

[Report 1947] / Medical Officer of Health, St Austell R.D.C.

Contributors

St. Austell (England). Rural District Council.

Publication/Creation

1947

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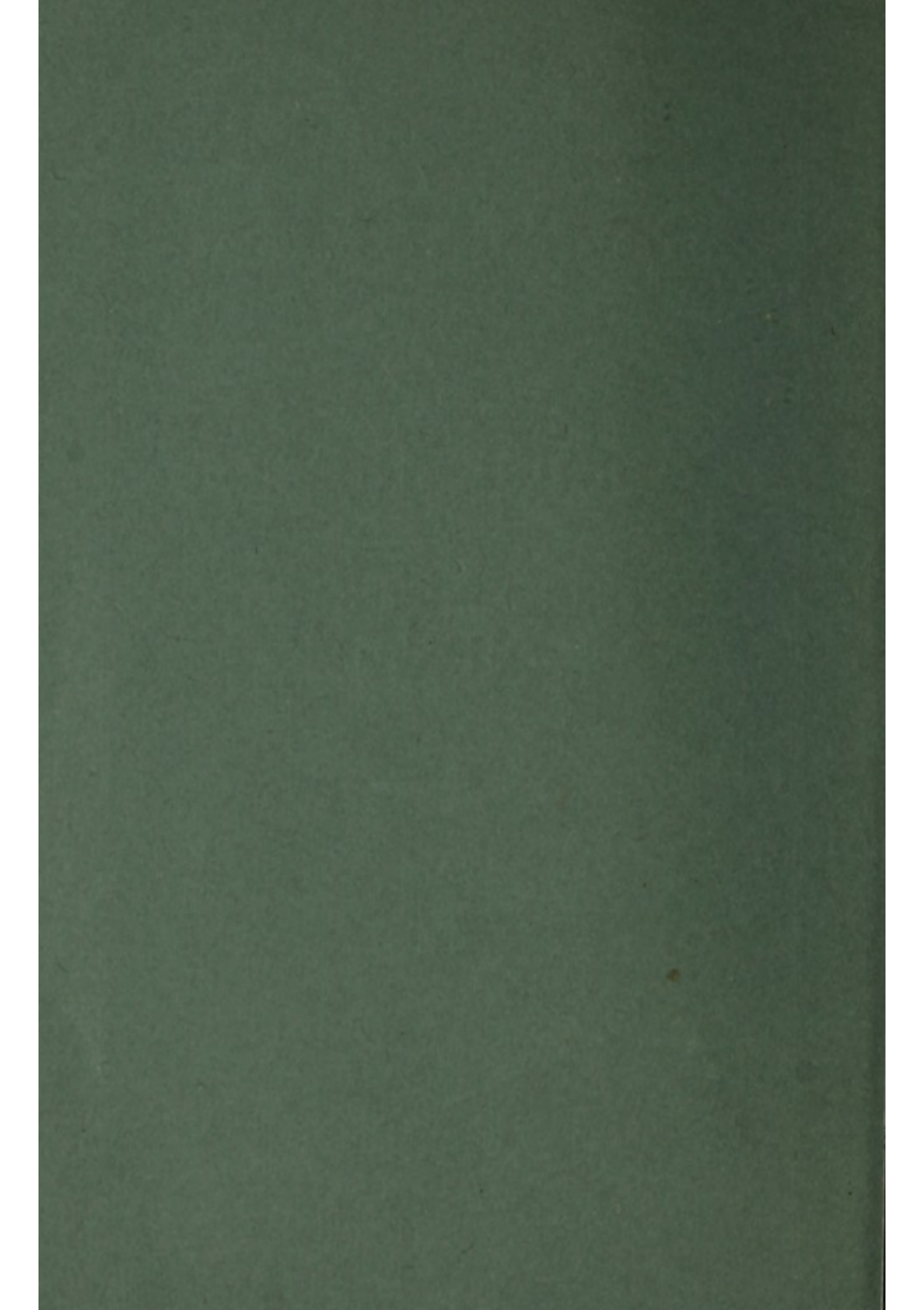
1947

THE RURAL DISTRICT OF ST. AUSTELL

Annual Report

OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER
OF HEALTH

H. HOCKING, PRINTER
ST. AUSTELL



1947

Medical Officer's Annual Report

To the Members of the St. Austell Rural District Council.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have much pleasure in again presenting my Annual Report. The health of the District has on the whole continued to be satisfactory. In spite of the general incidence of Acute Poliomyelitis during the year, we have been very fortunate in having only two cases. Our good record of freedom from Diphtheria has also been maintained and our Infantile Mortality Rate has again reached a very low level.

Although not as great as could have been wished there has been a marked improvement in Housing conditions, which we hope will continue.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

E. G. ANDREW.

Rural District Council Report

Natural and Social Conditions of the Area

Area (in acres) 82,389

Population (Census 1931) 20,464

Population (estimated mid-1947) 19,170

Rateable Value £76,525

Sum represented by a penny rate £308

Number of inhabited houses 5,963

The daily importation of labour for clay mining still goes on, owing to the lack of sufficient houses in the clay district and the same reason renders useless the condemnation of many unsuitable and insanitary dwellings. The population again continues to show a slight increase this year, namely 170, according to the Registrar-General's statistics.

VITAL STATISTICS

Live Births

	M.	F.	Total	Birth Rate per 1,000 of the population	
Legitimate	161	183	344		18.7
Illegitimate	10	8	18	England and Wales	20.5
				London	23.3
	171	191	362	1946 R.D.C. St. Austell	17.8

Still Births

	M.	F.	Total	Rate per 1,000 of total births (live and still)	
Legitimate	1	2	3		10.9
Illegitimate	1	-	1	Rate per 1,000 of pop.	.20
				England and Wales	.50
	2	2	4	London	.62

Deaths

	M.	F.	Total	Death Rate per 1,000 of the population	
	124	125	249		12.8
				1946	13.1
				England and Wales	12.0
				London	12.8
Death from Puerperal Sepsis	Nil				
Death from Maternal Causes	One				

Infant Mortality Rate (Under one year)

	M.	F.	Total	Rate per 1,000 live births	
Legitimate	6	1	7	1947	22.0
Illegitimate	1	-	1	1946	34.9
	—	—	—	England and Wales	41.0
	7	1	8	London	47.0
Deaths from Measles				Nil	
Deaths from Whooping Cough				Nil	
Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2)				Nil	

There has again been an extraordinary and welcome drop in the Infant Mortality Rate, which, whilst not quite so low as in 1944, when it reached the small figure of 17.6 per 1,000 live births, is the next lowest.

It is less than half the rate recorded for London and nearly half that recorded for England and Wales.

No deaths from child-birth have occurred and out of the eight infants whose deaths are recorded, 3 died from congenital causes and 2 from premature birth.

CHIEF CAUSES OF DEATH

	1947	1946
Heart Disease	69	79
Cancer	28	25
Intra-cranial lesions	26	35
Pneumonia	16	2
Diseases of the circulatory system	12	-
Nephritis	10	11
Bronchitis	10	10
Tuberculosis (all forms)	9	9
Road Traffic	1	5
Suicides	3	2
Deaths from Violence	5	3

Heart Disease and Cancer occupy first and second places in the above list and once again I should like to emphasize the danger of delay in seeking proper advice with regard to the second of these diseases and the help which modern scientific methods afford in diagnosis. One is glad to notice that only one death has occurred during the year through Road and Traffic accidents.

CAUSES OF SICKNESS IN SCHOOLS

Infectious diseases have been rather more prevalent this year among the children attending the various schools of the district. 68 cases of Measles and 57 of Whooping Cough were notified but

there is no doubt that a larger number was affected, as evidenced by the weekly school Reports of sickness. Many mothers, under the mistaken idea that neither of these are very important, and will 'soon recover,' do not call in a doctor. The Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry has said that the death rate from Whooping Cough is 6 times more than that from Measles and that a Prophylactic vaccine is being extensively investigated.

The Measles occurred chiefly at St. Enoder, Roche, St. Columb and Trethosa. Whooping Cough, as during last year, was prevalent at St. Dennis and in a lesser degree at Lanjeth. Fortunately in our district no death took place. Trethosa suffered from an epidemic of Mumps towards the end of 1947; the school reports gave the number as 60.

OTHER INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Diphtheria

The remarkable freedom from diphtheria continues, only 3 cases were notified as against 2 in 1946 and none were fatal. This gives a rate of notifications of .15 per 1,000 of the population, which is the same as London; that for England and Wales is very slightly less, viz., .13.

Immunization

148 children were fully immunised, a decrease compared with last year. It is still very disappointing that so many mothers, either through indifference, ignorance or selfishness, do not take advantage of the great means of protection for their children. The Ministry of Health strongly advises that five years after the initial immunisation a reinforcement injection should be given and this has been carried out in 257 cases.

Scarlet Fever

Only 15 cases of Scarlet Fever occurred, a decrease of 6 from the number in 1946. No deaths took place and the cases were of a mild type and somewhat scattered, except at St. Wenn where 6 cases were reported. The following figures give the comparative notifications of the district and the rest of the country.

St. Austell Rural	.77	} per thousand of the population
London	1.54	
England and Wales	1.37	

Anterior Poliomyelitis (Infantile Paralysis)

There has been a fairly general outbreak of this serious disease throughout the country and some 40 cases have been notified in Cornwall. Of these, only three occurred in this district,

one being fatal—a female adult. We hope that next year will see a considerable diminution in the number of cases reported. This germ attacks the anterior portion of the spinal cord, with resulting paralysis, which is often permanent and it is therefore most important to treat the patient at the earliest stage possible. Although not a very infectious disease, the number of cases gave rise to widespread publicity.

Influenza

Only one death has been reported from Influenza, which this year has been of a mild character.

Pneumonia

Six cases were notified but 16 deaths were reported, 75% of these were within the age limits of 50—89 years.

Erysipelas

One case was notified but no death occurred

Ophthalmia Neonatorum

No case was reported

Typhoid

No case was reported

Puerperal Causes

One case was notified but no death occurred. The greatly improved conditions now existing as regards child-birth, both pre-natal and at the time of confinement, have lessened puerperal diseases. It is increasing general for the birth to take place in hospitals or nursing homes and this is especially desirable in view of the prevalent shortage of domestic and nursing help.

Anthrax

Several expected cases of this disease were reported to me from various farms but all happily proved negative after tests, as in the previous year.

Tuberculosis

Seventeen cases were reported, 14 pulmonary (9 male and 5 female) and 3 non-pulmonary (all males). Nine deaths took place, 4 male and 3 female, pulmonary, and 2 non-pulmonary (both male). This gives a rate of 3.6 of all deaths and shows a slight increase on last year's figures. The Clinics at St. Austell

and Truro are proving a great service as in former years and it is unfortunate that the scarcity of nurses has increased the waiting list at Tehidy Sanatorium.

AMBULANCE FACILITIES

Mr. S. Rowley, the Commandant of the St. Austell Detachment of the Red Cross Society has kindly supplied the following figures. To him and his staff we cannot be sufficiently grateful for their continual service given always with much kindness and consideration.

	Hospital	Road Accidents	Works, etc. Accidents	Total
St. Austell	422	27	31	480
St. Dennis	32	6	1	39
		Hours		Mileage
St. Austell	.....	1,102		14,601
St. Dennis	.....	108		1,150

HOUSING

After the disappointing results achieved in this important department of the Council's activities last year, it is a pleasure to report the considerable progress made in 1947. We hope that 1948 will show a still greater advance. It is quite impossible under present conditions to meet the numerous and often pathetic appeals for suitable houses, which are received from time to time from most deserving cases. It is often very difficult to preserve a fair balance between the housing needs of agricultural and clay workers, not to mention ex-service men, and presents many problems to the Housing Committee.

I am indebted to Mr. Goodwin and Mr. Lawless for the following figures and facts:—

Council Houses completed—traditional type	.....	38
Under construction (of these 30 should be completed in the first six months of 1948)	.....	48
New Houses erected by private enterprise	.....	4
Under construction	.....	6

Rural Housing Survey

Total number of houses surveyed	.....	623
Satisfactory in all respects	.....	159 or 25.5%
Minor defects only	.....	79 or 12.7%
Requiring structural alterations or improvement	.....	229 or 36.8%
Incapable of being made fit at reasonable cost	.....	156 or 25.0%

Letting of Council Houses

In order to ensure that, so far as possible, houses are let to the most deserving cases, the Council has instructed that all applicants shall be interviewed in their own homes by a member of the Public Health Dept. This should enable a much more exact estimate of need, conditions, etc. to be made, augmenting the useful information which is supplied by the local District Councillors.

WATER SUPPLY

During the year, water extensions have been carried out at Lower Sticker, Trewithien Lane End and Grampound. In addition, mains have been relaid, a new duplicate pumping plant installed and a new 50,000 gallon reservoir constructed at Grampound. A chlorination plant has been installed at Trewoon and work on improving the limestone contact beds at Hendra Pumping Station has been commenced. The mains from Hendra Pumping Station to High Street reservoir have been scraped.

The private supply to St. Mawgan-in-Pydar and Trenance has continued to be unsatisfactory, and a scheme to provide a piped supply of water to these two places has been prepared and approved and is now before the Ministry of Health, and it is expected that a Public Inquiry will be held early in 1948.

All public water supplies have been analysed at intervals during the year, with satisfactory results.

SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE

During the year, the main sewers at Grampound have been re-laid. Sewerage schemes have been prepared for Gorran Churchtown, Trewoon and Polgooth. Minor alterations have been carried out at Goonamarris Disposal Works and the Council's Cesspool Emptier has been utilised wherever possible to assist in the cleansing of all disposal works. Approximately 100 privately owned cesspools in this district were emptied by the Cesspool Emptier, and, in addition, it has been possible to assist adjoining authorities, particularly Wadebridge R.D.C., Truro R.D.C. and St. Austell U.D.C., by emptying a large number of cesspools in those areas. Cesspools in connection with many of this Council's housing estates have been cleansed at regular intervals by the use of the Cesspool Emptier, and also cesspools at the slaughter houses at Lane and Chacewater have been emptied periodically.

I should like to add to the above, that frequently I receive from the County Medical Officer, adverse reports on the effluent of the sewage works in various places. Apparently the need is for some modernisation of the works and more supervision.

SCAVENGING

This service is not giving entire satisfaction owing to its extension to certain rather scattered and outlying places which had little or no collection during the war years. The Council has, therefore, placed an order for a new Refuse collection vehicle.

The sale of salvage realised just under £200 during the year.

MEAT INSPECTION

The work of inspection at the St. Austell slaughterhouse continues to be shared between this district and the Urban district.

MILK AND DAIRIES

During the year work under this heading has been intensified, the liason between the various authorities concerned has become closer, resulting in stricter control of new entrants and improvement of buildings, methods of production, etc.

RODENT CONTROL

The scheme under the Ministry of Food continues to operate smoothly. The Council's sewers have been test-baited showing that they are practically free from rat infestation. Many commercial premises are regularly treated, the cost being paid by the firms concerned. Domestic infestation does not seem to be a very large problem in this district, but investigation into all types of infestation is continuous. On numerous occasions officials of the Ministry have expressed satisfaction at the work and results obtained. One very difficult and heavy infestation just outside our district is being dealt with by our operator at the request of the Ministry.

WATER SAMPLES

Eleven private supplies were analysed, eight proved satisfactory and three unsatisfactory.

The supply to four of the Council's houses was sampled and found to be contaminated. Appropriate measures were taken to clean up the source of contamination.

Once again I should like to offer my thanks to the Clerk, the Engineer, the Inspectors and the Office staff for their willing co-operation throughout the year.

