
6. 1938 was the warmest year since 1921, notwithstanding the absence of a hot summer.
7. The postponement of the first frost of Autumn until late in November is without precedent, as also is the occurrence of the first shade temperature below freezing point (32°F.), early in December.
8. March had its sunniest day on record, viz.: 11½ hours on the 31st.

Altogether, 1938 was a singularly equable year, the difference in mean temperature between the warmest month (August) and the coldest (December) amounting to less than 20 degrees.

During the only warm spell of the year (first part of August) temperature never reached 80°F. in the shade. A feature of this spell was the moist character of the heat and the unusually frequent thunderstorms. The only really cold weather occurred during the week before Christmas when, for a period of 111 hours, the shade temperature remained below 32°F.

April had the remarkable distinction of being the sunniest month of the year, an honour it has not held since 1916.

The usual tables of statistics are appended :

Rainfall (in inches).

Month.	Total Fall 1938.	Difference from Normal.	Number of Rain Days (.005 inch or more)
January	... 2.63	+0.09	18
February	... 0.69	-1.33	5
March	... 0.02	-2.35	0
April	... 0.06	-1.87	2
May	... 1.88	-0.23	13
June	... 1.05	-0.87	10
July	... 2.28	+0.01	14
August	... 2.81	+0.29	16
September	... 1.15	-0.97	15
October	... 2.78	-0.41	16
November	... 3.21	+0.54	16
December	... 3.83	+1.10	18
Year	... 22.39	-6.00	143

At no time was as much as one inch registered in one day, the highest daily fall being 0.80 inch on December 9th. The March rainfall was made up of six very minute fractions of an inch, each insufficient to qualify as a "rain day."

Air Temperature (Degrees F.)

Month.	Mean.	Difference from Normal.	Extremes. Maximum. Minimum.
January	... 43.7	+4.3	55 33
February	... 42.1	+2.1	59 30
March	... 48.7	+6.1	65 28
April	... 46.1	-1.0	65 27
May	... 51.9	-1.4	72 32
June	... 58.6	0.0	77 42
July	... 59.8	-2.1	76 41
August	... 60.6	-0.2	79 39
September	... 56.9	+0.3	76 37
October	... 51.7	+2.2	64 37
November	... 49.5	+5.9	64 32
December	... 40.9	+0.6	54 21
Year	... 50.9	+1.4	79 (Aug.1) 21 (Dec.20)

The extreme maximum of 64°F. on November 5th and also the high minimum of 58°F. a day or two later are new records for November.

It will be seen that July experienced the greatest deficiency in warmth, whilst March had the largest excess.

Ground Temperature (Degrees F.)

Month.	One Foot Depth.	Means. Four Foot Depth.	No. of Nights with Ground Frost (30° F. or less).	Lowest Temp. on Grass.
January	... 41.6	44.1	5	24
February	... 40.8	43.9	9	20
March	... 44.6	45.0	16	17
April	... 47.7	47.8	22	16
May	... 52.5	50.3	6	22
June	... 59.0	54.7	0	33
July	... 61.0	57.5	0	33
August	... 62.0	59.4	0	31
September	... 57.7	57.7	2	29
October	... 51.9	55.0	1	30
November	... 49.2	52.2	6	22
December	... 41.5	47.0	10	16
Year	... 50.8	51.2	77	16 (Dec.20)

Bright Sunshine (Hours and 10ths).

Month.	Total 1938.	Difference from Normal.	Best Day's Record.	Sunless Days.
January	... 45.1	— 8.9	6.7	9
February	... 54.0	—15.8	7.8	8
March	... 163.1	+47.5	11.8	1
April	... 217.6	+75.6	11.6	0
May	... 143.2	—44.0	13.8	2
June	... 197.4	—66.0	14.2	0
July	... 150.5	—38.7	11.4	1
August	... 128.5	—52.6	11.6	6
September	... 104.9	—33.2	9.7	1
October	... 101.1	+33.0	8.8	3
November	... 73.4	+10.7	7.3	5
December	... 62.1	+12.6	6.2	8
Year	...1440.9	—48.1	14.2(June 17)	45



