

[Report 1943] / Medical Officer of Health, Ross-on-Wye U.D.C.

Contributors

Ross-on-Wye (England). Urban District Council.

Publication/Creation

1943

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ROSS-ON-WYE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.INTERIMANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTHFOR THE YEAR1943.STAFF OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT.Medical Officer of Health:

WILLIAM HOGG, M.B., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H., M.R.S.I.

Clerical Staff:

+ O.N. LITTLE.

+ J.M. DEKINS.

(+Temporary Appointments.)

Telephone - Ross 214.

County Offices,
Alton Street,
Ross-on-Wye.Sanitary Inspector, Sanitary Surveyor and Housing
Designated Officer:

+ R. SHAW BATHFORD, M.R.S.I., M.S.I.A., AFF. INST. M. & C.Y.E.

(+Holds Statutory Sanitary Inspectors Certificate
and Certificate of R.S.I. for Meat and Other
Foods, and Certificated Building Surveyor.)

Telephone - Ross 62.

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

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Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report for the Year 1943, in accordance with Circular 10/44, the Report is much abbreviated and is to be regarded as an interim report.

The health of the inhabitants of the District has remained extraordinarily good and the incidence of infectious disease was low although conditions of life in the fourth year of war would appear to predispose to the spread of infection. The response to the Diphtheria Immunisation facilities has been somewhat disappointing and in my opinion it is still possible for outbreaks of diphtheria to occur in the District.

One of the major activities of the year has been the Sanitary Inspector's efforts to prevent serious deterioration in the sanitary circumstances of the dwellings of the area. A good deal of work for this purpose has been completed during the year - but some deterioration has been unavoidable & it will be necessary in the immediate post war period to attend to this matter.

It gives me much pleasure to be able to record my thanks for the support which the Council has always afforded the officers of the Department throughout a by no means easy year. This has promoted efficiency and both the Sanitary Inspector and I are grateful for the confidence shown.

I also wish to express my appreciation of Mr. R. Shaw Batchford, Sanitary Inspector to the Council, Mr. E. Moses, Clerk to the Council and Mr. C. Caddick, Surveyor to the Council for assistance in the preparation of this Annual Report and much help most willingly given throughout the year.

I remain, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

WILLIAM HOGG.

Medical Officer of Health.

May 1944.

SECTION A. STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA:

Area (in acres)	1,004
Number of Inhabited Houses (End of 1942)	1,341
Rateable Value	£32,001
Sum represented by a Penny Rate	£133. 6. 9

Extract from Vital Statistics of the Year:

<u>Live Birth Rate</u> per 1,000 of estimated resident population	20.1
<u>Stillbirths Rate</u> per 1,000 Total Births (Live & Still.)	56.1
<u>Death Rate</u> per 1,000 of estimated resident population (crude)	11.9

Deaths from Puerperal Causes:

	Deaths.	Rate per 1,000 Total Births.
Heading No. 29 ... Puerperal Sepsis	NIL.	NIL.
Heading No. 30 ... Other Puerperal Causes	NIL.	NIL.

Death Rate of Infants under One Year of Age:

All Infants per 1,000 Live Births	59.4
Legitimate Infants per 1,000 Legitimate Live Births ...	41.7
Illegitimate Infants per 1,000 Illegitimate Live Births	400.0

SECTION B. GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA:Laboratory Facilities:

The number of specimens examined by the County and City Public Health Laboratory, Hereford, during the year were as follows:-

Milk	9
Sputum for tuberculosis	8
Swabs	21
Urine	1
Water - Bacteriological	22
Total	61

Public Mortuary:

The management of the mortuary continued to be satisfactory. During the year, eight bodies were received one from the Urban District and seven from the adjoining Rural District. In three instances the bodies were those of persons who had died from natural causes, the remaining five arose as a result of violent death.

Experience has shown that a supply of hot water is desirable at the mortuary especially when a post mortem examination has to be performed.

SECTION C. SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA:Water:

The mains of the Ross Water Undertaking provide a constant supply of potable water for the District. In part of the District the Water Undertaking also provides a constant river water supply (non-potable) which is useful for boiler and other industrial purposes owing to the river water being much softer than the potable water. The total hardness of the river water averages 6 - 7 parts per 100,00 against the drinking water total hardness of 22 parts per 100,000. The greater hardness of the drinking water is due to the fact that this water is derived from boreholes.

The potable water supply appears to be adequate for the needs of the entire area with the exception of the Three Crosses area and certain parts of Overross, where complaints of shortage of water have occurred from time to time. This inadequacy appears to arise from the fact that in these areas the highest dwellings are situated at

about 230' O.D. whilst the reservoir is at 304' O.D., but the greater part of the town intervenes between these points with a consequent heavy draw off from the mains which produces an inadequate pressure in the highest dwellings at Three Crosses and Overcross. It does not appear to be possible to overcome this difficulty by the installation of larger storage tanks in the dwellings affected.

In those parts of the town where the dual system operates there seems to be a certain amount of confusion especially amongst new inhabitants as to which system any particular tap connects. Whilst in some properties the river water is clearly indicated as being not suitable for drinking purposes, this practice is not universal although it appears to be very desirable. The river water supply cannot be regarded as suitable for potable purposes and indeed at times, its consumption is likely to be prejudicial to health.

The potable water is treated by continuous automatic chlorination and so long as this is maintained the water has been found to be sterile on bacteriological examination. No complaints have arisen as a result of overdosage, this is due to the care which is exercised by the Water Undertaking in control of the dosing apparatus. Without chlorination, the water is found to be not always sterile but the bacteriological counts show the water to be still of a high quality as a potable water. On chemical examination, the potable water has given very satisfactory results on every sample. Tests for iron, copper, lead and zinc have shown these metals to be absent and the water has no tendency to dissolve these metals.

Both the supplies are conveyed from the mains to the premises by means of services and taps. In few instances the taps are placed outside the dwellings supplied and some of these taps are shared by two or more dwellings, a most unsatisfactory arrangement. The number of dwellings not supplied by the mains is four.

There are still three shallow wells in use for the supply of water for domestic purposes. These are sampled from time to time, as opportunity occurs.

The use of Cawdor well is discontinued and the old public well in Corpus Christi Lane is rapidly falling into disuse.

During the year, 22 samples of water were submitted by your Public Health Department to the Public Health Laboratory, Hereford, for examination by bacteriological methods, these were taken from various points in the area at varying times and provide a useful guide to the purity of the supply. Of these samples four were found to be not satisfactory for potable purposes. One was found to be connected to the River Water Supply although it had been used in industrial premises as a drinking water supply.

Drainage and Sewerage:

Eleven new drains were constructed within the District during the year. These were new drains to existing premises and all were examined and tested by the Sanitary Inspector. A new system of water closets was installed at the Senior Mixed Council School.

Rivers and Streams:

The River Wye constitutes part of the boundary for the Urban District and receives the effluent from the three sewage outfalls at three separate points.

River Pollution:

The erection in the District of a manufacturing process which is alien to the amenities of the town has caused much additional work in the Department during the period under review. The escape, from time to time, of substances of an oily nature from these premises caused pollution of the watercourses.

The original apparatus installed consisted of a greatly enlarged oil and grease trap but this apparatus did not eliminate all of the oil from the effluent. As a result, an additional equipment was installed consisting of an electric pump and separating tower. There was an immediate improvement as soon as this additional apparatus was brought into use, but there is still a trace of oil in the effluent. Other substances connected with the process appear to be discharged and at the time of writing this report the conditions are still unsatisfactory.

Public Cleansing: The Council undertakes a weekly collection of household refuse throughout the District, and notwithstanding the the labour difficulties, which are general throughout the country, this service has been maintained without complaint.

Disposal is by tipping and the tip has been maintained in a satisfactory condition during the year.

Rats and Mice Destruction:

During the year the Ministry of Food enlisted the aid of the Council in a determined drive to reduce the rat population, and an Order was served requiring an initial survey and a report which included a plan of infestation. This was done, and since this, continual effort has been made to deal with these pests.

Sanitary Inspection of the Area:-

I am indebted to Mr. R. Shaw Batchford, Sanitary Inspector to the Council, for the following statement - furnished under Article 27 (Sub-section 18) of the Sanitary Officers (Outside London) Regulations.

Inspections:

Bakehouses	...	...	...	...	...	...	14
Common Lodging Houses	...	...	...	...	...	...	22
Cowsheds	...	...	...	...	...	...	8
Factories with Mechanical Power	...	...	...	...	...	...	26
Factories without Mechanical Power	...	...	...	...	...	...	33
Infectious Disease	...	...	...	...	...	...	18
Markets	...	...	...	...	...	...	50
Slaughterhouses	...	...	...	...	...	...	25
Military Inspections	...	...	...	...	...	...	65
Premises where Food is prepared	...	...	...	...	...	...	26
Miscellaneous - Under Public Health Act	...	...	...	...	...	...	83
Rats and Mice	...	...	...	...	...	...	150
Work in Progress	...	...	...	...	...	...	229
Hospital Disinfections	...	...	...	...	...	...	8
Other Disinfections	...	...	...	...	...	...	16
Total							<u>773</u>

Notices Issued:

Informal	...	...	...	...	...	...	37
Statutory	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
Total							<u>43</u>

Defects Remedied:

Roofs Repaired	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
Spouting Repaired	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
Verges Repaired	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Windows Repaired	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
General Woodwork Repaired	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Floors Repaired	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Chimneys Repaired	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Plaster Repaired	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Dampness Remedied	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Brickwork repaired or Pointed	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Water Supply Provided to W.C.s	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Wash-houses Improved	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Washcopper Repaired or Replaced	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Cellars Improved	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
New Drains Provided	...	...	...	...	...	...	11

New Pedestal Pans to W.C.s	...	...	...	...	2
Stopped Drains Cleared	...	...	...	...	7
Defective Drains Repaired	...	...	...	...	5
Yard Paving Improved	...	...	...	...	5
Offensive Accumulations Removed	...	...	...	...	15
Rats and Mice Infestations	...	...	...	...	21
Dirty Houses Cleansed	...	...	...	...	3
Bins Provided	...	...	...	...	3

In spite of a considerable increase in his duties in connection with Civil Defence, Mr. R. Shaw Batchford has continued to exercise an efficient control of the sanitary circumstances of the area throughout the year.

Common Lodging Houses:

The number of these in the town remained at three and all premises were regularly inspected throughout the year.

Factories and Workshops:

The Register of Factories was revised from time to time.

Camping Sites:

Number of Camping Sites in the area used for
Camping purposes during the year 2

Number of Camping Sites in respect of which
Licences have been issued by the Local Authority
under Section 269 of Public Health Act 1936 ... 1

Estimated maximum campers resident in the area at
one time during summer season 1943 20

School Closures:

There were no school closures on account of health reasons throughout the year.

SECTION D. - HOUSING:

Inspection of Dwelling Houses during the Year:

1. (a) Total number of Dwellings inspected
for housing defects under Public Health &
Housing Acts 37

(b) Number of Inspections made for the
purpose 43

2. Number of Dwelling Houses found not to be,
in all respects, reasonably fit for human
habitation 37

Action under Statutory Powers during the Year - Proceedings under Public Health Acts:

Number of Dwelling Houses in respect of which
notices were served requiring defects to be
remedied 37

Number of Dwelling Houses in which defects
were remedied after service of formal notices

(a) By Owners 36

(b) By Local Authority in Default of Owners ... Nil

Numbers 13 and 14 Alton Street:

These two houses had been the subject of Demolition Orders, but, owing to the outbreak of war, demolition

was not proceeded with. The Defence Regulations gave authority for this type of house to be re-occupied provided that necessary works were carried out. Licences to occupy were to be of six months validity and were to be renewed at the expiration every six months. These two houses have remained in occupation on these terms throughout the year.

Van Dwellings:

The removal of 2 hutments and 14 caravans which migrated into the District during the year was secured as a result of informal action by the Department. Unless control is maintained with regard to these dwellings, small settlements would become established accompanied, no doubt, with the insanitary environment which appears to be inseparable from groups of these dwellings.

SECTION E. - INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD:

Milk:

There were 4 wholesale purveyors and 15 retail purveyors of milk registered with the Local Authority at the end of the year. Much attention was devoted by the Department to milk supplies. Dairies and cowsheds were regularly inspected. Nine samples of milk were sent to the City and County Public Health Laboratory, Hereford, for examination for tubercle bacilli and the reports were negative. One sample was submitted under the Milk Special Designations Order.

Meat and Other Foods:

No slaughtering of meat for sale for human consumption has been carried out in the town during the year. Endeavour is made to inspect privately slaughtered pigs but owing to the incomplete information given this is frequently impossible.

The Sanitary Inspector endeavours to inspect as much as possible of the meat exposed for sale but, the inspection of the whole presents too great a task as the Inspector is very fully occupied at the present time. He has from time to time undertaken periods of duty as meat inspector at the Hereford City Abattoir. The Inspector regularly attends markets etc.

Food Found to be Unfit for Human Consumption:

5x 6lb. Tins Pork Luncheon Meat.
11 x 2½lbs. Tins Pork Luncheon Meat.
2cwt. 21lbs. Oats.
48 lbs. Swiss Rolls.
61 doz. Cakes.
35 lbs. Tea.
1½ lbs. Biscuits.
1 Carcase of Poultry.
64 Stones Fish.
1 Leg Lamb.
1½ cwt. Flour.
5 lbs. Lard.
3 Hams.
19 lbs. Gammon.
1 Pigs Viscera.
8½ lbs. Margarine.
2½ lbs. Cheese.
4 cwt. Sugar.
6 doz. Fish Cakes.
336 Tins Other Foodstuffs.

SECTION F. - PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASE:

The incidence of notifiable disease during the year was maintained at a satisfactory low level but showed a slight increase on the figures prevailing in 1942, the total notifications being 52 against 37 for the previous year.

Whooping Cough was the most prevalent disease, there were 20 notified cases all occurring in children under 10 years of age.

Measles gave rise to 13 notifications and was the second most prevalent infection which was again confined to children under 10 years. There were 6 notifications of pneumonia, which is exactly half the figure for 1942, but erysipelas gave rise to 4 notifications which is slightly above the average for the last few years. The incidence of scarlet fever increased somewhat but there were only 5 cases. No cases of diphtheria were notified at any time during the year, and no particular part of the year showed any special incidence of infectious disease..

Notifiable Disease during the Year 1943:-

Disease.	Total Cases Notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital.	Deaths.
Measles	13	-	-
Whooping Cough	20	-	-
Puerperal Pyrexia	2	2	-
Pneumonia	6	-	1
Scarlet Fever	5	2	-
Erysipelas	4	2	-
Sonne Dysentery	1	-	-
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	1	-	-

Analysis of Total Notified Cases According to Age:-

Disease.	Age Groups.												Totals.
	Under 1	1+	2+	3+	4+	5+	10+	15+	20+	35+	45+	65+	
Measles	1	1	2	2	1	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Whooping Cough	3	2	1	5	2	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	20
Puerperal Pyrexia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2
Pneumonia	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	1	1	6
Scarlet Fever	1	-	-	-	-	3	-	1	-	-	-	-	5
Erysipelas	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	4
Sonne Dysentery	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Totals	6	4	3	8	4	17	-	2	3	1	2	2	52

Diphtheria Immunisation:

The Diphtheria Immunisation Scheme is carried out by the medical practitioners of the area and by the Public Health Department. The total number of children who completed courses of diphtheria prophylactic during the year is indicated in the following table:-

Age Group	1 - 5 years.	5 - 15 years.	1 - 15 years.
1st. Quarter	42	110	152
2nd. Quarter	18	14	32
3rd. Quarter	11	1	12
4th. Quarter	4	5	9
Whole Year	75	130	205

These figures show an improvement when compared with those of the previous year. Nevertheless, it was estimated at the end of the year 35% of those under 5 years of age and 57% of those aged 5 - 15 years had received complete courses of diphtheria prophylactic. These figures are slightly higher than those for the previous year.

The difference in the numbers immunised corresponds roughly to the periods of intensified propaganda. In connection with this, I must pay tribute to the work of the Sanitary Inspector who arranged and carried out a great deal of the propaganda in a most capable manner. The success of the propaganda was due to a

large extent to the willing co-operation of many persons including the W.V.S., Health Visitor and District Nurses, the Teaching staff at the Council Schools, the chemists and druggists in the District and many of the business houses. I have also to acknowledge the valuable assistance given in connection with the special immunisation clinics of Mrs. Littlewood and the staff of the Ross First Aid Post.

The medical practitioners continued to co-operate with this work throughout the period but are confronted with the difficulty that all parents are not willing for their children to be immunised. This is especially apparent in connection with children under the age of five years. However, when the parent's consent is forthcoming I am satisfied that the fullest facilities are available for free immunisation.

Scabies:

The total number of scabies brought to the notice of the Department during the year was 14, of which 11 were children and 3 were adults. This figure is almost the same as that for the previous year. All treatment is carried out in the home as the Council has no clinics. It is certain that the incidence of scabies was somewhat greater than this figure suggests as notification is not compulsory.

Tuberculosis:

At the beginning of the year there were 32 cases of tuberculosis on the Register, 15 pulmonary and 17 non-pulmonary cases. During the year 13 cases were added to the Register 7 pulmonary and 6 non-pulmonary, and 6 cases were removed from the Register 4 pulmonary and 2 non-pulmonary. At the end of the year therefore 39 cases remained on the Register 18 pulmonary and 21 non-pulmonary.

New Cases & Mortality during 1942.

Age Periods.	NEW CASES.				DEATHS.			
	Respiratory.		Non-respiratory.		Respiratory.		Non-respiratory.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1+	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
5+	1	-	1	2	-	-	-	-
15+	2	-	-	2	1	-	-	1
25+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
35+	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
45+	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
55+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
65 & Over	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-
Totals	5	2	2	4	2	1	-	1

Meteorological Report:-

I am indebted to Mr. F.J. Parsons, Meteorologist-in-Charge, The Observatory, Ross-on-Wye, for the following report for the year 1943:-

SHADE TEMPERATURE (DEGREES FAHR).

Month.	Means.	Difference from Normal.	Extremes.	
			Maximum.	Minimum.
January	42.9	+3.5	53	27
February	44.6	+4.6	57	29
March	44.9	+2.3	59	26
April	52.1	+5.0	74	32
May	54.1	+0.8	75	33
June	58.1	-0.5	77	43
July	62.2	+0.3	89	45
August	61.2	+0.4	82	41
September	56.1	-0.5	74	35
October	51.9	+2.4	66	30
November	44.7	+1.1	58	29
December	39.4	-0.7	54	23
Year	51.0	+1.5	89(Jly.14)	23(Dec.14)

GROUND TEMPERATURE (DEGREES FAHR).

Month.	One foot depth. Mean.	Four feet depth. Mean.	On surface. Lowest on Grass.	No. of Nights of Ground Frost.
January	41.9	44.8	19	8
February	42.9	44.8	20	9
March	44.6	45.1	18	15
April	50.7	48.8	25	3
May	54.9	51.9	25	4
June	60.0	56.4	34	0
July	62.8	59.1	35	0
August	62.8	60.5	34	0
September	58.8	58.9	29	2
October	53.1	55.1	26	6
November	47.2	50.9	19	12
December	41.3	46.9	16	16
Year	51.7	51.9	16 (Dec. 14)	75

BRIGHT SUNSHINE (HOURS & TENTHS).

Month.	Duration.		Highest Record in one day.	Number of Sunless Days.
	Total 1943	Difference from normal.		
January	45.5	- 8.4	5.9	12
February	94.4	+27.1	8.6	4
March	149.6	+35.6	10.0	3
April	161.1	+16.9	12.8	1
May	234.9	+50.1	14.6	2
June	171.7	-34.8	13.8	2
July	189.4	+ 7.6	14.3	1
August	147.8	-33.9	10.7	1
September	134.4	- 3.0	10.3	1
October	110.0	+13.1	8.8	2
November	75.4	+13.8	5.9	9
December	43.2	- 6.7	6.5	13
Year	1557.4	+77.4	14.6 (May 18)	51

RAINFALL (INCHES).

Month.	Total 1943.	Difference from Normal.	Maximum Fall.	No. of Rain Days. (.005 inch or more.)
January	6.35	+3.81	1.25	21
February	2.01	-0.01	.88	7
March	1.08	-1.29	.49	5
April	.63	-1.30	.16	10
May	3.37	+1.26	.76	11
June	1.17	-0.75	.45	12
July	1.31	-0.96	.48	9
August	2.08	-0.44	.71	14
September	3.35	+1.23	1.21	17
October	1.95	-1.24	.71	13
November	1.67	-1.00	.49	18
December	1.63	-1.10	.48	11
Year	26.60	-1.70	1.25 (Jan. 31.)	148

For the third year in succession rainfall was below normal. The year opened with heavy rain the total fall for January beating all previous records for that month. Not since 1869 had a total of over 6 inches been registered.

Only two days had heavy falls, both exceeding

one inch - one in January (1.25 inch), the other in September (1.21 inch) during a heavy thunderstorm. The June quarter was the driest but the fourth quarter was nearly as dry, there being a deficit of $3\frac{1}{3}$ inches at a time of year when rainfall is normally abundant.

Two absolute droughts were noted, the first of exactly five weeks duration from mid-February until the third week in March, the second began after mid-June and extended well into July, lasting 19 days. Rainfall duration for 1943 totalled $421\frac{3}{4}$ hours January accounting for $95\frac{1}{2}$. In April there were only 11 hours.

In the matter of temperature 1943 was the warmest year since 1921 with a mean of 51.0 degrees. Only three months were deficient in warmth. On three days shade temperature exceeded 80 degrees, twice in July and once in August. The maximum reading of 89 degrees on July 31st. was the highest for July since 1923 and in the intervening years has only once been exceeded in any month, viz. in August 1932 (91 degrees).

April had not been so warm since 1893. A feature of the year was the brilliant spring.

Very little cold weather was experienced during the winter months, there being a cold week in January (when the only snowfall occurred) and another in December.

For the third year in succession the autumn was warm and comparatively dry.

The quietest weather occurred in February and March. From April onwards the weather was often windy - unusually so for an inland town and for the late spring and summer months.

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