BOROUGH OF RYE

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

for the year 1949

BY

M.I.SILVERTON, T.D.,M.R.C.S.,L.R.C.P.,D.P.H.

To the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors
of the Rye Borough Council,

I have the honour to present the Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the year 1949.

It is satisfactory to note that the health of the Borough compares favourably with the rest of the country.

The incidence of infectious disease has been relatively light. In particular it will be noted that there were no cases of poliomyelitis. The success of the immunisation campaign against diphtheria is exemplified by the fact that there have not been any cases of this dread disease in this Town.

Lack of housing remains a great problem as everywhere. I am grateful for the consideration given to the rehousing of families with young children living in sub-standard dwellings.

I wish to record my appreciation of the work of Mr. Gower, Sanitary Inspector, who has striven to carry out his duties although overburdened.

The Town Clerk and other Chief Officers have given me every assistance, and I am grateful for their co-operation and kindness.

I am most appreciative of the consideration and support which the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors have so generously accorded me on all occasions.

I have the honour to be,
Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

M. I. SILVERTON.

Medical Officer of Health.

The Watch Oak,
BATTLE,
Sussex.

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BOROUGH OF RYE.

STAFF

Medical Officer of Health:

M. I. SILVERTON, T.D.,M.R.C.S.,L.R.C.P.,D.P.H.

Sanitary Inspector:

H. C. GOWER, M.Inst.R.A.

Surveyor, Town Planning Officer and Water Superintendent, from 1st January to March:

A. G. J. CORNNER, O.B.E.,M.I.Mun.E.,M.R.San.I.

Surveyor, Town Planning Officer and Water Superintendent, from March to end of year:

H. C. GOWER, M.Inst.R.A.

The staff of the Battle Rural District Council Public Health Department carry out all the clerical work of the Medical Officer of Health.

STATISTICS RELATING TO THE BOROUGH OF RYE.

	1947	1948	1949
Area of Borough in acres	1,021	1,021	1,021
Population by census 1931 ... ... 3,947.			
Population (Registrar General's estimate for mid-year)	4,300	4,390	4,398
Rateable Value	£40,032	£41,606	£42,460
Number of inhabited houses	1,333	1,372	1,381
Number of Rateable premises	1,639	1,673	1,720
Sum represented by a Penny Rate	£146	£161	£164

BIRTHS AND BIRTH RATE

Live Births

	Male	Female	Total
Legitimate	35	31	66
Illegitimate	2	1	3
	37	32	69

Stillbirths

Legitimate	1	1	2
Illegitimate	0	0	0
	1	1	2

Live Birth Rate per 1,000 of civilian population.. .. 15.68

Live Birth Rate per 1,000 of civilian population (England & Wales) 16.7

Stillbirth Rate per 1,000 births (live and still). .. 28.16

Stillbirth Rate per 1,000 births (live and still) (England & Wales) 0.39

The abnormal constitution of the population of this Town will account for the lowered Birth Rate as compared with England & Wales. Further reference will be made to this subject when considering the Death Rate.

DEATHS AND DEATH RATES

Deaths

	Male	Female	Total
1947	26	22	48
1948	23	33	56
1949	33	33	66

Death Rate for Borough of Rye per 1,000 of resident population 15.00

Corrected Death Rate for Borough of Rye 11.7

Death Rate for England & Wales per 1,000 civilian population 11.7

It should be realised that this Town is particularly favoured by those persons retiring from active life and is thus heavily weighted for age as compared with England & Wales as a whole, and so we get an apparently increased Death Rate. The Registrar General is aware of this and has given us a method of overcoming this bias by introducing a "Comparability Factor" of 0.78 for this Borough, thus giving a Corrected Death Rate of 11.7 which compares with 11.7 for England & Wales.

Deaths and Death Rates, continued.

Death under 1 year.

There were no deaths of infants under 1 year in the Borough of Rye.

Infant Death Rate per 1,000 live births .. .. .. Nil

Infant Death Rate per 1,000 live births (England & Wales) 32.00

Death Rate for diarrhoea (infants under 1 year) per 1,000 live births (England & Wales) 3.00

Maternal Deaths

Borough of Rye .. .. One

Maternal mortality rate per 1,000 live and still births, Borough of Rye 14.08

Maternal mortality rate per 1,000 live and still births, England & Wales 0.98

Death Rates per 1,000 civilian population from certain specific causes.

	England & Wales	Rye Borough
Typhoid and paratyphoid	nil	nil
Whooping cough	0.01	nil
Diphtheria	nil	nil
Tuberculosis	0.45	0.22
Influenza	0.15	nil
Smallpox	nil	nil
Pneumonia	0.51	0.45
Acute poliomyelitis and polioencephalitis	0.01	nil

Detailed Causes of Death

	Male	Female	Total
Tuberculosis of respiratory system	1	0	1
Cancer (all sites)	6	5	11
Diabetes	0	1	1
Intercranial vascular lesions	2	1	3
Heart Diseases	13	12	25
Other circulatory diseases	1	3	4
Bronchitis	1	1	2
Pneumonia	0	2	2
Other respiratory diseases	0	1	1
Diarrhoea under two years	1	0	1
Nephritis	2	2	4
Maternal causes	0	1	1
Suicide	0	1	1
Road Traffic Accidents	2	0	2
All other causes	4	3	7
	33	33	66

TUBERCULOSIS NOTIFICATIONS

	1944		1945		1946		1947		1948		1949	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Pulmonary												
Additions to Register	5	1	2	1	3	5	3	3	3	5	0	0
Total on Register at 31st December.	14	5	9	5	11	7	12	10	11	13	7	10
Non-pulmonary												
Additions to Register	1	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	1	1	1
Total on Register at 31st December.	2	2	2	1	5	3	5	3	4	4	3	4

The existing tuberculosis registers have been extensively reviewed during the past year, and in view of the resultant corrections the figures given for 1949 now present a more accurate picture of the prevalence of this disease in this town.

Death Rates for Tuberculosis

The mortality rate for tuberculosis has described a steadily downward trend during past decades which was halted temporarily in the first and second world wars. The tempo of decline has been somewhat arrested since the last war. This may be attributed to a combination of factors, the most obvious being overcrowding and poor-quality dwellings, which perforce must be retained owing to the inherent difficulties in providing suitable alternative accommodation. Another potent source of dissemination may be due to the lack of beds in Sanatoria, leaving "open cases" in unsuitable homes, so acting as an ever-present focus of infection within the family circle.

The national diet would not appear to have any relation to incidence; it has been adequate and evenly distributed, although restricted in choice. The increased milk supply in the summer months was a welcome addition.

Housing in relation to Tuberculosis.

I can visualise the time when it may be considered that the rents of Council houses are too high in relation to wages, and I hope that the subsequent economies practised by the families concerned will not result in a sub-standard diet with its inevitable train of lowered resistance to disease generally and in particular, tuberculosis.

I am now informed by the Housing Manager that "it is becoming increasingly apparent that an economic rent for more than a two-bedroomed house is beyond the means of the average applicant".

Tuberculosis, continued.

Tuberculosis and Raw (Undesignated) Milk.

This is a potential danger in view of the all too frequent findings of bovine tubercle bacilli in raw, undesignated milks, by bacteriologists all over the country. I am greatly disturbed by the complacency of the community generally in accepting such a hazard within their midst, despite the dissemination of such knowledge by Health Visitors and others, particularly to mothers of young children.

INCIDENCE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Comparative Statistics for the years 1944 - 1949, 1st January - 31st December respectively.

	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949
Scarlet fever	4	4	5	0	4	4
Measles	1	111	2	9	132	30
Pneumonia	1	0	1	0	0	13
Erysipelas	1	0	1	1	1	4
Whooping cough	0	4	6	15	76	0
Acute poliomyelitis	0	0	0	1	0	0

Diphtheria

It is extremely satisfactory to note that there have been no cases of diphtheria during the past six years. This killing and disabling disease is being overcome in the country as a whole by virtue of the intensive immunisation campaign. Details of the protection conferred on this particular community are given on page 8.

Acute Poliomyelitis.

The first serious epidemic in England & Wales was in 1947, when it will be noted that this Borough had one case. 1949 also proved to be a year of increased incidence.

We in this town were fortunate in that we had no cases in the year under review.

Measles.

It will be observed that this was a comparatively mild attack, and fortunately no deaths were attributable to this condition.

Measles is always with us and recurs in cycles, the last heavy attack being in 1948.

Pneumonia.

Six of these cases were complications of measles in children between the age groups of 9 months and 5 years. All these recovered in due course.

Incidence of Infectious Diseases, continued.

Whooping cough.

This most distressing and potentially disabling disease is the subject of intensive field research by the Medical Research Council in order to find a safe and reliable vaccine which will confer protection as surely as immunisation does in diphtheria. One hopes that these endeavours will be successful in the near future. It is regretted therefore, that for the present, whooping cough vaccine is not provided by the Local Health Authority.

Other Diseases.

The incidence of the other infectious diseases have no special significance.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES IN FOOD POISONING.

Food Poisoning Outbreaks in 1949.

Total number of outbreaks	nil
Number of cases	nil
Number of deaths	nil

Although we have been fortunate in escaping outbreaks of food poisoning it behoves us all to be perpetually on our guard.

Accumulated evidence from inquiries into outbreaks of food poisoning shows that the almost constant factor is lack of personal care and hygiene. In brief, running noses, sore throats, apparently trifling sores on exposed parts of the body (hands and face), and discharging ears are likely sources of contamination. Therefore it is imperative that all food handlers should thoroughly wash their hands and lower arms prior to touching food. It may be stated that the carrier of an intestinal disease would not be a danger in food handling if the hands were scrupulously cleaned after using the lavatory.

As an extra precaution against the introduction of bacteria into food it is urged that prepared dishes should not be stored but eaten as soon as possible after preparation; twice heated foods are always a potential source of danger. Types of dangerous keeping foods are gravies, meats, creams, custards, trifles and puddings; immediate refrigeration is the safeguard if keeping is contemplated.

PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY SERVICE.

The Public Health Laboratory Service, Brighton, was available for use in November, 1949. It is too early to state the immediate benefits which have accrued from the opening of this Medical ancillary to preventive medicine in this town, but it is obvious from the facilities offered that it will prove extremely useful to this Authority.

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION SERVICE

Number of children who received injections in 1949.

Primary Course

Under 5 years of age	71
From 5 - 14 years	34
Total	105
Re-inforcing dose	134

Total number of children under 15 years of age resident in the Borough of Rye who had been immunised up to 31st December, 1949:-

Under 5 years of age	252
5 - 14 years (inclusive)	562
	814

Comparative figures for the past three years:-

	1947	1948	1949
Under 5 years of age			
Number immunised	183	232	252
Child population	370	389	382
Percentage immunised	49.45%	59.64%	65.96%
5 - 14 years of age (inclusive)			
Number immunised	370	427	562
Child population	570	562	575
Percentage immunised	64.91%	75.97%	97.73%

Discrepancy in the numbers immunised under 5 years and those in the age groups 5 - 14, is in my opinion, a measure of the apathy of parents with regard to taking positive action, even when so intimately connected with the present and future welfare of their "young". It is so much easier for them to agree to immunisation when clinics for children of school age are held at their schools, thus leaving the shepherding to teachers, than to make the personal effort necessary to take the child to a clinic on a specific day at a stated time.

The Local Health Authority has now agreed (December 1949) with the British Medical Association on the fee to be paid for immunisation and vaccination; this includes a completed record card in each case. Payment is made by the Local Health Authority on receipt of the completed record. This should give a more accurate picture of the state of protection conferred on the community.

VACCINATION.

Number vaccinated in 1949:-

	Under 1 year	1 - 4 years	5 - 14 years	15 or over	Total
Primary vaccination	16	16	1	-	33
Re-vaccination	-	-	1	3	4

Number of babies born in 1949 69

Number of babies under 1 year vaccinated in 1949 16

Percentage vaccinated 23.18%

It is regretted that the percentage of vaccinations performed is so small.

With the increased popularity of air travel the probability of an outbreak of smallpox is always with us. In addition it may be noted that in the future air travel will become even more commonplace than at present.

It is hoped that parents will become sufficiently alive to the necessity for conferring protection on their babies in view of this ever present menace. The optimum age for primary vaccination is four months. At this age the baby is not usually susceptible to illness following vaccination. Children and adults vaccinated for the first time in the older age groups are likely to suffer much more inconvenience.

Most countries insist on all travellers having had recent vaccination before allowing entry and International Certificates confirming recent vaccination are called for in these cases. These Certificates are countersigned by the Medical Officer of Health of the District or Borough concerned.

Diphtheria Immunisation and Vaccination are functions of the Local Health Authority (County Council). These duties in this Borough are delegated to your Medical Officer of Health by the County Medical Officer of Health.

SCHOOLS.

Your Medical Officer of Health devotes two and a half days per week to the medical examination of school children by virtue of his appointment as Assistant School Medical Officer on the staff of the County Council. Rye schools are thus catered for in addition to schools in Battle Rural District.

This duty is most valuable in that it affords me an opportunity to meet the parents of the children concerned, hear of their problems at first hand and be of some assistance in resolving their difficulties. Although the majority of parents of children in the younger age group do attend on the occasion of the School medical examination it is often found that the children of parents who never attend are those who would derive most benefit from friendly advice on the health of their children and the prevention of disease.

I do feel that it is possible, in many cases, to pick out children who come from homes which leave much to be desired and who would benefit by health education and improvement of amenities in housing.

Schools, continued.

Children of this type present a heterogeneous mass of minimal physical signs which do not fit into any accepted nomenclature of disease but are definitely lacking in positive health. I would classify them as suffering from sub-normal health due to environmental inadequacies.

I consider Rye is fortunate in that its scholastic establishments are all of the modern type both in buildings and sanitary arrangements. This is particularly pleasing as the teaching of hygiene in these formative years is of the utmost importance.

I would like to thank the School Nurses for their help in giving me an insight into individual home conditions and their unvarying readiness to assist in the promotion of health in the home.

The Head Teachers and their Staffs have given me every assistance in my investigations and I am extremely grateful to them for their friendly and co-operative attitude. Without the unstinted help of those two bodies my work in the schools would have been increasingly difficult and almost nullified.

NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN.

I would like to thank Inspector Sibley, the local representative of the N.S.P.C.C., for his timely help in assisting certain families in this Borough who had neglected their duties as parents. These cases have in the main been due to (a) force of circumstances; (b) weakness of character; and (c) lack of education.

By persistent visiting and attempting to inculcate a sense of values he has been instrumental in keeping these families in being and generally rehabilitating them.

INFANT WELFARE CENTRES IN BOROUGH OF RYE.

The Infant Welfare Centre is held on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays in every month at the Youth Club Centre, Lion Street, Rye.

THE AMBULANCE SERVICE.

Since the advent of the National Health Service Act in July 1948, this has been carried on as heretofore by the St. John Ambulance Brigade with the addition of financial grants from the County Council.

Your Medical Officer of Health supervises this Service as a delegated duty from the Local Health Authority under the Direction of the County Medical Officer of Health.

On 2nd October, 1949, a new Austin "Welfarer" Ambulance was dedicated at the Parish Church, Rye. This ambulance was provided to replace the 1937 Ford.

I would like to pay tribute to the individual members of this voluntary service who have given this town and the surrounding villages an unfailing, twenty-four hour service, seven days a week.

CHIEF OCCUPATIONS AND INDUSTRIES.

Shopkeeping. Catering. Building.

Agriculture. Fisheries. Shipping.

General and structural Engineering.

Wooden Ship Building.

Fisheries.

148 vessels are registered at the Port of Rye. Of these some 25 berth at Rye or Rye Harbour.

Shipping.

Two cargo boats from the Netherlands delivered timber to Rye in the year 1949.

Wooden Ship Building.

General repair work of various classes was carried out to small vessels.

It is noted with regret that no new boats were built in the past year.

MILK AND DAIRIES.

Milk Production and Producers.

The advent of the Milk and Dairies Regulations in October, 1949, has removed the responsibility for ensuring clean milk production on the farms from the Local Authority to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. In addition, the Food Ministry will, when pasteurisation plant is in sufficient supply, designate specific areas which will then sell only designated milks, which comprise:-

(a) Tuberculin Tested;

(b) Pasteurised (efficient pasteurisation is a proven safeguard against milk-borne diseases which does not destroy the nutritional value of the milk even though the cream line may be slightly diminished);

(c) Sterilised.

I look forward to the time when this Borough will come within the area so designated.

Milk Licences.

The following licences were granted by this Authority during 1949:-

Supplementary Dealer's Licence for "Tuberculin Tested" milk	1
Supplementary Dealer's Licence for "Accredited" milk	1
Supplementary Dealer's Licence for "Pasteurised" milk	1

Cowsheds and dairies were periodically inspected.

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT, 1938.

Ice Cream.

Twelve premises in Rye are registered under this Act; nine for sale of Ice Cream only, and three for manufacture, storage and sale. Of the latter only one was actually manufacturing during the year. No new registrations were made during the year 1949.

WATER SUPPLY.

Routine samples are taken for bacteriological examination once a month and for chemical examination once a quarter. Other samples are taken as required.

During 1949, 28 bacteriological samples (19 pre-chlorinated and 9 post-chlorinated) and 8 chemical samples (4 pre-chlorinated and 4 post-chlorinated) were taken. All samples proved satisfactory.

All water supplied to consumers was chlorinated and satisfactory.

The consumption of water during the year was as follows:-

Pumped from Cadborough Waterworks	54,369,000 gallons.
Pumped from Military Road	7,056,000 gallons.
	61,425,000 gallons.

This is approximately 1,700,000 gallons more than was pumped in the previous year.

The following table shows where the water was consumed:-

Borough of Rye	54,065,330 gallons
Battle Rural District (bulk supply) (1948 - 5,459,200 gallons)	6,562,600 gallons
Battle Rural District (standpipes) (Camber, Winchelsea Beach, East Guldeford, etc.,)	797,070 gallons
	61,425,000 gallons

Restricted Supply.

Owing to shortage in supply it again became necessary to shut down the mains at night, commencing on the 9th November, 1949, and continuing during the rest of the year.

Additional Water Supply.

A scheme for increasing the supply, by an additional borehole at Cadborough Waterworks, together with the necessary pumping plant, is being prepared by Consulting Engineers and will be submitted to the Ministry of Health in 1950.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

The automatic ejector stations during the year lifted the following amounts of sewage:-

Station A.	Cadborough Marsh ...	... 768,825 gallons
" B.	Winchelsea ...	13,628,700 gallons
" C.	New Winchelsea Road...	1,482,500 gallons
" D.	King's Avenue ...	2,095,940 gallons
" E.	Tilling Green ...	6,730,386 gallons
		24,706,351 gallons

The above figures show an increase over the previous year of 8,085,321 gallons or 48.6%. This is mainly due to the number of new houses on the Tilling Green Estate.

A sewerage scheme is being prepared for draining parts of the town where very old sewers still exist, together with disposal works for the whole of the area.

REFUSE COLLECTION.

3,106 cubic yards of refuse were dealt with at the fully controlled tip in Cadborough Road.

The work of refuse disposal is carried out according to the latest instructions of the Ministry of Health, and is entirely satisfactory and free from annoyance.

Salvage.

The following salvage was collected up to the 31st March, 1949, when collection was discontinued:-

	Tons.	cwt.	qrs.	lb.	£.	s.	d.
Paper	3	16	0	7	15.	18.	7.
Rags, etc.,		2	0	5	1.	8.	8.
Bottles and Jars		16	1	20	3.	5.	6.
	4	14	2	4	£20.	12.	9.

CONTROL OF CIVIL BUILDING.

During the year twenty-five licences amounting to £11,773. 0. 0. were issued by the Rye Building Control Committee and thirty-eight licences amounting to £30,160. 0. 0. were issued by the Ministry of Works.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS.

Fifty-six complaints of nuisances were investigated and remedied by the service of informal notices under the Public Health Acts.

Four houses were disinfected on account of infectious diseases.

HOUSING ACT, 1936.

No Statutory Notices under Section 9 of the Housing Act, 1936, were issued in respect of defective houses.

INSPECTION OF MEAT AND OTHER FOODS.

No slaughter houses were in general use during 1949. All home killed meat was obtained from Government Slaughter Houses outside the Borough. Thirty-five pigs were slaughtered in a Rye slaughter house under a Ministry of Food Licence.

The following is a list of food condemned as unfit for human consumption:-

97½ lb.	Fresh meat	123	Chickens
20½ lb.	tinned meat	360	Duck eggs
88 lb.	fish, wet	59½ lb.	tinned milk
48½ lb.	tinned fish	3 lb.	flour
57½ lb.	soup	6 lb.	sugar
½ lb.	dried egg	127½ lb.	cheese
11 lb.	bacon	31½ lb.	tinned fruit
123 lb.	tinned vegetables	43½ lb.	preserves

310 lb. miscellaneous jars, bottles, packets, etc.

FACTORIES ACT, 1937.

There were forty-nine factories on the Register at the end of the year, forty of which use mechanical power.

No complaints were received from H.M.Inspector of Factories with regard to premises in Rye.

RODENT CONTROL.

One part-time rodent operator is employed in the Borough of Rye. The following infestations were treated:-

Rats		
	Minor infestations	148
	Estimated kill	837
Mice		
	Minor infestations	27
	Estimated kill	197

The Council are operating the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries' scheme for Private Dwellings, whereby all infestations for dwellinghouses are treated free of charge to the occupants.

The sewers were treated twice during the year 1949 and the results indicated that a considerable number of rats were destroyed.

HOUSING.

The beauty of Rye lies in its old world houses and streets.

Many of the interiors of these houses were, until recently, still in a primitive state as regards sanitation, methods of heating and the ingress of artificial light. These cumulative internal defects would have been sufficient to render them Section 11 houses under the Housing Act, 1936, i.e. houses for

Housing, continued.

the working classes not being capable of being made fit for human habitation at a reasonable cost, and therefore due for demolition. Fortunately, such action has been forestalled by people in search of beauty and dignity, for they have purchased these shells and brought their interiors up to acceptable modern standards, in short, the re-creation of a modernised estate superimposed upon the old, with its consequent conservation. The former tenants who had been deprived of present day standards of living were transferred to the new Council house estate with all modern amenities.

It is interesting to speculate on these events which have now completed a full circle. In the main, these houses were originally built for occupation by owner/occupiers and as they fell short of accepted standards these owners found it more advantageous to move out rather than bring them up-to-date.

These residences were then let at cheap rentals to others less fortunately placed. Now we are witnessing a re-occupation by a similar strata of society as heretofore.

This cycle of events is not just typical of Rye but is part of a pattern which is being repeated over the whole country. It is indeed an interesting sidelight on our social history.

Twenty-eight new Council houses were completed during the year. Thirty-four were in course of erection and approval was received for a further sixteen.

Houses Controlled by the Council.

Pre-war Council houses	115
Post-war Council houses	78
Leasehold Houses (expired leases).	103
Requisitioned houses and flats ...	16
Bonding Store Flats	3
Temporary Houses (Bretton Road and N.F.S.Huts)	25
	340

This represents 24.6% of the inhabited houses in the Borough.

Tilling Green Estate.

The site works, roads, sewers and services were almost completed for approximately a further 118 houses and flats.

In addition, the site at "The Close" was prepared for a further 30 houses and flats.

Housing Needs.

The list of applicants for Council houses reached 295 on the 31st December, 1949.

Private Enterprise Building.

During 1949 two private enterprise houses were completed.

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