

**[Report 1950] / Medical Officer of Health, St Ives (Cornwall) Borough.**

**Contributors**

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ST. IVES BOROUGH COUNCIL.

The Guildhall,  
ST. IVES,  
Cornwall.

To His Worship the Mayor, Aldermen and  
Councillors of the Borough of St. Ives.

Mr. Mayor, Lady and Gentlemen,

In presenting the Annual Report for 1950 the most important points are that the town had several cases of diphtheria, a disease which is preventable, and that considerable progress was made with the Carbis Bay sewerage scheme.

However, two essential items from the point of view of environmental medicine still require the most careful consideration and action. I refer, of course, to the absolute necessity for a proper water supply to Helactown, and to the need for an adequate sewerage scheme for the village of Lelant. Both matters are discussed in the text.

It is a pleasure to mention the help I have received from the Members of the Council, and also the co-operation with the other Chief Officials. In addition, I have received constant and unfailing help from Mr. Douglas, the Sanitary Inspector, who continues to give most conscientious and willing service to the Department.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

W.K. DUNSCOMBE.

Medical Officer of Health.

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STATISTICAL INFORMATION.  
1950.

1. Civilian Population			
Registrar General's Mid Year Estimate	...	8,720.	
2. Area	...	4,339 acres.	
3. Rateable Value	...	282,046.	
4. Product of Penny Rate	...	2328.	
5. No. of Inhabited Houses.	...	3,107.	
6. Comparability Factor	...	0.71	
7. Live Births	72 Male.      44 Female.	...	116 Total.
	Rate per 1,000 Population - 13.3		
8. Still Births	2 Male.      3 Female.	...	5 Total.
	Total Rate per 1,000 Total Births 41.3		
9. Total Deaths	62 Male.      65 Female.	...	127 Total.
	Rate per 1,000 Population 14.56		
10. Infant Deaths	2 Male.      - Female.	...	2 Total.
	Rate per 1,000 Live Births 17.2		
11. Maternal Deaths	...		1.

TABLE OF CAUSES OF DEATH.

	<u>Male.</u>	<u>Female.</u>	<u>Total.</u>
Tuberculosis of Respiratory System	4.	1.	5.
Tuberculosis - Other Sites	-	1.	1.
Diphtheria	1.	-	1.
Meningococcal Infection	1.	-	1.
Cancer of Stomach	6.	-	6.
Cancer of Breast	-	2.	2.
Cancer of Uterus	-	1.	1.
Cancer of all other Sites	3.	4.	7.
Diabetes	1.	-	1.
Vascular Lesions of Nervous System	7.	14.	21.
Coronary Disease	14.	6.	20.
Hypertension	4.	4.	8.
Other Heart Disease	5.	19.	24.
Other Circulatory Diseases	3.	2.	5.
Pneumonia	2.	2.	4.
Nephritis	3.	2.	5.
Pregnancy Etc.	-	1.	1.
Other Causes	6.	5.	11.
Suicide	-	1.	1.
Hyperplasia of Prostate	2.	-	2.

PRINCIPAL CAUSES OF DEATH.

Heart Disease	...	44.
Vascular Lesions of		
Nervous System	...	21.
Cancer	...	16.
Tuberculosis of		
Respiratory System	...	5.
Nephritis	...	5.

## 1. WATER SUPPLIES.

The following figures are given by the courtesy of the Borough Surveyor:-

Number of Houses on Main Supply	...	2,874.
Number of Houses with Standpipe Supply	...	Nil.
Number of Houses without either	...	182.

(i) General, Amalveor Scheme. The final report on this Scheme, which is a modification of that suggested in the Cornwall Water Survey, was approved by the Council in June.

However, legal difficulties regarding Riparian rights and differences with the West Penwith Rural District Council continued to delay the Scheme which was submitted to the Ministry of Health in August.

In addition, it had to receive the blessing of the County Council. Unfortunately this was not forthcoming until 1951 but with the hastening of the speed in the re-armament programme it is, or ought to be, obvious that delay of even a week in approval may mean months as far as the completion of the Scheme is concerned.

(ii) Halsetown. It follows that the unfortunate village of Halsetown is still without either an adequate or a proper supply and the Council should decide that if the Amalveor Scheme does not fructify a proper supply by high level tank and pumping should be provided from existing sources. It should be remembered that this hamlet has been a part of the Borough since 1934 and it can hardly be said therefore that there has been unnecessary haste in giving it even a reasonable supply.

(iii) As it was a wet summer the use of the pumps at Trenwith was not so extensive as in the previous year. The Council should, however, face up to the necessity for the duplicating of the pumps so that we have an adequate standby if we have to resort to pumping for any prolonged period as it should be obvious that replacements are going to be extraordinarily difficult to get.

(iv) Water Development. In connection with the Amalveor and Trenwith proposals a very extensive and able demonstration was given to the Council by the Borough Engineer. Unfortunately, it was necessary for the Medical Officer of Health to point out (and to ask for his advice to be recorded) that the Trenwith Scheme with its possible extension to include water from the depths of the Consols sets was raw water and he therefore must advise that it should not be put into supply without treatment. The Council have not accepted this advice.

(v) Chy-an-Gweal. A point of importance arose during the year in connection with this supply and demonstrates the undesirability of dealing with small supplies if there are larger sources available. A complaint was received regarding the condition and taste of water from a certain house and after careful elimination of irrelevant details a sample was taken for plumbosolvency. This proved that the water was definitely plumbo-solvent and the supply was discontinued. This supply is only used in drought or near-drought periods but since it is a gravity flow eliminates the pumping that might otherwise be necessary. The point is that economy is not always associated with a satisfactory supply.

## 2. SEWERAGE.

(a) Carbis Bay. The most important development was the obtaining of approval to the Carbis Bay Sewerage Scheme. Briefly, this involves draining to a sump near the Beach and then lifting this by a rising main to the trunk sewer running along the railway. This is being done by a Hydraulomat pump and the use of this type involved obtaining certain water rights. This is nearly always a long process but the owners were co-operative and matters proceeded smoothly. Unfortunately some delay occurred in approvals and equipment and it was not possible to start digging the sump until the worst winter weather with the result that some delay in the commencement of operations has occurred.

(b) Lelant. Although the Council is committed to considerable capital expenditure in the provision of adequate public conveniences it must give earnest and early consideration to the proper sewerage of Lelant. This is partly bound up with the future use of the Saltings and of the culverting of the stream near the Chapel and also of providing a proper outfall which might mean taking the sewer below low-water mark - a costly proceeding. However, it has to be faced, as Lelant is a village of undoubted beauty and if permitted could be developed, but in any case deserves modern sewerage arrangements.

(c) Although not entirely a public health matter the menace of the sand at Porthmoor beach must be mentioned as its drifting blocks gullies in the Digey and nearby areas and eventually must interfere with the proper functioning of the sewers, so while it piles high even up above the eaves of some of the studios, the Council cannot entirely act the part of Gallio. The replacement of a sewer there would be a very costly procedure.

### 3. HOUSING.

Although the pace of house construction slowed down through no fault of the Council, 20 houses were built by the Council and 5 by Private Enterprise.

Unfortunately at the Penbeagle Estate, in one section arrangements were made for steps to be made up to a path by the houses. These steps were not constructed wide enough to permit a pram to be taken up and as this was the only reasonable access an alteration had to be made. It must, however, be anticipated that prams may sometimes be required and paths should be made to suit them.

Some of the construction for roads and sewers involved quite a considerable amount of blasting through very hard rock and consequently has been a very costly procedure. The land itself on the other hand was bought cheaply.

Housing of Old People. This is a matter of such importance as to merit prolonged and careful consideration. The Royal Commission did not, unfortunately, give the matter of the ageing population all the attention it warranted, but owing to the migration into the Borough of persons retired from other areas less fortunate perhaps in climate it is of vital importance here.

The position can be stated quite simply. By 1970 on the basis of present trends, more than 17 per cent of the population of the Borough will be aged 65 or over.

Special points have to be considered when building houses for old persons - ease of working, sites on the flat, or the lessening of stairs, provision of accommodation for aged couples, and also for single persons who may need a little looking after but are not infirm. All these points mean careful planning at every stage before one single block is laid and putting off the evil day merely makes the position more acute when eventually it is faced.

### 4. INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

The full details of notifications appear in the Appendix but it is necessary to state here that the population in the Borough more or less asked for diphtheria and eventually got it. In the past repeated warnings have been given in Annual and also in Committee reports of the poor response to diphtheria immunisation in the Borough and retribution overtook us. Several cases of diphtheria occurred in one of the schools and one child died. He had not been immunised. In addition three cases of post diphtheritic paralysis occurred which were diagnosed several weeks later. As a result of this scare a large number of children was immunised or re-immunised.

Poliomyelitis. Two cases of poliomyelitis occurred, neither of which appeared to be related to the other in any way. It is this difficulty in tracing the occasional case which makes this disease so baffling as far as prevention is concerned.

Measles. Attention must also be drawn to the very large number of cases of measles. These figures are only of the cases actually notified and it has always been the case that in addition there is a very large number to which no Doctor is called as it is the general impression that measles is a mild

childish ailment. The public should be warned that this is not the case and it may have serious consequences in young children because of complications involving chest diseases or affecting the child's sight. The necessity, therefore, of calling in the family Doctor and seeking his advice and treatment is in no way lessened.

5. PUBLIC CONVENIENCES.

It was possible to do something to extend the provision for ladies at the West Pier and plans were prepared for a full extension which should mean that the accommodation there is at last reasonably satisfactory. However, having regard to the importance of St. Bia's Well the convenience located here should be moved and any alterations could be combined with renewal of the ladies convenience at the Meadow where owing to the popularity of the beach additional accommodation is essential.

At the Island an extension of existing facilities is urgently required having regard to the popularity of this particular area for camping and general pleasure.

6. CAMPING SITES.

It has to be faced that the demand for camping sites is most certainly not likely to decrease either for holidays or - in those cases where a permanent camp is permitted - as a substitute for houses during the present shortage. Consequently, in view of its reputation as a holiday resort, the demand for sites in the Borough is not likely to diminish. At present there are four sites of which that on the Island is the most congested and it was felt desirable to limit the numbers somewhat. The new site at Ayr should be of material assistance in this respect but even so the Council must realise that in view of the steep hills which will have to be negotiated to get to it, there will be a very strong and continuing attraction for persons to occupy the Island site since it is so close to two excellent beaches.

W. K. DUNSCOMBE.

Medical Officer of Health.

REPORT OF SANITARY INSPECTOR FOR 1950.

1. MISCELLANEOUS VISITS.

Premises Visited re Complaints	...	317
Re-Inspections	...	167
Drain Test - New and Repair Work	...	172
House Inspections	...	70
Rodent Control Inspections	...	332
Public Conveniences	...	70
Camping Sites	...	15
Factories	...	59
Bakehouses	...	14
Fumigations	...	16
Ice Cream Premises	...	44
Cafes	...	52
Public Houses	...	12
Salvage Depot	...	4

2. FOOD PREMISES.

All premises where food is prepared are inspected regularly and, while not up to the standard one would wish for owing to the congestion of the premises and the difficulty of carrying out structural alterations, the cleanliness of the premises as a whole is good.

During July and August, Samples of chicken, ice cream, milk and water were taken and sent for Analysis in suspected food poisoning cases, but fortunately all were returned as "no pathogenic organism found", as were four faeces specimens.

3. ICE CREAM.

During the summer 44 visits were made to ice cream manufacturer's premises, and 18 samples of ice cream were submitted to the County Analyst. The results were as follows :-

Grade 1.	-	7.	Grade 2.	-	6.
Grade 3.	-	4.	Grade 4.	-	1.

This is an improvement on last year, but there should be no samples in Grade 4 or in Grade 3.

8 Samples were taken for fat content, the results varying from 2.9 per cent to 18.6 per cent with an average of 6 per cent.

4. REGISTRATION OF PREMISES.

During the year 9 applications were received for registration for the sale of ice cream. 8 were granted and 1 was refused on the grounds that the premises had no facilities for the washing of hands. In my opinion it is unfortunate that Local Authorities cannot control the type of premises from which ice cream can be sold. At present ice cream can be sold from practically any shop provided they have the facilities for washing their hands. It is impossible for inspectors to see that everyone who sells potatoes and greens as well as other articles which could contaminate ice cream washes their hands before serving, and most employers do the best they can to enforce it but the attitude of some employees is "I am not interested in hygiene". Most of the large ice cream manufacturers wrap their products but there is no provision in the Act which stipulates that a licence can be granted for the sale of wrapped ice cream only which means that once a licence is granted the proprietor can please himself whether he sells wrapped or loose ice cream.

5. UN SOUND FOOD CONDEMNED.

During the year the following articles of food were inspected and condemned as unfit for human consumption and were voluntarily surrendered :-

296 Tins of Various Food.	128 lbs Meat (Bone Taint).
20 Stone Fish.	24 lbs Cherries.
32 Jars Fish and Meat Paste.	28 Jars Pickles.

6. PUBLIC CLEANSING.

Collection and Disposal of House and Trade Refuse.

Collection is by means of one Karrier 7 cub. yds and one Thornycroft 10 cub. yds lorries. Disposal of House and Trade Refuse is at Hayle where, in conjunction with the West Penwith Rural District Council, controlled tipping is carried out.

Number of loads of refuse per week	...	...	32.
Approximate weight of refuse per week	...	...	64 tons.
Approximate weight of refuse per year	...	...	3,328 tons.
Approximate milage per vehicle per year	...	...	15,000 miles.

7. SALVAGE.

Salvage was recommenced in December, 1950, when we despatched 6 tons. 10 cwts. and it is gratifying to know that the mills are prepared to enter into a five year agreement with a safeguarding clause suitable to both parties. It is only by having an agreement for a specified time that Local Authorities will continue to collect salvage.

8. ROAD SWEEPING.

The milage of roads requiring sweeping amounted to 19.45 miles of unclassified roads and 10.53 of County Council roads.

9. GULLY AND CESSPIT EMPTYING MACHINE.

During the year this vehicle was hired out on 68 occasions to private individual property owners who are not on main drainage. The vehicle is also on hire to Penzance Town Council two days a week and to the adjacent Local Authorities when desired.

There is no doubt that this type of vehicle is a boon to property owners in the surrounding district who are not on main drainage as it is impossible to get men to-day to empty cesspits by buckets.

10. RODENT CONTROL.

During the year the number of properties inspected was as follows:-

Local Authority.	104 properties.	212 inspections.
Private Dwellings.	78 properties.	230 visits.
Business Premises.	31 properties.	76 visits.

The number of rats poisoned was 117 while 34 were caught by traps. 18 mice were also caught. Very few rats are caught in sewers, due to the small size of the sewers, making it impossible for rats to breed as the sewers become surcharged during heavy rain. 26 manholes were treated where any evidence of rats was found.

I am indebted to Mr. T. Nankervis for the work he carries out in keeping the Town free from rats.

11. FACTORIES ACTS 1937 and 1948.

During the year 59 inspections were made to the various types of factories for the purpose of provisions as to health. 16 Factories were found to require lime washing or small repairs and all were complied with.

12. FOOD AND DRUGS ACT 1938. Report for the year ending 31st December, 1950.

I am indebted to Mr. H.A. Rundle of Cornwall County Council (which is the Food and Drugs Authority) for the following figures of samples taken by his Department.

Details of Samples procured during 1950 from the Borough of St. Ives.

<u>Article.</u>	<u>No. of Samples Taken.</u>	<u>Result of Analysis.</u>		<u>Remarks.</u>
		<u>Genuine.</u>	<u>Adulterated.</u>	
Milk.	23.	23.	-	1 Sample was found 10% deficient in fat.
Hop Bitters.	1.	1.	-	
Fried Haddock and Chips.	1.	1.	-	
	25.	25.	-	

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