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ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
Medical Officer of Health
AND
Medical Officer for Maternity
and Child Welfare
OF THE
Borough of Taunton
For the Year 1923.

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Public Health Department,
Corporation Street,
Taunton,

10th April, 1924.

**To The Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of the
Borough of Taunton.**

MR. MAYOR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report on the conditions in the town during the year 1923. This is the third interim report.

The vital statistics are given in more detail than in previous years. The epidemic of Measles and Whooping Cough in the early part of the year was responsible for the death of 12 children, Diarrhoea also accounted for 8. This disease appears latterly to be subject to increase every other year.

The lack of houses of any kind is the most serious defect affecting the health of the people, while at least 700 of those in occupation are without ventilation and are quite unfit for use as dwelling houses.

The prevalence of Small Pox in the adjoining Counties is causing considerable anxiety and has made necessary the notification of Chicken Pox.

The new office accommodation is a great improvement on that formerly available.

The details as to the new sewers have been furnished by the Borough Surveyor and those regarding the Water Works from the Manager of that Department.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN ALLEN.

HEALTH COMMITTEE.

MR. ALDERMAN WEST, Chairman.

Mrs. Councillor Barnicott.	Mr. Councillor Lane.
Mr. " Beel.	" " Maynard.
" " Down.	" " Webber.
" " Howell-Spencer.	" " White.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE COMMITTEE.

In addition to the above,

Mr. Alderman Penny.	
" " Potter.	
Dr. A. J. Macdonald	 Medical Profession.
Mrs. G. Fowler	 }
" E. Jarvis	 }
Miss M. Upton	 }
Mrs. Walker	 }
" Pearce	 }

Infants' Health Society.

Women's Co-operative Guild.

STAFF.

*Sanitary Inspector	 J. W. NORTHCOMBE, C.R.S.I., F.I.S.E., M.S.I.A.
Assist. Sanitary Inspector	... F. M. WESTCOTT.
*Health Visitor	 MRS. E. STEWART, C.M.B. (To 4th April.) MISS M. LAKE, C.M.B., M.R.S.I., R.S.I. Certificates for H.V. and S.N. ; and M. & C.W.
Clerk	 A. W. GOOD, C.R.S.I.
*Consulting Medical Officer	... HENRY J. ALFORD, M.D., F.I.C.
*Medical Officer of Health,	
*School Medical Officer and	JOHN ALLEN, M.B., D.P.H.
*Medical Officer of Maternity and Child Welfare	...

*Salary contribution made under Public Health Acts or by
Exchequer Grants.



HEALTH PROPAGANDA.

It was decided in August that efforts should be made to observe Health Week between the 7th and 13th October. With this object in view the Public Health Committee convened a Public Meeting on 28th August, to which all the public organisations in the town were asked to send representatives. As a result of this meeting it was decided to observe Health Week and a Committee was formed to arrange this. It was resolved at the suggestion of the Central Organisation that the dominant idea be Self Help in Health. The propaganda arranged was mainly in the form of Lectures. The clergy were asked to co-operate by delivering special sermons on the 7th and 14th October. With the co-operation of local medical men, lectures were given in the Elementary and Secondary Schools during the week. On the 8th October, Miss Gane, the Superintendent Health Visitor of the Somerset County Council gave a lecture on "The Care of the Child" in the Municipal Hall, which was very well attended. On the 9th October, Dr. W. G. Savage, County Medical Officer of Health for Somerset, gave a lecture on "Microbes and Health" in the Municipal Hall. Here the fallacy that Taunton people will not attend lectures received its death blow, for the Hall was packed and overflowing while many were turned away.

By arrangement the Cordwent Trustees secured Dr. Saleeby to give their Annual Lecture on 16th October. Dr. Saleeby lectured in the Lyceum in the afternoon on "Sunlight and Health." The higher classes from all the elementary schools and many from the secondary schools attended this. In the evening Dr. Saleeby gave a lecture in the Municipal Hall on "Marvels of Modern Medicine." Here again the Municipal Hall proved incapable of admitting all those who came to hear the lecture.

By the generosity of the then Mayor, Alderman Kingsbury, it was decided to stimulate the interest of the elementary school children by his offer of four prizes for the best and next best essay written by boys and girls on "What I must do to keep healthy and fit." These were written in school, at the close of Health Week. The Head Teachers made a preliminary selection and the final selection was made by Mr. Catford, Mr. Nicholson and myself. The prizes were presented in public at the next Council Meeting.

Apart from the lectures several firms had special displays in their shop windows of articles calculated to promote health and sanitation.

The Press gave good publicity to the lectures and arrangements and published a special article by me on "Self-help in Health." I have no doubt that the concentration of the attention of the public on matters of this kind has most beneficial results and that Health Week should be observed here every year. The expenses amounting to £8 17s. od. were all defrayed by private subscriptions.

DELEGATION OF POWERS TO THE HEALTH COMMITTEE.

On the 10th July, 1923, the Council resolved that their powers under certain sections of the Acts and Bye-laws be delegated to the Health Committee. These were given in detail in the Agenda of that date. By this the Health Committee has all the powers of the Sanitary Authority necessary for the remedying of most defects and is able to carry these out with the minimum of delay.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.

Water Supply.

The rainfall on the water-shed amounted to 35.89 inches; a continuous supply was given throughout the year.

The supply from the shaft at Forches Corner was discontinued in February owing to twisting of the shaft after the heavy rainfall in this month. A scheme for the reconstruction of this shaft at an estimated cost of £3,000 was approved on 14th August, 1923, and the work is now in progress.

Samples of water are taken from a main tap in the town at frequent intervals and submitted to bacteriological examination.

A dairy farm in the area added in 1921 was re-opened. This was dependent for its water supply on a well. A sample of water from this was found to be contaminated and town's water installed.

A sample from two houses supplied by a well in the Galmington area was also found contaminated and town's water is being supplied.

Drainage, Sewerage and Scavenging.

New sewers have been laid during the year as follows:—

Honiton Road and Galmington	18 inch.	588.6 yards.
	15 „	411.5 yards.
	12 „	352.0 yards.
	9 „	159.0 yards.
Wellington Road	9 „	323.3 yards.
Roman Road	9 „	216.6 yards.

The scheme for the reconstruction of the Sewage Disposal Works at a total estimated cost of £29,000, was approved by the Minister of Health on 17th November, 1923.

**PREMISES AND OCCUPATIONS WHICH ARE
CONTROLLED BY BYELAWS OR REGULATIONS.**

Offensive Trades.

The Minister of Health confirmed on 22nd January, 1923, the Byelaws for the control of the trades or businesses of Blood boiler and Blood drier, Bone boiler, Soap boiler, Tallow melter and Fat melter or Fat extractor, Tripe boiler, Glue maker, Size maker, Gut scraper, Rag and Bone dealer, Fish frier and Dealer in hides and skins. The byelaws for the control of the trades, businesses or manufactures of a Fellmonger, a Tanner and Leather dresser allowed on 27th April, 1883, are still in force.

The offensive trades and the number of these are:—

Blood boiler and Blood drier	...	...	...	nil.
Bone boiler	...	...	...	nil.
Fellmonger, Tanner and Leather dresser	...	...	...	1
Soap boiler	...	...	...	nil.
Tallow melter, Fat melter and Fat extractor	...	...	...	nil.
Tripe boiler	...	...	...	8
Glue maker and Size maker	...	...	...	nil.
Gut scraper	...	...	...	1
Rag and Bone dealer	...	...	...	8
Fish Frier	...	...	...	7
Hide and Skin dealer	...	...	...	2

Other Premises and Occupations.

There are Regulations or Byelaws for the control of the following:—

Bakehouses, Wholesale, Retail and Underground.
Dairies, Milkshops and Cowsheds.
Common Lodging Houses.
Tents, Vans and Sheds.
Slaughterhouses, Licenced and Registered.
Removal of Offensive or Noxious Matter.
Nuisances (including pig keeping, storage and removal of manure, etc.)

Bakehouses.

As bread is retailed by all the roundsmen without any wrapper it is in consequence liable to contamination by all manner of filth. An enquiry was made as to the possibility of stale loaves being returned by customers and I am assured that members of the Master Bakers' Federation have given strict instructions to their roundsmen that stale loaves must not be taken from customers.

There are twenty-one bakehouses. Some sanitary defects in one, a water closet with the soil pipe used also for rainwater and ventilating into the loft were remedied upon informal notice being given.

Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops.

The number registered on 31st December, 1923, was:—

Retailers	...	...	...	...	...	50
Wholesale Traders and Producers	...	...	...	...	...	7

The premises from which milk is retailed are:—

Farms	...	...	...	...	...	6
Dairy Businesses	...	...	...	...	...	16
General Shops	...	...	...	...	...	18
Premises outside Borough	...	...	...	...	...	8

These premises, excepting those without the Borough, have all been inspected by me during the year and surprise visits paid to the farms when milking was in progress. I regret that several

of the owners of what were purely dairy businesses have extended the variety of articles sold and altered the character of the business. Three retailers are registered from one premises. By arrangement with the Public Health Laboratory of the Somerset County Council samples of the mixed milk from each of the farms in the Borough were taken in order to see if these contained the *Bac. tuberculosis*. The examination of these requires some time and the milk must be examined as soon as possible after milking. This necessitated visits to the farms in the early morning. Fourteen samples were taken between May and October. All except one were reported free from Tuberculosis. This one exception was doubtful and in this case the farmer had his herd examined by a veterinary surgeon and suspicion fell on one cow. The milk from this cow was not retailed and further samples, one from the suspected cow and one from the mixed milk of the remainder of the herd, were taken. These were reported free. It will be seen that at the time of taking the samples the milk actually produced on farms in the Borough was free from Tuberculosis. Five samples were also taken to test the cleanliness of the milk. The total number of bacteria per cubic centimetre varied from 250,000 to 18,000 and the number of *Bac. coli* (a microbe of faecal origin and therefore a good index of the care taken in milking) from 1,000 to less than 10 per cubic centimetre. The analyst reported that three of these were "quite good" and two were of "fair quality."

Slaughterhouses.

The number in use is:—

Registered	...	...	...	7
Licensed	...	...	...	5
			Total	<u>12</u>

No applications in respect of new premises have been made during the year.

Byelaw number 9 requiring the use of a mechanically operated killer is in abeyance.

Byelaw number 11 is also in abeyance for this would require the provision of a separate slaughter-room and the consequent extension or sub-division of all the registered premises. One slaughterhouse has been connected to the sewer and there remains

one without any connection to the sewer. Slaughtering takes place in these at any times, it has been found impossible to regulate this according to a time table or rota, for killing is regulated by the demand for meat and the temperature.

The system of Meat Inspection (Memo 62 Foods) advocated by the Ministry of Health, was adopted by the Council on 10th July, 1923. All meat dealers were furnished with a copy and appear to have carried out the regulations stated. The Taunton and District Master Butchers Retail Association, comprising almost all the retail butchers in this area, have adopted a scheme whereby the members of this Association are insured against "losses sustained by their innocently purchasing diseased bullocks." This scheme appears to be of value to the consumer by greatly reducing the loss the butcher sustains on finding that the beast that appeared when alive to be quite sound and when dead to be riddled with Tuberculosis.

Common Lodging Houses.

The number registered was one. It has accommodation for 37 adults, including two married couples. An application for the registration of another was under consideration at the end of the year.

Tents, Vans and Sheds.

The shortage of houses has caused several caravans to take up quarters in places in the town. One was found to be dependent upon a pump for water supply. The water proved to be contaminated and town's water was laid on.

Nuisances.

The receptacles for horse dung require continual supervision especially during the summer months.

Food.

From information received, a butcher's shop was visited in March and the meat therein was examined. A fore quarter, a loin and two sections of ribs of beef were found all showing signs of tuberculosis, and also that efforts had been made by dressing

to remove the traces of this disease. These were seized and a magistrate brought to the shop. He condemned these as diseased and ordered their removal and destruction. The total weight was 116 lbs. 5 ozs. Prosecution took place on 10th May, 1923, before the Borough Justices, the butchers were found guilty, were fined £10 to cover all charges on the four summonses, and to pay £3 3s. costs. This meat was not prepared in a slaughterhouse in the Borough, nor were the defendants members of the Master Butchers' Retail Association and their insurance scheme.

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The diseases notifiable are:—

- Small Pox.
- Cholera.
- Diphtheria and Membranous Croup.
- Erysipelas.
- Scarlet Fever and Scarlatina.
- Typhus Fever.
- Typhoid Fever (including Enteric and Paratyphoid Fevers).
- Relapsing and Continued Fevers.
- Puerperal Fever.
- Cerebro-spinal Fever.
- Acute Poliomyelitis.
- Ophthalmia Neonatorum.
- Measles.
- German Measles.
- Tuberculosis (all forms).
- Malaria.
- Dysentery (Amœbic and Bacillary).
- Trench Fever.
- Acute Primary Pneumonia.
- Acute Influenzal Pneumonia.
- Encephalitis Lethargica.
- Acute Polio Encephalitis.
- Anthrax.

Diphtheria.

Notifications were received of 12 cases, ten of these were removed to the Isolation Hospital. There were no deaths. All possible contacts in the homes were swabbed and four bacteriological cases were found. Three of these were from one home. The case these were contacts of was a child suffering from the nasal type discovered at the School Clinic where he had come for treatment. Another case was discovered through a report from the Medical Officer of Health of another district, stating that a child from Taunton had been staying in a house in his area and that a case of Diphtheria had occurred there. This child was

found to be under treatment for enlarged glands of the neck, and was undoubtedly recovering from an attack of Diphtheria; her sister was in a similar condition.

MONTHLY INCIDENCE.

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Clinical	—	—	1	—	1	2	1	1	1	4	1	—
Bacteriological	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	2	1	—	—

Bacteriological Examinations.

Swabs for diagnosis are kept at this office. They are sent for examination and report to the Public Health Laboratories of the Somerset County Council at Weston-super-Mare. These are sent by passenger train, and the laboratory being warned by telephone, are collected by them on arrival. It is thus possible to get a report on a swab sent in the forenoon by noon of the following day.

The number of swabs taken by me was 98 and of these 10 were reported as showing Diphtheria bacilli present.

Antitoxin or Anti Diphtheria Serum.

This is kept in stock in fresh condition at Municipal Building in minimum quantities of 8,000 units. It is available at any time of the day or night.

Scarlet Fever.

The epidemic of this disease in the winter of 1922 continued in 1923. The total number of cases notified was 47; of these 36 were removed to the Isolation Hospital. There were no deaths.

MONTHLY INCIDENCE.

Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
11	11	5	6	6	1	0	0	0	2	3	2

Twelve of these cases were of boys attending one elementary school and the first six of these were of boys from the Children's Home notified in January and February. The cases from the Children's Home ceased and the other boys attending the same school were notified. Several visits were paid and all the boys

examined, but no cases were found nor any possible carriers. Five cases were notified from one home, the first on 16th February was removed to Isolation Hospital and discharged on 29th March, the second was notified and removed on 4th April, the third was notified and removed on 23rd April, the fourth was notified and removed on 24th April, and the fifth notified and removed on 5th May. The house was a licensed one and had ample accommodation and was very thoroughly disinfected after each case. It would appear that the child first admitted was the source of infection of the other four cases. He was very carefully examined and the only possible infective condition found was a swollen nasal mucous membrane. Nine cases were found ill at home by the School Nurses with no doctor in attendance, these were at once reported to me, when I visited and confirmed the diagnosis.

Enteric Fever.

Two cases of this disease were notified, one in June and one in July. The first, a case of Paratyphoid, was admitted to the Isolation Hospital and made a good recovery. The second died after 27 days' illness, the diagnosis in this case was somewhat speculative and was not confirmed by bacteriological examination. No source of infection could be traced for either case.

Puerperal Fever.

Three cases of this disease were known to have occurred. The first was a midwife's case (as I am informed by the practitioner) due to some retained afterbirth. The second only came to my knowledge through the death of the patient. This was a case of delayed labour and after several ineffectual attempts at delivery, was admitted to hospital, where a cæsarian section was performed. The third was a midwife's case and probably due to retained afterbirth. I have reason to believe that all the cases of this disease are not notified. A circular giving the following definition of this disease has been sent to all Medical Practitioners in the area:—

“Septicæmia and pyæmia, including peritonitis and all cases of acute pelvic inflammation in connection with child birth.”

Pneumonia.

Notifications of 13 cases were received. Three of these were treated in the Taunton and Somerset Hospital, and one in the Union Infirmary. One death only resulted and this after five months. It was certified as Acute pulmonary tuberculosis.

MONTHLY INCIDENCE.

Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1	0	2	1	2	0	0	1	1	1	2	2

Encephalitis Lethargica.

Two cases of this disease were notified. One, a secondary school girl aged 15, had a mild attack of the lethargic type with diplopia and pains in the legs. The other, also a female, employed in a collar factory, had a more severe attack of the lethargic type with marked diplopia and pains in the limbs. It appeared possible that the husband of this case had an unrecognised attack of this disease while on active service and had never completely recovered.

Cerebro-Spinal Fever.

One case of this disease was notified and admitted to the Isolation Hospital. Here the diagnosis was negatived and death was certified as being due to middle ear disease and extension to the brain.

Measles.

This disease was epidemic in the early part of the year when 123 cases were notified, while I also received information of 31 other cases from the School Nurses and Health Visitor. There were six deaths directly due to Measles, while one death was certified due to Whooping Cough with Measles in addition. The case mortality was therefore about 3.8 per cent. The ages of the children dying were:—

Under one year	...	...	...	...	1
One year and under two years	...	...	...	...	3
Two years and under three years	...	...	...	...	2

MONTHLY INCIDENCE.

Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
7	15	25	39	16	11	3	1	6	0	0	0

Nursing aid was available for any cases in which the practitioner attending thought it necessary and a reminder to this effect was sent to all doctors. As this had not been required for any case and there had already been four deaths, a second letter was sent and also information that special cases could be admitted to the Isolation Hospital. There were two further deaths but in neither of these was the nursing aid required. It was supplied to three cases in all. As skilled nursing has a most important effect in this disease, I cannot understand the neglect of this.

It had been found necessary to close North Town Infants' School from 22nd February to 29th March, and Original Infants' School from 13th March to 28th March, owing to Whooping Cough, and it was then thought advisable to close all the Infant Schools from 11th April to 25th April, owing to the prevalence of Measles. The Superintendents of all the Sunday Schools were informed and asked to co-operate by excluding all children under 8 years of age, this advice was followed by the majority. Four cases were sent into the Isolation Hospital, two being children from the married quarters and two being soldiers from the Barracks.

Ophthalmia Neonatorum.

Seven cases were notified among the 383 births registered. Five of these were delivered by doctors and two by midwives, while only one of the seven had any preventive measures such as the instillation of silver preparations immediately after birth. Nursing aid was supplied to three of the cases but one of these required further treatment and was admitted to the Taunton and Somerset Hospital where it recovered from this condition completely after 26 days as an in-patient.

I give below the table showing the treatment of these cases and the final result.

Cases.			Final Result.			
Notified.	Treated.		Vision Unimpaired	Vision Impaired.	Total Blindness.	Deaths.
	At Home.	In Hospital.				
7	6	1	7	nil.	nil.	nil.

Tuberculosis.

The cases notified during the year numbered 64, while information was received of two other cases coming into the town from other areas. A table giving the variety and age of all cases notified is shown on page 26.

I have paid home visits to a large number of the older cases notified and have revised the register in accordance with the particulars gathered; many had removed to other areas.

The number of cases known to be suffering from this disease in the town is 402, and these are classified as:—

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Pulmonary	151	174	325
Non-pulmonary	36	41	77
Total	187	215	402

The total number of deaths certified as being due to Tuberculosis was 26 and no notification had been made for three of these. The proportion of non-notified cases to notified cases among the deaths was 11.5 per cent.

The process of disinfection after removal or death of a case has been made more thorough, but it would be preferable to disinfect the rooms occupied at frequent intervals during their actual occupancy if the staff for this was available.

Small Pox.

In view of the prevalence of this disease in the Midlands and Gloucestershire, it was decided to make Chicken Pox notifiable. An order to this effect was made and came into force on 11th July, 1923, for a period of six months. Since then 18 cases of Chicken Pox have been notified. I have seen all these and verified the diagnosis.

Information was received from Port Sanitary Authorities of seven contacts. These were all visited until clear. There have also been persons visiting this area from districts where Small Pox was rife. I have visited these where known. In one case a mother with unvaccinated children from an infected area had sent these to an elementary school; I deemed it advisable to exclude these from school.

In order to be fully prepared in the event of a case of Small Pox arising, the whole of my staff and such other persons as the ambulance driver, etc., were vaccinated by me. Temporary arrangements were made for the admission of any case into the Isolation Hospital, and the staff there vaccinated. The number of vaccinations performed was 33. As the Hospital built by the Somerset County Council for this disease is now complete, any case arising would be sent there. In order to be familiar with the present type of this disease, I visited Gloucester in June and saw many cases isolated there.

Non-notifiable Infectious Diseases.

Whooping Cough.

I have received information of 64 cases of this disease from the School Nurses.

MONTHLY INCIDENCE.

Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
8	43	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

It was found necessary to close the Infant Schools, the times closed being given in detail under Measles. There were six deaths due to it:—

										Deaths.
Under one year										0
1 year and under 2 years										1
2	„	„	„	3	„	„	„	„	„	2
3	„	„	„	4	„	„	„	„	„	2
4	„	„	„	5	„	„	„	„	„	0
5	„	„	„	10	„	„	„	„	„	1
10	„	„	„	15	„	„	„	„	„	0

Diarrhœa and Enteritis (under 2 years).

The deaths of eight children were certified as being due to this cause:—

MONTHLY INCIDENCE.

Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1	2	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1

It would appear that the deaths from this disease are more frequent in Taunton than other towns of a similar size, for in 1923 the proportion per 1,000 births was 6.4 among the 157 towns of similar population, while in Taunton it was 22.6. Records of deaths from this disease are available only from 1918, and are:—

Year.					Deaths per 1,000 births.
1918	...	...	...	...	—
1919	...	...	...	...	19.6
1920	...	...	...	...	3.9
1921	...	...	...	...	22.2
1922	...	...	...	...	2.4
1923	...	...	...	...	22.6

The house fly did not appear in any large numbers during the year, and as six deaths occurred during the colder months these would not appear to be due to the infective type of disease.

Only one of these children had attended the Infant Welfare Centre and this was suffering from Rickets with head nodding. It is possible that the custom of giving babies of three months old a stew of bath biscuits and milk contributes to this mortality.

Cancer.

The Ministry of Health have issued a circular (No. 426) during the year, summarising our present knowledge regarding this disease and I give some part of this. The term "Cancer" is applied to a disease affecting man and the lower animals, characterised by:—

- (1) disordered overgrowth of some tissue of the body.
- (2) starting in some definite part.
- (3) not surrounded by a capsule.
- (4) invading surrounding parts.
- (5) undergoing degenerative changes.
- (6) dissemination to distant parts of the body.
- (7) causing in the great majority of cases the death of the person affected.

It has increased considerably in later years and even when allowance is made for (a) improvement in diagnosis; (b) the fact that there are now living a larger proportion of people at the ages when cancer is more likely to affect them. The death rate per 1,000 living in England and Wales from this disease was 0.32 in 1851-60, was 1.12 in 1911-20, and was 1.21 in 1921, that is, the deaths from this disease have been trebled in two generations.

In Taunton the crude death rate in 1921 was 1.2 per 1,000, in 1911 it was 1.1 per 1,000, and in 1901, 0.7 per 1,000. The cancer death rate in Taunton is therefore increasing.

There is no evidence that the disease is contagious, and disinfection after removal or death of a case is not therefore necessary. There is also no evidence to confirm the existence of what are known as cancer houses, or that the disease is inherited.

At present the most important factor in treatment is early diagnosis. Contrary to the general belief cancer is seldom painful in its early stages and may be painless throughout its course. Medical advice should be sought at once if a tumour or swelling is found in the breast; if ulcerated conditions in the mouth persist; in cases of persistent hoarseness; if a mole or wart shows a tendency to grow; if blood or mucous is passed in the motions, and if there is a bloody or offensive discharge at other than the normal periods and especially at or after the change of life.

The age incidence of the cases dying in Taunton in 1923:—

Age.			Male.	Female.	Total.
20—	...	...	—	—	—
30—	...	...	—	—	—
40—	...	...	1	4	5
50—	...	...	2	1	3
60—	...	...	7	6	13
70—	...	...	3	5	8
80—	...	...	—	—	—
90	...	...	—	—	—
Total			13	16	29

The sites affected were stated as:—

			Male.	Female.	Total.
Stomach	...	...	1	3	4
Bowel	...	...	3	2	5
Liver	...	...	3	4	7
Rectum	...	...	2	0	2
Breast	...	...	0	3	3
Uterus	...	...	0	4	4
Throat	...	...	0	0	0
Mouth	...	...	2	0	2
Miscellaneous	...	...	2	0	2
Total			13	16	29

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE.

Births registered during 1923 numbered 383, of these 198 were male and 185 female, giving a birth rate of 15.6 per thousand. The births registered as illegitimate numbered 17, giving an illegitimate birth rate of 0.7 per thousand, and an illegitimate death rate of 117.6 per 1,000 illegitimate children born. Notifications under the Notification of Births Act received within 36 hours of birth numbered 360, and include from Doctors 84, from Nurses 266, and from parents 10. Stillbirths numbered 22 and are 5.7 per cent. of the births registered.

Work of the Health Visitor.

Mrs. Stewart resigned on 4th April owing to poor health, and was succeeded by Miss M. Lake, who commenced duty on 7th May, 1923. As far as possible her home visiting is according to the following scheme:—

- 1st year—Six visits at intervals of two months.
- 2nd year—Three visits at intervals of four months.
- 3rd year—Two visits at intervals of six months.
- 4th and 5th year—When necessary.

This is not rigidly observed, some such as illegitimate or weakly infants may require more frequent visits. The details are recorded on cards and the information gathered from these is passed on to the school record when the child attends school. If the infant leaves the town the removal is passed on if the new address is known.

The visits made are:—

FIRST VISITS.				RE-VISITS.			
Ante natal	...	...	70	Ante natal	...	...	48
Stillbirths	...	...	15	Under one year	...	...	1,043
Under one year...	...	...	372	Between one and two	...	...	871
Over one year	...	...	12	years	...	...	962
			—	Between two and three	...	...	—
			469	years	...	...	2,924
			—				—
Total ... 3,393.							

Infant Mortality.

The deaths of infants under one year of age numbered 22, giving an infantile mortality rate of 57.4 per thousand children born. Thirteen of these were male children and nine female. Two were the subjects of coroner's inquests and both were illegitimate. In one the cause was given as suffocation in a convulsion and the other drowning in a chamber utensil through lack of attention at birth. The deaths from Diarrhœa show an increase and number four.

Infant Welfare Centre.

The infant consultations and weighings were held in the Technical Institute until 1st September, when the new premises in Corporation Street were opened. These are a great improvement and consist of a large waiting room, a room for weighing and a room for consultations. There are no steps to climb and perambulators enter through Castle Green. A shed for perambulators is provided so that on wet days they are kept dry while the mother is in the Centre. New weighing scales (Avery's pattern) have been provided, these weigh accurately by a quarter ounce up to 40 pounds. The infant is suspended in a large flannel lined pan which even the most determined child would find it difficult to tumble out of. These scales render it possible to weigh the amount of food taken in by a child at a breast feed and in consequence to gauge the amount of this in cases where the breast milk is thought deficient in quantity.

The Clinic is open on Tuesday afternoons, and was open 51 times during the year. The total attendances numbered 1,379, while 795 consultations were given including 128 babies seen for the first time. Cod Liver Oil is given to some necessitous cases when the condition of the child indicates this.

Milk (Mothers and Children) Orders.

The distribution of milk free of cost to nursing mothers and children continued throughout the year. The income scale for applications was revised once during the year in consequence of the fall in the cost of living from 80 to 70 per cent. All applications are made at this office and as this department is responsible for the administration of the School Canteen, one application suffices for the provision of milk for the younger and meals for the older children.

Particulars of Free Milk Orders:—

Number of families supplied with free milk	...	69
Number of free orders (28 days each)	...	319
Quantity of milk supplied, pints	...	10,254
Total cost	...	£130 - 13 - 10

A stock of dried milk in 1 lb. cartons, including Glaxo, Cow and Gate, and Ambrosia is kept at the Centre and sold at cost price to mothers for whose children this variety is prescribed. The price per pound at the beginning of the year was 1/10 and at the end 1/6. It is infinitely cleaner, and has a more stable cream content than ordinary milk and is more than equivalent to certified milk. It is especially suitable for homes where there is no proper food store.

APPENDIX, 1923.

1. General Statistics.

Area, statute acres	...	...	...	...	2,015
Population (estimated mid-year)	...	...	...	...	24,500
Number of inhabited houses, 1921—					
(a) pre-extension	...	...	...	...	5,201
(b) post-extension	...	...	...	...	5,664
Rateable value	...	...	...	...	£121,647
Sum represented by penny rate	...	...	...	...	£430

2. Vital Statistics.

Density of population over whole area, per acre	...	...	...	...	12.1
Births registered—					
Male	...	...	...	...	198
Female	...	...	...	...	185
				—	383
Births registered as illegitimate—					
Male	...	...	...	...	11
Female	...	...	...	...	6
				—	17
Birth Rate	...	...	...	...	15.6
Birth Rate, illegitimate	...	...	...	...	0.7
Deaths, after correction for transfer	...	...	...	...	258
Death Rate, crude	...	...	...	...	10.5
Death Rate, standardised	...	...	...	...	—
Deaths of Infants under one year—					
Legitimate	...	...	...	...	20
Illegitimate	...	...	...	...	2
				—	22
Infant Mortality per 1,000 births	...	...	...	...	57.4
Deaths of Infants under one month per 1,000 births	...	...	...	...	26.1
Stillbirths per 1,000 registered births	...	...	...	...	57.4
Deaths, Female, in consequence of child birth—					
(a) from sepsis	...	...	...	...	1
(b) from other causes	...	...	...	...	nil.
Puerperal Fever Rate per 1,000 registered live births	...	...	...	...	7.8

Deaths from Measles, all ages	...	...	...	6
Deaths from Whooping Cough, all ages	...	...	...	6
Deaths from Diarrhoea, under two years of age	...	...	...	8
Death Rate, Pulmonary Tuberculosis	...	...	...	0.8
Death Rate, other Tuberculosis	...	...	...	0.2
Death Rate, Cancer	...	...	...	1.1
Natural Rate of increase per 1,000 of population	...	...	...	5.1

VITAL STATISTICS, ENGLAND AND WALES, 1923.

Birth Rate	...	...	...	...	...	...	19.7
Death Rate	...	...	...	...	...	...	11.6
Infant Mortality Rate	...	...	...	...	...	...	69.0

NOTIFIABLE INFECTIOUS DISEASES, 1923.

DISEASE.	AGE GROUPS OF ALL CASES NOTIFIED.											Total of all Ages	Cases Admitted to Hospital	Deaths
	Under 1 year	1 to 2 years	2 to 3 years	3 to 4 years	4 to 5 years	5 to 10 years	10 to 15 years	15 to 20 years	20 to 35 years	35 to 45 years	45 to 65 years	65 years and over		
Diphtheria, Clinical	—	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	—	—	1	1	10	—
„ Bacteriological	—	—	—	—	—	2	1	1	1	—	—	—	4	—
Scarlet Fever	—	—	2	2	1	18	17	6	1	—	—	—	36	—
Enteric Fever, including Paratyphoid	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	2	1
Puerperal Fever	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2*	—	—	—	1	1
Pneumonia	—	1	1	—	—	2	1	—	4	2	2	—	4	1
Erysipelas	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	2	—	—
Encephalitis Lethargica	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
Cerebro-Spinal Fever	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1†	—	1	—
Measles	9	4	13	20	14	47	12	2	1	1	—	—	4	6
German Measles	—	—	—	—	—	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Chickenpox	—	—	—	1	1	10	4	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
Malaria (Exogenous)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—

* One not notified and found by return of deaths.

† Notification cancelled. Death due to middle ear disease.

TUBERCULOSIS.

Age Periods.	New Cases.				Deaths.			
	Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.		Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0 —	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1 —	1	—	1	—	—	—	1	—
5 —	10	2	1	—	—	—	—	—
10 —	5	6	—	—	—	—	—	—
15 —	2	4	—	2	1	2	—	1
20 —	1	5	1	—	—	5	2	—
25 —	4	4	—	2	2	4	—	1
35 —	5	3	1	1	2	1	—	—
45 —	1	1	—	1	1	2	—	1
55 —	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
65 +	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	29	27	4	6	6	14	3	3

ANALYSIS OF THE CAUSES OF DEATHS OF INFANTS UNDER ONE YEAR.

DISEASE.	Under 1 week	1 to 2 weeks	2 to 3 weeks	3 to 4 weeks	Total under 1 month	1 to 3 months	3 to 6 months	6 to 9 months	9 to 12 months	Total under 1 year
Measles								1		1
Whooping Cough ..										0
Chicken Pox										0
Bronchitis									1	1
Broncho-Pneumonia ..									1	1
Pneumonia										0
Diarrhoeal Diseases ..						1		3	1	5
Immature Birth	5				5	1				6
Marasmus										0
Congenital Defects ..	3				3	2				5
Rickets								1		1
Accident	2				2					2
"Convulsions"										
Total	10				10	4		5	3	22

Legitimate 20

Illegitimate 2 (both died by accident (1) by drowning in chamber utensil and (2) by suffocation while in a convulsion).

ANALYSIS OF AGES AT DEATH OF INFANTS UNDER FIVE YEARS.

	M.	F.	Total.
Under 1 day	1	3	4
1 day and under 7 days	4	1	5
1 week and under 4 weeks	—	1	1
1 month and under 3 months	3	1	4
3 months and under 6 months	—	—	—
6 months and under 9 months	4	1	5
9 months and under 12 months	1	2	3
1 year and under 2 years	7	5	12
2 years and under 3 years	4	4	8
3 years and under 4 years	3	—	3
4 years and under 5 years	—	1	1
Death rate per 1,000 births of Infants under one month = 26.1			
" " " " " " one year = 57.4			

SUMMARY OF NURSING ARRANGEMENTS, HOSPITALS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS AVAILABLE FOR THE BOROUGH OF TAUNTON.

Professional Nursing in the Home.

- (a) General.—Two, belonging to the Taunton District Nursing Association.
- (b) Infectious Diseases.—The Taunton District Nursing Association provide nursing aid for cases of Measles and Ophthalmia Neonatorum when required by the Medical Officer of Health, Taunton. The charge for Measles being 10 pence per visit and for Ophthalmia Neonatorum 8 pence per visit (including dressings).

Midwives.

There are four who live and practise in Taunton. These are not employed or subsidised by the public health authority.

Clinics and Treatment Centres.

- (1) MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE CENTRE. One.

This is provided and maintained by the Taunton Borough Council. It was removed from the Technical Institute on 1st September, 1923, to new premises at the rear of the Public Health Offices in Corporation Street. It is approached from Castle Green and is open on Tuesday afternoons from 2 to 5 p.m.

- (2) SCHOOL CLINIC. One.

This is held in the same building as the Infant Welfare Centre and is open every school day. It is used for examinations, treatment of minor ailments, treatment of defective vision and for dental defects.

- (3) TUBERCULOSIS DISPENSARY. One.

This is provided and maintained by the Somerset County Council in premises used solely for this purpose in Priory Avenue. It is open on Mondays for Taunton cases.

- (4) VENEREAL DISEASES CLINIC. One.

This is provided and maintained by the Somerset County Council. It is held in rooms in the out-patient department of the Taunton and Somerset Hospital. Men are seen on Saturdays between 3.30 and 5 p.m., and women and children on Tuesdays between 2 and 4 p.m.

Hospitals provided or subsidised by the Local Authority or the County Council.

1. Tuberculosis.—There is a Sanatorium of 20 beds on the Cheddon Road adjacent to the Isolation Hospital. It is provided and maintained by the Somerset County Council.
2. Maternity, Nil.—Cases with complications are admitted to the Taunton and Somerset Hospital when surgical interference is indicated. There is a great need for a home where women may go for confinement.
3. Children.—A separate ward of 15 beds in the Taunton and Somerset Hospital is maintained for children from Taunton and the surrounding districts.
4. Fever.—The Hospital for these cases is situated on the Cheddon Road. It is administered by a Joint Committee including members of the Taunton Borough and Rural Councils and the Somerset County Council. It can accommodate 32 cases.
5. Small Pox.—A Hospital of 8 beds has been provided by the Somerset County Council at Cossington, which is 4 miles from Bridgwater, and is 15 miles from Taunton by road. Any case of Small Pox arising in this district would be removed to this hospital.
6. Other.—The Taunton and Somerset Hospital, situate in East Reach, Taunton. It has 107 beds and treats medical and surgical cases. It is dependent on voluntary contributions for its support.

There are no institutions in the district where special provision is made for either unmarried mothers, illegitimate children or homeless children, excepting those provided by the Poor Law.

Ambulance Facilities.

- (a) For Infectious Diseases, a horse brougham.
- (b) For Accident and Non-infectious cases, a two-horse ambulance and a wheeled stretcher. Neither of these are adequate for the work they have to do.

Laboratory Work.

All material for chemical or bacteriological examination is sent to the County Analyst at the Public Health Laboratories, Boulevard, Weston-super-Mare. Blood for the Wasserman re-action is sent to Professor Walker Hall at the University of Bristol. Outfits for the taking and transmission of material are stocked in the Public Health Offices, Corporation Street. If necessary arrangements are made for the transmission of material by train and its collection from Weston-super-Mare railway station by special messenger.

Diphtheria Antitoxin.

A stock of this in phials of 8,000 units contained in not more than 10 c.c. volume, is kept at this office and is available at any time on the request of a medical practitioner.

ACTS (ADOPTIVE) IN FORCE IN THIS AREA.

	Date adopted.
Public Health Acts, Amendment Act, 1890	November, 1890.
Infectious Diseases Prevention Act, 1890	October, 1890.
Public Libraries Act, 1892	October, 1902.
Private Street Works Act, 1892	June, 1906.
Notification of Births Act, 1907	August, 1908.
Public Health Acts, Amendment Act, 1907	May, 1909.
Provisional Order Confirmation (Taunton Extension) Act, 1921	9th November, 1921.

**Bye-laws and Local Regulations (Public Health) in force
in this area.**

	Date adopted.
Bye-laws, New Streets and Buildings	10th January, 1879.
„ Cleansing of Footways and Pavements	„ „
„ Nuisances	„ „
„ Common Lodging Houses	„ „
„ Offensive Trades (Fellmonger, Tanner and Leather Dresser)	27th April, 1883.
„ Tents, Vans and Sheds and similar structures used for human habitation	25th October, 1921.

Bye-laws, Slaughterhouses	1st November, 1921.
„ Offensive Trades (Blood boiler, Blood drier, Bone boiler, Soap boiler, Tallow melter, Fat melter, Fat extractor, Tripe boiler, Glue maker and Size maker, Gut scraper, Rag and Bone Dealer, Fish frier, Dealer in Hides and Skins)	10th January, 1922.
Regulations, Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops	11th December, 1906.

HOUSING.

Number of new houses erected during the year:—

(a) Total	...	...	...	...	...	...	19
(b) With State assistance under Housing Acts							
1919 to 1923	...	...	...	...	...	...	nil.
(i.) By Local Authority	...	...	...	...	...	...	nil.
(ii.) By other bodies or persons	...	...	...	...	...	...	nil.

1. Unfit Dwelling Houses.

Inspection.—(1) Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Regulations)	...	...	...	...	...	825
(2) Number of dwelling houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910.	...	...	...	...	...	40
(3) Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	...	...	...	...	...	nil.
(4) Number of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to under previous headings) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	...	...	...	...	...	607

2. Remedy of Defects without Service of Formal Notices.

Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers	...	...	...	...	...	504
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3. Action under Statutory Powers.

(A) Proceedings under Section 28 of the Housing, Town Planning, etc., Act, 1919.	nil.
(1) Number of houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs ...	nil.
(2) Number of dwelling houses which were rendered fit	
(a) By owners	nil.
(b) By Local Authority, in default of owner	nil.
(3) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by owners of intention to close	nil.
(B) Proceedings under Public Health Acts.	
(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	103
(2) Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied—	
(a) By owners	103
(b) By Local Authority in default of owner	nil.
(C) Proceedings under Section 17 and 18 of the Housing, Town Planning, etc., Act, 1909.	
(1) Number of representations made with a view to the making of Closing Orders ...	nil.
(2) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made ...	nil.
(3) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the dwelling houses having been rendered fit	nil.
(4) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made ...	nil.
(5) Number of dwelling houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders ...	nil.

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT.

Report as to work completed during the year 1923. James W. Northcombe, C.R.S.I., F.I.S.E., M.S.I.A.

Number of Informal Notices given	...	...	...	...	612
Number of Statutory Notices served	...	...	...	...	103
Houses and premises cleansed and repaired	...	...	...	...	324
Defective Roofs repaired	...	...	...	...	96
" Courtyards repaired	...	...	...	...	7
" Windows repaired	...	...	...	...	37
" Shutters repaired	...	...	...	...	111
" Floors repaired	...	...	...	...	31
" Stairs repaired	...	...	...	...	3
" Waste troughs repaired	...	...	...	...	6
New Waste troughs provided	...	...	...	...	14
House drains repaired, cleansed, etc.	...	...	...	...	105
Water Closets, new, provided	...	...	...	...	22
" " repaired	...	...	...	...	161
" " unchoked and cleaned	...	...	...	...	107
Water Supply, houses supplied with town's water	...	...	...	...	7
House drains connected to sewer	...	...	...	...	7
Water Closets flushed	...	...	...	...	16
Cesspits destroyed	...	...	...	...	3
Overcrowding abated	...	...	...	...	11
Animals removed, being improperly kept	...	...	...	...	170
Removal of dung and other refuse	...	...	...	...	74
Dust removal, communications received and attended to	...	...	...	...	96

Visits and Inspections.

Slaughterhouses		...	...	...	288
Bakehouses	...	...	...	...	81
Common Lodging Houses	...	...	...	...	30
Dairies and Milkshops	...	...	...	...	160
Cowsheds	...	...	...	...	62
Manure	...	...	...	...	99
Cesspits	...	...	...	...	9
General	...	...	...	...	1,971
Infectious Diseases	...	...	...	...	388
Hide and Skin Dealers	...	...	...	...	56
Gut Scraping	...	...	...	...	51
Tanners	...	...	...	...	4
Rag and Bone Dealers	...	...	...	...	30
Food Shops	...	...	...	...	47

Tents, Vans and Sheds	...	...	...	19
Parade	...	...	...	50
Markets	...	...	...	56
Cattle Market	...	...	...	8
Total				3,409

Meat destroyed at the Destructor during the year:—

				cwts.	qrs.	lbs.
Frozen Beef	...	...	...	1	3	12
Carcases of Beef (2)	...	...	...	8	3	26
Pork Carcases	...	...	...	21	1	22
Bacon	...	...	...	8	0	4
Plucks	...	...	...	2	2	7
Total...				42	3	15

Disinfecting during the year.

Rooms:—

Tuberculosis	...	...	...	...	116
Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	...	97
Diphtheria	...	...	...	...	24
Pneumonia	...	...	...	...	5
Cancer	...	...	...	...	15
Meningitis	...	...	...	...	3
Verminous and Scabies	...	...	...	...	33
Total					293

Bedding and Clothing, Articles:—

Tuberculosis	...	...	...	...	1,088
Other Infectious Diseases	...	...	...	...	2,443
Verminous and Scabies	...	...	...	...	624
Military	...	...	...	...	210
Total					4,365

The van used for the removal of clothing and bedding to the steam disinfector has been disinfected 165 times.

The number of persons who have received disinfectants during the year was 328.

Number of Animals Slaughtered in the Borough during the Year.

Bullocks	...	...	...	...	...	1,126
Calves	...	...	...	...	...	3,740
Sheep	...	...	...	...	...	10,966
Pigs	...	...	...	...	...	12,796
Total						...
						28,628

METEOROLOGICAL TABLE, 1923.

MONTH.	Barometer.			Thermometer.			Sunshine.		Rainfall.		
	Mean.	Highest.	Lowest.	Mean.	Highest.	Lowest.	Hours.	Sunless Days.	Inches.	Days Rain fell	Days with 04 or more
January	30.19	30.68	29.63	42.6°	55°	25°	57.5	10	1.735	17	7
February	29.53	30.12	28.78	44.5°	57°	26°	76.5	8	7.86	25	23
March	29.99	30.27	29.31	44.5°	62°	28°	95.5	4	1.34	14	8
April	29.66	30.09	29.30	46.0°	60°	24°	95.5	7	2.45	21	15
May	29.90	30.17	29.40	51.05°	75°	32°	185.5	1	2.22	22	13
June	30.13	30.46	29.89	56.4°	75°	41°	185.5	5	0.57	6	2
July	30.00	30.34	29.48	61.4°	90°	45°	187.0	2	0.885	15	7
August	29.90	30.29	29.21	60.87°	82°	39°	228.0	2	1.93	17	9
September	29.98	30.40	29.34	55.26°	74°	34°	161.0	2	2.58	15	13
October	29.69	30.22	28.95	51.24°	72°	30°	98.0	5	5.10	26	20
November	29.77	30.31	29.20	37.8°	57°	17°	95.0	3	2.22	17	9
December	29.99	30.50	29.22	41.4°	53°	22°	43.5	9	2.82	26	13

Total Sunshine—1508.5 hours; Sunless Days—58.

Total Rainfall—31.71 inches; Total No. of days rain fell—221.





