1948

The . . Medical Officer's Annual Report To the . . . St. Austell Rural District Council.

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1948

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Medical Officer's Annual Report.

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

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In presenting my final Report as your Medical Officer, I should like to thank all the Councillors, past and present, for their kindness and consideration during my long term of office, and for the loyal support which they have always given me.

I have many pleasant memories of our association and wish all success to the future work of the St. Austell Rural District Council. There is still much to be done in the area but when the present sanitary conditions are compared with those prevailing thirty years ago, the advance has been very marked. Housing has made considerable progress during this year and one hopes that the rate of building will be further accelerated.

Once again, I would ask you to accept my sincere thanks and good wishes for future prosperity.

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-1948) 20,140.

Rateable Value £72,372.

Sum represented by a penny rate £302.

Number of inhabited houses 6,104.

The population of the area remains almost stationary, although there is a very slight increase. Clay-mining and agriculture are still the main industries and it is interesting to learn that in normal times the clay tonnage export was second only to coal.

Catering for visitors is becoming of increasing economic importance to the District, particularly in the coastal areas, such as Gorran Haven on the South and St. Mawgan on the North coast.

It might be an advantage if certain light industries could be introduced but the heavy railway freights and lack of coal, present difficulties in the way of their establishment.

VITAL STATISTICS.

Live Births :—

	M.	F.	T'tl
Legitimate	171	147	318
Illegitimate	10	9	19
	181	156	337

Birth Rate per 1,000 of the population	16.7
England and Wales	17.9
London	20.0
1947 R.D.C., St. Austell	18.7

Still Births :—

	M.	F.	T'tl
Legitimate	2	3	5
Illegitimate	0	0	0
	2	3	5

Rate per 1,000 of the population	.24
England and Wales	.42
London	.52

Deaths :—

M.	F.	T'tl
116	124	240

Death Rate per 1,000 of the population	11.9
1947	13.1
England and Wales	10.8
London	11.6

Death from Puerperal Sepsis	Nil.
Death from Maternal Causes	Nil.

INFANTILE MORTALITY RATE.

	M.	F.	T'tl	Rate per 1,000 live births	
Legitimate	7	6	13	1948	41.5
Illegitimate	1	–	1	1947	22.0
	—	—	—	England and Wales	34.0
	8	6	14	London	39.0

Deaths from Measles Nil

Deaths from Whooping Cough Nil

Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2) Nil

It is a matter for regret that there has been an upward trend in the Infantile Mortality Rate after the excellent record of last year. It must be remembered that this has been accompanied with a slight drop in the birth rate.

Eight infants died from congenital causes and three from premature birth.

CHIEF CAUSES OF DEATH.

	1948	1947
Heart Disease	83	69
Intra-cranial lesions	29	26
Cancer	28	28
Bronchitis	15	10
Nephritis	9	10
Pneumonia	9	16
Diseases of the circulatory system	8	12
Tuberculosis (all forms)	8	9
Road Traffic	3	1
Suicides	0	3
Death from violence	4	5

When the records of the last two years are compared, there is little difference to be observed in the numerical order of the above causes of death. One hopes that success will attend the continued atomic and other forms of research into the treatment and origin of cancer.

It may be noted that there has been a slight increase in death through Road Traffic accidents but happily no case of suicide has occurred

CAUSES OF SICKNESS IN SCHOOLS.

The health of the children this year has not been too good. One hundred and sixteen cases of Whooping Cough were notified against fifty-seven in 1947 and judging from the School Reports, many more cases occurred. Practically the whole District was involved but Gorran, Nanpean, Foxhole and St. Dennis were chiefly affected.

The majority of the cases occurred during the early part of the year in these villages, but Roche had many in the early summer.

Forty-three notifications of Measles were received in comparison with sixty-eight last year, and as in the case of Whooping Cough, the distribution was widely spread.

These two infections are always important but are often not so regarded by parents. No deaths may take place, but it is possible for children to suffer serious after-effects, especially if the illness has been treated too lightly.

Some ninety cases of Chickenpox were responsible for considerable absenteeism in different schools, notably at Trethosa, Indian Queens and in smaller numbers at St. Dennis and Nanpean.

Four cases of Scarlet Fever among children of school age were notified.

There was an absence of any notifications of Diphtheria among those of school age, although there were two cases in the district.

GENERAL INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Diphtheria.

As I have just said, only two cases of this disease were notified, both males in their twenties, one at Trewoon and one at Whitemoor, but no death took place. This gives a rate for the District as follows :—

St. Austell R.D.C.	0.09	
England and Wales	0.08	per 1,000 of the population
London	0.10	

Immunization.

After June, immunization was taken over by the County Council under the new Health Act and therefore I can only give figures for the first half of the year 1948. These are rather disappointing in view of the importance of this form of preventive protection and parents still seem generally indifferent to its adoption.

One hundred and forty-one children under fifteen were fully immunized and in accordance with Ministry of Health's advice two hundred and fifty children received re-inforcement injections. The whole country shows a marked improvement in the incidence of diptheria during the last few years, probably due in a large degree to the wide-spread propaganda with regard to immunization and the increasing improvement in Sanitary Hygiene.

Scarlet Fever.

There has been a considerable decrease since 1947, six cases in comparison with fifteen. No deaths took place and the cases were distributed in the western area. This gives a rate per 1,000 of the population as follows :—

St. Austell Rural Dist.	.28	
London	1.90	per 1,000 of the population
England and Wales	1.73	

Anterior Poliomyelitis (Infantile Paralysis).

Two cases of this disease have been notified, both children one of twelve months and one of five months.

It was fortunate that there was such a small number in the District when many parts of the country suffered rather heavily. Fourteen cases was the total number reported in Cornwall. It is wise, whenever this serious disease occurs that children should not attend crowded gatherings of any kind and any symptoms of sickness should be carefully watched.

Influenza.

Again only one death has been reported and owing to the mild winter there has been little serious illness from this cause.

Pneumonia.

Six cases were notified and nine deaths took place, a considerable reduction from the sixteen reported last year and probably a result of the clemency of the weather.

Erysipelas.

One case was notified but no death occurred.

Opthalmia Neonatorum.
Typhoid.
Puerpera. Causes.
Anthrax.

No case was reported in either of these four diseases.

TUBERCULOSIS.

All the cases notified were Pulmonary, five in all—three male and two female, the lowest number for some time.

Six cases of death from Pulmonary T.B. were reported and two from Non-pulmonary—a total of eight, and a decrease of one in comparison with 1947.

This gives a death rate of 0.38 per 1,000 of the population compared with 0.51 for England and Wales and 0.59 for London a rate of 3·3% of total deaths. Tuberculosis patients have constant supervision at the Clinics held at St. Austell District Hospital and

at Truro. Hospital cases are treated at Tehidy Sanatorium. Unfortunately there is still a long waiting list due to lack of necessary accommodation and of staff. This is general throughout the country and is all the more serious as the majority of cases occur between the ages of fifteen years and forty years, affecting therefore especially the working part of the population. Economically Tuberculosis exacts one of the highest tolls of man-power and efficiency in industry, and it is most necessary that additional nursing help be secured by some method.

AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

During the year, 1948, Ambulance work, formerly voluntary has, for the last six months been carried on under the National Health service, beginning on July 1st, 1948. There has been a marked increase in the amount of work done, since this transfer to the Cornwall County Council involving now the labours of four full-time paid drivers, in addition to considerable voluntary help. Mr. S. Rowley, the Commandant of the St. Austell Red Cross, has kindly contributed the following details of work done and the district is very grateful for the great voluntary help given in the past and continued now on many occasions.

	St. Austell (3 Ambulances)	St. Dennis (1 Ambulance)	Total
Cases.			
Hospital	630	20	650
Road accidents	20	3	23
TOTAL	679	24	703
Mileage	21,323	631	21,954
Hours in action	1,246	46	1,292

HOUSING.

The hope which I expressed in last year's report that 1948 would see a greater advance in Housing, has been notably fulfilled but the demand is still great. A long waiting list faces the selection Committee, and the investigation of the circumstances of all applicants involves a great deal of work.

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

Council Houses completed and occupied Traditional type	51
Cornish Unit Houses erected and occupied	84
Cornish Unit Houses under construction (31st, Dec. 1948)	70
New Houses erected by private enterprise	6
New Houses under construction by private enterprise.	2

Rural Housing Survey.

Total number of houses surveyed	1,253
Houses satisfactory in all respects	279 or 22.4 %
Houses with minor defects only	130 or 10.4 %
Houses requiring structural alteration & improvement	587 or 46.8 %
Houses suitable for reconditioning	2
No of notices served under Section 11 Housing Act	11
No. of Notices served under Public Health Act including informal notices	107

Letting of Council Houses.

In all cases of selection of tenants for Council Houses my Department continues to report upon the housing circumstances of all applicants residing within the district.

WATER SUPPLY.

During the year, water extensions have been carried out from St. Dennis to Treviscoe, Trerice and Egypt. Mains have been relaid and extended at Polgooth and Hewaswater. An auto-pneumatic booster set has been installed at St. Columb housing site, to increase the pressure. At Golant, a new source has been put into use, and pumping equipment installed.

Mawgan and Trenance Water Scheme.

A Public Enquiry was held early in the year and the actual construction work is due to commence in the Summer of 1949.

Queens-Fraddon-Summercourt Water Scheme.

A scheme to provide a piped supply of water to Indian Queens St. Columb Road, Fraddon, Summercourt, Black Cross and Trevarren has been prepared and approved by the Minister of Health, who will probably cause a Public Enquiry to be held in 1949.

Customary analysis of private supplies have been taken as follows :—

Number of samples taken of private supplies	25
Number found unsatisfactory	11

The above figures show how necessary the testing of private water supplies is in the interests of the health of residents where public supply is not available.

It is disappointing that the much discussed De Lank Water Scheme seems unlikely to materialize for several years.

SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE.

During the year the Council have approved Sewerage and Sewage disposal schemes for Gorran Churchtown, Trewoon and Polgooth, and both these schemes have been submitted to the Ministry of Health, and it is very probable that Public Enquiries will be held during 1949. The effluent sewer from the Council houses at Penhale has ben relaid and various minor repairs have been carried out. One hundred and seven privately owned cesspools have been emptied and the Cesspool Emptier has also been employed on cleansing cesspools in connection with many of the Council's housing estates.

Provision has been made to commence repair and reconstruction work on various disposal works during 1949, in an effort to improve the quality of the effluent.

I am pleased to note this after the observations in my last Report on the unsatisfactory condition of the effluents in various places.

SCAVENGING.

In order to improve the service, the Council purchased a new 10 cubic feet refuse collection vehicle, which was put into service in November.

MEAT INSPECTION.

The work at the St. Austell slaughter-house continues to be shared with the staff of the Urban District.

MILK AND DAIRIES.

There continues to be close liaison between the Milk Marketing Board, the County Council, the County Agricultural Executive Committee and this Authority in all matters concerned with milk producers, cleanliness and improvement of cowsheds and dairies.

RODENT CONTROL.

By arrangement with the Ministry of Food, no charge is made for the treatment of domestic premises, such cost is equally shared between the local rates and the Ministry.

ICE CREAM.

Recent legislation requiring stricter control of the manufacture of this product has been followed up closely, all those concerned have complied with the requirements, their premises are regularly inspected and the products sampled for purity. There were no cases where special action was called for on account of impurity, the general standard was good.

In closing my Report I should like to thank once again the Clerk,the Engineer, the Inspectors and Office Staff for their courteous and continued help throughout the year and regret the end of our happy association.