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Annual Report
on the
Health and
Sanitary Circumstances
of the
Town of Sherborne
For the Year 1925

by
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Medical Officer of Health.



URBAN DISTRICT OF SHERBORNE.

ANNUAL HEALTH REPORT

FOR 1925.

To the CHAIRMAN, VICE-CHAIRMAN and MEMBERS
of the URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

SURVEY REPORT FOR 5 YEARS, 1921—1925.

In a small Urban Area it is not easy or perhaps possible to estimate, by statistics, the amount of improvement in the public health. A few small outbreaks of infectious disease in the quinquennium might easily make the statistics for infectious disease high as compared with previous years and the outbreak of these epidemics is quite beyond our control. In general I should say that fair progress has been made. Certainly in many directions advances have been made which must tend to improve the public health. Vital statistics do not help to give an idea of the improvement in the public health, because the accident of half a dozen old people dying this year rather than next year, has a notable effect on our figures, but the general tendency is towards a lowering of the death rate.

Housing.

Under the 1921 Scheme 36 parlour houses were built and serve a useful purpose, although they are of very little help to the labouring classes because of their necessarily high rent. Under the 1923 Scheme 80 non-parlour houses have been built, of these on March 31st 69 were occupied and the remaining eleven will be occupied by May 31st 1926.

34 more cottages of the non-parlour type are being considered by the Council and it appears likely that they will be begun this year.

Water Supply.

No changes have been made during the period, but steps are being taken to duplicate the steam engine and pumps at the Waterworks, in case of failure of the very old steam engine which has done the pumping for over 50 years.

Steps are being taken to provide a chlorinating plant for our smaller source of supply, Dymore (supplying one-sixth of our needs) which is more or less continuously slightly contaminated from the rabbit burrows on the land whence this water comes.

Arrangements are also being made by which we can utilise a well at the Isolation Hospital, instead of having to cart all the water from the town.



Sewerage.

New sewers have been laid in Vernalls, Marston, and Yeovil Roads to serve the houses built on these roads.

Scavenging and refuse disposal remains the same.

Food Inspection.

Carried out as before with the addition of the inspections carried out under the Tuberculosis and Slaughter House Order. Carcasses are examined when slaughtered in the district.

Maternity and child welfare schemes continue as before.

The schemes for tuberculosis and venereal diseases are carried on by the County Council.

Isolation Hospital.

This has been enlarged and made more efficient. On the South side of the main block three small huts have been erected and connected with the wards by covered ways. These are for the nurses who formerly slept in cubicles in the corners of the wards.

One large new ward has been erected capable of taking 12 beds. The necessary services for this and the adjoining ward have also been added.

I consider that a public slaughter house is advisable, and that the Council should strongly press for the observance of the regulations regarding the provision of properly covered metal dustbins and I suggest that a standard size of bin be fixed.

Natural and Social Conditions of the District.

AREA (acres) 929, less inland water 923.

POPULATION (1921 census corrected to date) 6330 (estimated). As the census was taken this time while the schools were in, 1000 is to be deducted to compare with the 1911 census figures which were 5649. This shows a decrease of population since 1911.

Physical Features and General Characters of the District.

The town lies chiefly on the Northern side of the valley of the Yeo. The highest point is 321 feet and the lowest 169 feet above sea level. The sub-soil is inferior oolite.

RAINFALL, from figures kindly supplied by Mr. Hill, was 36.30 inches on 208 days compared with 40.70 inches on 217 days in 1924. The average rainfall in Sherborne for the 3 years preceding 1925 was 39.97 and the average number of rainy days was 215.

Social Conditions.

The chief occupations are agriculture and the manufacture of gloves. There are two large milk factories, one for silk-weaving, one for letter-press printing, and a steam laundry. Sherborne is widely known as an educational centre, being well provided with schools of every grade for both boys and girls.

Number of Inhabited Buildings, 1924, 1477.

Number of families or separate occupiers 1924, 1482.

Rateable Value, £36,017.

Sum represented by a penny rate, £132.

Vital Statistics.

| | Total | Males | Females |
|------------------------------|-------|-------|---------|
| <i>Births</i> — { Legitimate | 78 | 44 | 34 |
| { Illegitimate | 2 | 2 | — |

Birth Rate per 1000 of resident population, 14.6.

„ „ per 1000 of England and Wales, 18.3.

Deaths—Males 29. Females 32. Total 61.

Allowance has been made for transferable deaths. There were 26 deaths of 70 years and over, the average age of these being over 80 years.

There were 9 deaths from cancer, 5 males and 4 females.

Death Rate 9.65 per 1000 of total population.

„ „ 12.2 „ „ of England and Wales.

Number of women dying in, or in consequence of child-birth—From Sepsis, Nil. From other causes, Nil.

Deaths of Infants under 1 year of age per 1000 births, 38.4

„ „ „ England and Wales, 75.

Legitimate, 3. Illegitimate, Nil. Total 3. All of these were 7 weeks or under.

Deaths from Measles (all ages)—Nil. England and Wales per 1000 population, 0.14.

Deaths from Whooping Cough—Nil. England and Wales per 1000 population, 0.10.

Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)—Nil. England and Wales per 1000 births, 8.4.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES DURING THE YEAR.

| | Total cases notified. | Cases admitted to Hospital. | Total Deaths. |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Diphtheria | — | — | — |
| Scarlet Fever | 51 | 47 | — |
| Enteric Fever | — | — | — |
| Puerperal Fever | — | — | — |
| Pneumonia | 7 | 2 | 4 |
| Epidemic cerebro-spinal meningitis | — | — | — |
| Erysipelas | 2 | — | — |
| Anterior Poliomyelitis | 1 | — | — |

Tuberculosis—

(a) *Pulmonary*—Males, 4. Females, nil.

Total 4.

Deaths: 2 Males.

(b) *Non-Pulmonary*—Males 1. Females, 4. Total 5.

No Death.

The notification of the different forms of tuberculosis is much improved.

No action has been taken during the year under Prevention of Tuberculosis Regs. 1925 or P.H. Act, sect. 62.

Ophthalmia neonatorum—There has been no case.

Causes of Sickness.

There is nothing noteworthy to report beyond an outbreak of Scarlet Fever, 51 cases in all, 47 of which were admitted to the Isolation Hospital.

Prevalence of and Control over Infectious Disease.

The only disease causing trouble in the past five years has been scarlet fever.

There have been outbreaks from time to time, but on the whole these have been controlled with moderate ease.

The outbreaks in 1925 have been a little difficult to deal with because of its mildness and the fact that several of the cases when only first seen when peeling. There has been no return case.

No use has been made of the Schick and Dick tests.

There has been no case of diphtheria arising in the town.

1 primary and 2 revaccinations have been performed by the M.O.H.

Summary of Nursing Arrangements, Hospitals and other Institutions available for the District.

Professional Nursing in the Home.—The District Nurse, whose main work is midwifery, does some sick-nursing in the cottages. She is under the County Nursing Association.

Midwives.—The District Nurse is the only one. Two other midwives practice privately.

Clinics and Treatment Centres.—Maternity and Child Welfare Centre supported by voluntary subscriptions, with the supervision and assistance of the County Council Welfare Nurse. Otherwise there are no Clinics or Treatment Centres.

Child Welfare Centre opened 46 times.
Total attendances 461.
Babies registered 59.

Hospitals Provided or Subscribed to by the Local Authority or by the County Council.—An Isolation Hospital managed by the Urban District Council, which also receives cases from the Rural District by arrangement. Its situation and the extent and nature of its accommodation, are satisfactory. During the year one large ward has been added to the East end of Hospital Buildings. It will accommodate twelve patients. At the same time a service annexe and two w.c.'s have been built to serve this ward and the adjoining double-ward which hitherto had no such accommodation.

Small Pox.—An agreement has been entered into by which the Poole Small-Pox Hospital will receive cases from this district.

No Institutional provision for unmarried mothers, illegitimate infants and homeless children exists.

Ambulance Facilities—

- (a) For Infectious cases—There is a horse-ambulance.
- (b) For Non Infectious and Accident Cases—There is a well-equipped motor ambulance managed by the local male V.A.D.

Laboratory Work.—Done by the Lister Institute. Water Analysis is done by the Lister Institute and by Drs. Thresh and Beale.

List of Adoptive Acts—

Infectious Diseases (Notification Act 1889) adopted Dec. 11th, 1899.

Measles and Whooping Cough Act added on Jan. 16th, 1890, adopted 1st March, 1890, and applied to extended area by order of L.G.B. 19th ult., 1894.

Public Health Amendment Act 1890. Part II. and III. adopted 9th Dec., 1890. Commencement 2nd February, 1891, and applied to extended area by order of the L.G.B. 1st Sept., 1896.

Infectious Disease Prevention Act 1890. Adopted 9th July, 1894.

Bye-laws of 1901 are now in force.

New Building Bye-laws have been adopted.

Sanitary Conditions of the District.

Water.—The chief source of supply is a well at the Waterworks, 207 feet deep, the average yield of which is 200,000 gallons a day, constant.

The strata through which the shaft goes are

| | | | |
|-----------------|----|-----|-------------|
| Inferior Oolite | .. | 45 | feet |
| Midford Sand | .. | 135 | „ |
| Upper Lias Clay | .. | 17 | „ |
| Middle Lias | .. | 10 | „ 6 inches. |

The other source, Dymore Spring, situated about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the town, gives 40,000 gallons a day.

Owing to the abnormally wet season of last year there has been surface contamination of the Dymore supply. All that can be done to mitigate this has been done. It was hoped that a cessation of excessive rainfall would help matters to right themselves.

Matters have not improved with drier conditions and it has been decided to instal a small chlorinating plant to deal with the Dymore water and this is at present awaiting the approval of the Ministry.

Chemical Analysis of the Dymore water is satisfactory, but the bacteriological analysis shews a large number of bacteria and bacillus coli.

Repeated examinations of the water, considered in connection with the nature and situation of the land and soil from which it comes, lead to the conclusion that the source of contamination is the rabbit burrows which are here very numerous.

Although the supply is comparatively small being only one-sixth of our total supply, it is a valuable one because it helps our well and comes to the reservoir by gravity, thus saving the cost of pumping.

Water Analysis.—This has been frequently done during the past few years.

Sample taken from High Level Reservoir July 27th 1925 Report. "The chemical analysis shows this to be a hard water of a high degree of organic purity. It is a pure and wholesome water."

This is typical of the reports we regularly receive of this water.

The Bacteriological reports are all of the same tenour "of great purity," "of exceptional purity."

There is a "slight trace of iron" in our water.

| | | |
|---------------------------|----|----------|
| The permanent hardness is | .. | 2 |
| The temporary hardness is | .. | 24 |
| (removed by boiling) | | — |
| | | Total 26 |

Rivers and Streams.—The river Yeo receives the effluent from the sewage disposal works.

No case of pollution has been observed and no complaints have been received.

Drainage and Sewerage.—The sewage works are working satisfactorily.

The whole of the district is well drained and the sewers are generally of adequate size, but in several cases are laid with open joints, e.g. Yeovil Road, Marston Road, and Acreman Street.

Closet Accommodation.—There are about 1500 water-closets in the district. There is a shortage in several of the courts off Newland and at some of the cottages in Newland and Acreman Street. In the worst place this shortage has been remedied by building three new ones and putting the three old ones into good sanitary repair.

A great deal remains to be done and this question is occupying our attention at the present time.

On the whole the landlords are sympathetic and appear anxious to meet our demands.

We count on their assistance in this matter.

Twelve houses in Acreman Street have been re-drained.

All closets are now converted into water-closets.

Scavenging.—Refuse from houses is collected bi-weekly by the Council's workmen and carted to a field to the North of the town where it is set on fire and smoulders.

The bye-law relating to dust-bins is not properly observed and I think the Council must seriously press that every house should have a properly covered metal dust bin of a standard size and that these must be removed from the pavements not less than one hour after the scavenging cart passes.

It is the landlord's obligation to supply dust-bins.

There are no fixed receptacles in the district, but in many cases old boxes and pails without proper covering are still used.

Sanitary Inspection of the District.—

Number of premises visited :

60 defects or nuisances discovered. The owners were notified and in all cases the necessary work was done.

Sanitary Inspector's Statement.—

(a) Number of inspections made during the year : 144.

(b) Number of notices served during the year : none.

(c) The result of the service of such notices : All complied with, without statutory notice.

Smoke Abatement.—Five cautionary letters have been sent. It is still bad from three factories.

Premises and Occupations which can be Controlled by Bye-Laws and Regulations.—

Offensive trades : none.

Underground sleeping rooms : none.

One underground bakery.

Schools.—The sanitary conditions and water supply of schools, including public elementary schools, are all satisfactory.

Food.

(a) *Milk Supply.*—There are five milk-shops in the town. Four of which are run in connection with four dairy farms situated in, or close to the town. Also one retailer who distributes his milk direct from the farm where he purchases it.

The supply and the arrangements for distribution are adequate.

One dairy pasteurises a large quantity of its milk for retail in the town and another dairy supplies Grade A milk.

The standard of cleanliness varies in the different cases from a high to a moderate one.

On the whole the conditions may be considered satisfactory, up to the average, and as good as one can hope for in the present uneducated state of public opinion on this matter, but there is ample room for improvement.

The desirability of milking with dry and clean hands is not realised, and I am not convinced that the milkers' hands and the cows' udders are in all cases thoroughly cleansed.

There are two factories which collect a large quantity of milk daily from the surrounding country for the making of butter, cheese, dried milk, etc.

There are five cowsheds in the district. 10 inspections made. No notices served.

(i.) Action taken as to tuberculous milk and tuberculous cattle.

Two carcasses examined one fore-quarter and several organs condemned.

(ii.) No licenses granted for specially designated milks.

(iii.) No licenses refused for ditto.

(iv.) Analyses are done by the County.

(b) *Meat Supply.*—There are three slaughter houses. 8 inspections made. No notices served. 1 carcass condemned. It seems desirable to close the slaughter-house in Trendle Street.

(c) *Other Foods.*—Inspections are carried out by the Sanitary Inspector and the Medical Officer of Health.

Administration of Sale of Food and Drugs Act.

Samples taken—Brandy 1, Cream 1, Curry Powder 1, Epsom Salts 1, Lemon Cheese 1, Milk 3, Oatmeal 1, Piccalilli 1, Sal Volatile 1, Stout 1, Whisky 1.

| Adulterated Samples. | | Action taken. |
|----------------------|-------|----------------------------|
| Stout | | Brewers communicated with. |
| Cream | | Vendor cautioned. |

Public Health Staff.

Consists of the Medical Officer of Health, and Sanitary Inspector.

Housing.

General Housing Conditions of the District.

The shortage is being rapidly dealt with, for with a town of a population (for housing purposes) of 5330, eighty cottages have been built in the past two years, of these 69 are now occupied and the balance will be occupied by the end of May. New schemes are under consideration for a further 34 non-parlour cottages in the same neighbourhood as the 80, and on ground already purchased. Of these 26 will be of the same size as the 80 and 8 will be 100 superficial feet larger. Also it is proposed to build 4 larger houses of the parlour type with 4 bedrooms in Ludbourne Road on land belonging to the Council, and similar to the adjoining 6 houses built some years ago.

Overcrowding

Still exists, but to a very much less degree and it is difficult to see how it is possible to deal with some cases because of the financial condition of the households. This is due to house shortage and low wages. The principal cases of overcrowding have been moved to the new Council houses.

Fitness of Houses

The general standard of housing is fair with bad patches. The defects commonly found are old drains and traps, dampness, rotted wood-work, badly paved and small yards, no through ventilation, poor light, and are in the main due to the properties being so old.

General Action taken as regards unfit houses.

Usually by informal notice and by closing the houses when the tenants leave or are provided with new Council cottages. They are re-opened when put into a satisfactory state of repair.

The defects are in the main due to lack of proper management and supervision by owners, though in some cases careless tenants are to blame. Closet accommodation has been slightly increased during the year and this question is engaging our attention. Our aim is, where possible, to provide one w.c. for each household.

Bye-Laws relating to Houses, etc.

There appears to be need for new bye-laws or extension of existing bye-laws in regard to drainage of existing buildings and to fish and chip shops.

The health of the town has been satisfactory during the past year and it compares favourably with the rest of the country.



APPENDIX.

HOUSING CONDITIONS.

Number of new houses erected during the year :—

- | | |
|--|---|
| (a) Total | } |
| (b) As part of a municipal housing scheme. | |

1. *Unfit dwelling houses.*

| | |
|--|------|
| Inspection—(1) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) | 241 |
| (2) Number of dwelling-houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910 | 34 |
| (3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation | None |
| (4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation | 6 |

2. *Remedy of Defects without Service of Formal Notices.*

| | |
|---|----|
| Number of defective dwellings rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers | 42 |
|---|----|

3. *Action under Statutory Powers.*

A.—Proceedings under Section 28 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c. Act, 1919.

| | |
|--|------|
| (1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs | 16 |
| (2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit :— | |
| (a) by owners | 21 |
| (b) by Local Authority in default of owners | None |
| (3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by owners of intention to close | — |

B.—Proceedings under Public Health Acts.

| | |
|--|------|
| (1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied | 13 |
| (2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied :— | |
| (a) by owners | 6 |
| (b) by Local Authority in default of owners | None |

C.—Proceedings under Sections 17 and 18 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c. Act 1909.

| | |
|--|------|
| (1) Number of representations made with a view to the making of Closing Orders | None |
| (2) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made | " |
| (3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the dwelling-houses having been rendered fit | " |
| (4) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made | " |
| (5) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders | " |



