

[Report 1962] / Medical Officer of Health, Taunton Borough.

Contributors

Taunton (England). Borough Council.

Publication/Creation

1962

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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER
OF HEALTH



HUGH MORRISON, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.

AND

CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

G. M. PAWSON, M.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I.

OF THE

BOROUGH OF TAUNTON

FOR THE YEAR 1962





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FOR THE YEAR 1962



ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE
COMMISSIONER
OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR
1907

MASSACHUSETTS
1908

Public Health Department,
St. Paul's House,
Taunton.

July, 1963.

The Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses,
THE BOROUGH OF TAUNTON,
Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report for the year 1962.

The report is drawn up in accordance with Ministry of Health instructions, and follows the general lines of previous reports, so that comparisons with the conditions of former years may easily be made.

The tables dealing with Vital Statistics have been largely re-designed in the hope that this material will become more generally readable and interesting. The section on Immunisation against infectious diseases has also been re-drafted in an attempt to give a clearer picture of the important work which is carried out in this field. I have expanded the account of the Health Visiting and other Personal Health Services carried on in the Borough. Although these are administered by the County Council as Local Health Authority, I feel that members of the Borough Council and others interested should be aware of the widespread activities in Preventive Medicine which are constantly going on in the town.

Housing conditions remain one of the major preoccupations of most Health Departments, and in this respect the Taunton Department is no exception. We have been fortunate in securing the services of Mr. Hopes of Exeter during the year as a third member of the Public Health Inspecting Staff, and already great benefit has accrued from the extension of time which can be devoted to the problems of housing in the Borough. A considerable increase in housing inspection has, however, become necessary because of the new legislation dealing with Houses in Multi-occupation which came into force during the year, and the Department is still at full stretch on housing work. An account of this legislation and of other housing matters is given in the Chief Public Health Inspector's portion of the Report.

I wish to express my appreciation of the help I have received during the year from the Chairman of the Public Health Committee Councillor J. Clough, from the Public Health Inspectors and from my fellow officials and staff.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

HUGH MORRISON,
Medical Officer of Health.

BOROUGH OF TAUNTON

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health, 1962

GENERAL STATISTICS

Acreage of Borough	...	...	...	...	...	...	2,581
Population (estimated by Registrar General, mid-year)	...	...	...	...	...	...	36,230
Number of inhabited houses and flats (separately assessed) at the end of 1962 (according to the rate books)	...	...	...	...	...	...	10,936
Rateable value at the end of 1962	...	...	...	...	...	...	£567,843
Estimated product of a penny rate (a) Original	...	...	...	...	...	...	£2,310
(b) Revised	...	...	...	...	...	...	£2,329

VITAL STATISTICS

It should be pointed out that in the figures which follow the standardisation of the rate for births and deaths allows for the differing age and sex distribution of the population in different areas, and is obtained by multiplying the crude rate by a comparability factor for the district furnished by the Registrar General. This enables comparison to be made with the figures for the country as a whole, or with those for other districts.

1. Births.

(a) Live Births

			M	F	Total
Legitimate	...	...	287	248	535
Illegitimate	...	...	20	14	34
Total	...	...	307	262	569

Birth Rate per 1,000 population	...	...	...	...	15.95
Standardised Birth Rate :—					
Taunton	...	...	...	...	15.79
England and Wales	...	...	...	...	18.00
Percentage illegitimate of total live births	...	...	...	...	5.97

(b) Still Births

Total	...	...	...	...	9
Rate per 1,000 live and still births :—					
Taunton	...	...	...	...	15.81
England and Wales	...	...	...	...	18.10
Total live and Still Births	...	...	...	...	578

2. Deaths

(a) Total Deaths	...	...	...	...	...	411	
Death Rate per 1,000 population	...	...	...	...	...	...	11.31
Standardised Death Rate :—							
Taunton	...	...	...	...	...	...	10.63
England and Wales	...	...	...	...	...	...	11.90
(b) Infant Deaths (deaths under 1 year) :—							
Total	...	...	...	...	...	12	
Infant Deaths per 1,000 live births :—							
Taunton	...	...	...	...	...	...	21.08
England and Wales	...	...	...	...	...	...	21.40
Legitimate Infant Deaths per 1,000 legitimate live births	...	...	...	...	...	...	18.69
Illegitimate " " " " illegitimate " " "	...	...	...	...	...	...	58.81
Neo-natal Morality Rate (deaths under 4 weeks per 1,000 live births)	...	...	...	...	...	...	17.57
Early Neo-natal Morality Rate (deaths under 1 week per 1,000 live births)	...	...	...	...	...	...	15.81
Perinatal Mortality Rate (Still Births and deaths under one week combined per 1,000 live and Still Births)	...	...	...	...	...	...	29.32

Causes of Infant Deaths :—

Cause of Death	Under 1 week	1—4 Weeks	1—6 Months	6—12 Months	Total under 1 year
Collapse of Lung	3	—	—	—	3
Pneumonia	—	1	1	1	3
Asphyxia	1	—	—	—	1
Prematurity	4	—	—	—	4
Birth Injury	1	—	—	—	1
Total	9	1	1	1	12

(c) Maternal Mortality						
Total Maternal Deaths	...	...	...	...	1	
Rate per 1,000 live and Still Births	...	...	...	...	...	1.73
(d) Deaths from Cancer :—						
Cancer of the Lung	...	...	Males	...	18	
			Females	...	2	
			Total	...	20	
Cancer in all other situations	...	...	Males	...	23	
			Females	...	27	
			Total	...	50	

REGISTRAR GENERAL'S TABLE OF DEATHS

<i>Cause of Death</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Tuberculosis, respiratory	—	—	—
Tuberculosis, other	—	—	—
Syphilitic disease	—	—	—
Diphtheria	—	—	—
Whooping cough	—	—	—
Meningococcal infections	—	—	—
Acute poliomyelitis	—	—	—
Measles	—	—	—
Other infective and parasite diseases	—	1	1
Malignant neoplasm, stomach	7	3	10
Malignant neoplasm, lung, bronchus	18	2	20
Malignant neoplasm, breast	—	6	6
Malignant neoplasm, uterus	—	3	3
Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	16	15	31
Leukaemia, aleukaemia	—	1	1
Diabetes	—	2	2
Vascular lesions of nervous system	24	46	70
Coronary disease, angina	57	24	81
Hypertension with heart disease	6	8	14
Other heart disease	11	34	45
Other circulatory disease	8	11	19
Influenza	—	2	2
Pneumonia	8	9	17
Bronchitis	22	9	31
Other diseases of respiratory system	5	2	7
Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	3	1	4
Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea	1	—	1
Nephritis and nephrosis	2	—	2
Hyperplasia of prostate	3	—	3
Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion	—	1	1
Congenital malformations	—	—	—
Other defined and ill-defined diseases... ..	15	14	29
Motor vehicle accidents	2	1	3
All other accidents	3	2	5
Suicide	2	1	3
Homicide and operations of war	—	—	—

INFECTIOUS DISEASES, 1962

Disease	No. of Cases notified
Measles	88
Scarlatina (Scarlet Fever)	14
Puerperal Pyrexia	4
Meningococcal Infection	1
Dysentery	2
Whooping Cough	2
Acute Primary Pneumonia	5
Acute Influenzal Pneumonia	—
Poliomyelitis	—
Erysipelas	1
Food Poisoning	5
Tuberculosis—Respiratory	7
Tuberculosis—Non-Respiratory	—
Diphtheria	—
Enteric and Paratyphoid Fever	—
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	—
Acute Encephalitis	—
Typhoid Fever	—
Small Pox	—
Malaria	—
Anthrax	—

TUBERCULOSIS

Cases on the Borough Register	Pulmonary	Non-Pulmonary
31.12.61	94	14
Number of new cases during the year	11	2
Number of deaths during the year ...	—	—

IMMUNISATION

Diphtheria Immunisation.

The immunisation campaign against diphtheria has been an outstanding success in this district, and in the country as a whole; but it remains essential that all young children should be given the benefit of this protection, and there is some evidence that without constant stress on this fact, the number of children being immunised each year might easily fall to a dangerously low level.

Total "Primaries" under 5 years	482
Total "Primaries" 5—14 years	65
Total Re-inforcements	316

Whooping Cough Immunisation.

It is customary in the Borough to combine immunisation against whooping cough with the course used to protect against diphtheria, and this is also a most valuable public health measure, since whooping cough is now probably the most serious of the common infectious diseases affecting young children.

140 babies under one year of age were immunised against whooping cough. This is 24.60% of the total annual live births.

Tetanus Immunisation.

Immunisation against tetanus is now also being offered to children, the required injections usually being combined in the series given against diphtheria and whooping cough.

Number of children immunised :—

	Primaries	Re-inforcing
Under 1 year	140	—
1—5 years	338	11
6—10 years	60	62
11—16 years	4	1

Poliomyelitis Immunisation

Poliomyelitis immunisation, which formally involved injections is now carried out by giving the material by mouth. During 1962 the following persons received a course of primary vaccinations or oral doses.

Children born in 1962	37
Children (aged up to 18 years)	555
Young persons (aged 19—29 years)	61
Persons under 40 years and priority groups	135
Total	788

In addition 844 persons, comprising all groups, received their third (re-inforcing) injection.

154 children between 5—12 years received a 4th re-inforcing injection.

472 children between 5 and 12 years received a dose of Oral after 3 injections.

B.C.G. Immunisation against T.B.

Immunisation against Tuberculosis by the use of B.C.G. vaccine is offered to susceptible children at the age of thirteen.

608 children were given the Heaf Test and approximately 93.4% of these were given the B.C.G. Vaccination.

Small Pox Vaccinations.

The aim in future will be to vaccinate children in the second year of life.

The greatly increased number of young people and adults vaccinated in 1962 resulted from the smallpox epidemic which occurred in the North and Midlands.

				Vaccination		Re-vaccination	
				1961	1962	1961	1962
Under 1 year	...	...	...	315	392	—	—
1 year	...	...	...	14	51	—	3
2—4 years	...	...	...	21	214	1	79
5—14 years	...	...	...	27	814	2	653
15 or over	...	...	...	6	1,238	3	2,130
Totals	...	...	...	383	2,709	6	2,865

PERSONAL HEALTH SERVICES.

Administered in Taunton M.B. by the Somerset County Council.

Health Visiting Services.

There are five Health Visitors engaged on work in the Borough
During 1962 their activities included :—

Home Visiting of Children.

Visits to children under one year of age ... 556

Visits to children under five years of age ... 9,666

Ante-natal Visits.

During the year a scheme was inaugurated whereby expectant mothers booked for hospital confinement were visited and if necessary kept under observation by the Health Visitors in co-operation with the Domiciliary Midwives.

School Children.

Visits are paid to children at the request of the doctor following on the work of the school medical inspections.

Old People.

Special visits are paid to old people as required, on request by doctors, hospital almoners, welfare officers, etc.

School Medical Inspection.

Each Health Visitor visits the schools in her area to assist the School Medical Officer with routine medical inspections and immunisation. When necessary she carries out hygiene surveys in the schools.

Other Visits.

Amongst other cases referred to and dealt with by the Health Visitors are handicapped persons, infectious diseases, difficult social conditions, etc. Visiting of tuberculosis cases and other chest conditions is carried out by a Health Visitor specialising in this work.

Child Welfare Centres.

An additional centre was opened during the year making a total of four in the Borough. Attendances were as follows :—

651 attended Tower Lane, on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons

392 attended All Saints' Church Hall, Halcon, on Wednesday afternoon.

317 attended St. Peter's Church Hall, Priorswood, on Friday afternoons.

160 attended St. Michael's Church Hall, Galmington, on Monday afternoon.

A total attendance of 8,801 children under 5 years of age, including 913 new cases.

Ante-natal Clinics.

The blood test clinic for ante-natal patients has been discontinued. Facilities for this service are now available at the Family Doctors' surgeries and at Musgrove Park Hospital.

The Ante-natal Clinic is staffed each Monday by Domiciliary Midwives who help and advise expectant mothers booked for Wellington Maternity Home or for domiciliary confinement. The average weekly attendance was 14.

Mothercraft Classes.

These are held in the Health Centre weekly with a short break between each series of seven talks.

Classes for relaxation exercises and talks by a Doctor, a Health Visitor or a Midwife are given each time.

There is an average attendance of 30—36, slightly higher during the winter months. It is necessary to divide the class into two groups, the talks being given to each group in turn while the other group is having relaxation exercises.

Domiciliary Midwifery and Nursing.

An average of 3,500 midwifery and nursing visits are made of patients in their own homes each month by domiciliary midwives and nurses. These visits increase with the closer link with follow up visits made to early hospital discharges.

Premature Baby Service.

In addition to the arrangements for the care of full-time children a special service is provided for premature infants. If there is a risk that a child will be borne after less than 37 or 38 weeks' gestation, arrangements are made for the admission of the expectant mother to Musgrove Park Hospital where special facilities are available and special equipment is provided where necessary.

Small or premature babies unsuitable for nursing at home are admitted to that Unit from the district and a special Oxygenaire incubator is sent by ambulance to collect them.

If premature babies borne at home can be nursed there, the district midwife can obtain special equipment for this and advice, if required, from the Area Nursing Officer who follows up all premature births.

During 1962, 31 premature infants were born in hospitals of whom two died; one was born at home.

Distribution of Welfare Foods.

National dried milk, orange juice and codliver oil for infants and vitamin tablets for expectant mothers, provided by the Ministry of Food, are distributed at the Welfare Centres.

The Voluntary Workers of the Taunton Infant Health Society sell at approximately cost price foods such as certain brands of dried milk, babies cereals and rose hip syrup to mothers and children who attend the Clinics.

The Day Nursery.

This is situated at Victoria Park, East Reach and is open each weekday except Saturdays and Public Holidays.

Accommodation is provided from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. for a maximum of 30 children.

The average daily attendance during 1962 was 25, the vast majority of the children on the register belonging to the Priority I group.

Home Help Service.

During 1962, 334 Borough residents received assistance in their homes against 301 in 1961. These included the following types of cases :—

Maternity	...	...	...	...	...	34
Post and pre-natal		...	...	...	...	17
Old age	...	...	...	...	...	154
General illness	...	...	...	...	...	45
Chronic sick	...	...	...	...	...	58
Post operative	...	...	...	...	...	12
Child care	...	...	...	...	...	3
Mental illness	...	...	...	...	...	11

The opening of Calway House considerably reduced the number of elderly persons receiving help. Three Home Helps engaged for night duties in homes of the sick were called on with increasing frequency during the winter months.

This branch of the service works in very close co-operation with the District Nurses.

Orthopaedic Clinic.

This is held in the Health Centre on Tuesday morning and Wednesday afternoon. The Orthopaedic Surgeon attending on the 2nd and 4th Fridays during the month. This service is the responsibility of the Regional Hospital Board but is administered on an agency basis by the Somerset County Council.

Dental Clinic, Tower Lane.

The treatment given to school children during the year ended 31st December, 1962 was as follows :—

1. Number of pupils inspected by the Authority's Dental Officers						
(a) Periodic age groups	...	...	...	...	...	5,437
(b) Specials	...	...	...	...	...	345
					Total (1)	5,782

2.	Number found to require treatment	...	...	...	...	3,485
3.	Number offered treatment	...	...	...	...	2,549
4.	Number actually treated	...	...	...	...	1,130
5.	Attendances made by pupils for treatment including orthodontic patients	...	...	...	...	3,730
6.	Half-days devoted to :—					
	Periodic School Inspections	...	...	...	51	
	Treatment	...	...	...	629	
	Total	...	...	...	...	680

The treatment given to expectant and nursing mothers and to pre-school children is shown below :—

	Adults	Pre-school children
1. Number of cases inspected	11	44
2. Number found to require treatment	10	39
3. Number of cases treated	7	37
4. Number of attendances	35	113
13. Dentures provided	4	—

Ambulance Service.

The main Ambulance Station and Control for the South-West of the County is situated at the entrance to Musgrove Park Hospital. The Ambulance Station serves a very wide area and at 31st December the establishment of vehicles and staff was as follows :—

Vehicles—6 Ambulances
5 Sitting-case Ambulances
1 Car
Staff— 5 Senior Drivers
17 Driver/Attendants

The following details comprise of patients carried and mileage run by vehicles at the Taunton Station during 1962 :—

Ambulances	...	9,580	89,483
Sitting-case Ambulances	...	15,767	115,586
Cars	...	1,301	17,960

All vehicles at this Station are fitted with radio.

MASS RADIOGRAPHY SERVICE

In the Autumn of 1962, the Mass Radiography Service from Bristol conducted Chest X-ray examinations over a period of 10 days. The following table gives an account of the work done :—

Examinations at the Health Centre and at various suburban centres	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2,283
Appointments at Health Centre	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3,008
Firms and other establishments visited	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1,462
Cases recalled for further investigation	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	48

Abnormalities discovered :—

Active Tuberculosis	...	...	...	...	...	...	5
Healed Tuberculosis	...	...	...	...	...	...	8
Bronchial Carcinoma	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Chronic Bronchitis	...	...	...	...	...	...	4
Fibrosis of Lungs	...	...	...	...	...	...	8
Abnormalities of chest or diaphragm	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Bronchiectasis	...	...	...	...	...	...	5
Heart lesions	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Infections of Lungs	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
Spontaneous Pneumothorax	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Sarcoidosis	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Goitre	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Benign Tumour	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Total	...	...	...	...	...	...	48

NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT, 1948—Section 47

No court proceedings had to be taken to remove persons in need of care and attention from their homes to hospital or other institutions.

There was one case in which informal action had to be resorted to for this purpose. This concerned an elderly lady who was living in very deplorable conditions and who although very unwilling to consider the idea of going into hospital, was very much happier once the transfer had been effected.

WATER SUPPLY

The following notes are kindly supplied by the Council's Waterworks Engineer, W. J. Wonnacott, Esq., M.I.C.E., M.I.W.E.

The total amount of treated water delivered into supply during 1962 was :—

Taunton Statutory Area	...	...	761,391,000	gallons
Bulk Supplies to Taunton R.D.C.	...	...	34,598,807	„
Wellington R.D.C.	...	...	54,955,240	„
Williton R.D.C.	...	...	111,041,077	„
Bridgwater R.D.C.	...	...	3,082,000	„
Free Supplies	...	...	1,900,000	„
			966,968,124	„

The amount pumped from the River
Otter in 1962 was :— 121,082,000 „

This represents 15.90% of the water available from all sources.
The total rainfall recorded at the various stations was :—

Leigh Reservoir (Blackdowns)	...	30.45	inches
Clatworthy Reservoir (Brendons)		36.865	„

During the year 1962 considerable progress in new works has been made in the Taunton Corporation Water Undertaking. The principal schemes of work completed were as follows :—

- (a) Priorswood Road to Durston 9in. and 6in. Trunk main
—£26,990.
- (b) Staplegrove—Obridge 15in., 12in. and 9in. Link main
—£26,231.
- (c) Easter Parishes Contract No. 1, 3in. and 6in. Mains
—£32,366.

During the year 1962, 555 new supplies were connected to the Corporation's mains.

The West Somerset Water Board Order 1962, made on 3rd December, 1962, and coming into Operation on 1st January, 1963, provided for the transfer on the 1st April, 1963, of the Water Undertakings of the Borough of Bridgwater and Taunton; the Urban District Councils of Minehead and Wellington; the Watchet Waterworks Company and Rural District Councils of Bridgwater, Dulverton, Williton, Wellington and Taunton.

The area of the Board will be 610 square miles, serving a population of 154,000 and a daily water requirement of 9,500,000 gallons. The Headquarters of the Board will be situated in Taunton, with Divisional Offices in Bridgwater, Taunton and Minehead.

The Chief Officers of the Board will be :—

Chief Engineer—W. J. Wonnacott, M.I.C.E., M.I.W.E.,
Chartered Civil Engineer.

Clerk/Financial Officer—A. N. Cockayne, A.I.M.T.A.,

Part-time Solicitor—K. A. Horne, Town Clerk, Taunton.

Water Samples.

Test	Raw Water	Treated Supply	
		Satisfactory	Not satisfactory
Bacteriological ...	23	223	4
Chemical ...	6	44	—

The unsatisfactory bacteriological samples consisted of two taken from private premises, where the extent of contamination was minimal and due to some plumbing defect on the premises themselves which was quickly rectified, together with two from a deep well supply. In the later case the water was not being used for drinking purposes, but here also measures were taken to deal with the trouble.

It will be seen that chemical sampling of the water was carried out much more frequently than in previous years. This has resulted from the appointment of a full time Analyst to the Water Depart-

ment and is a valuable additional check on quality. These analyses have revealed minor chemical abnormalities in some cases which have then been corrected, but generally speaking the water has been of first class quality for drinking purposes.

SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

A new method of sludge disposal has been put into operation during the year. This consists of transporting digested liquid sludge from the works in tankers and spraying it on to agricultural land where its manurial value is considerable.

The procedure follows the lines of a large scheme which has operated successfully for some time in Hertfordshire. The great advantage is that considerable less space requires to be set aside for sludge drying and storage at the works.

Some complaints of nuisance have arisen from the areas where the digested sludge has been distributed, but the process is being kept under very careful observation to ensure that no danger to health or ill effect on the amenities of the countryside may occur.

HOUSING.

I am indebted to the Borough Architect, the Borough Engineer and Surveyor and the Housing Officer for the following information and tables :—

TABLE I.

No. of Post-War Houses erected to 31st December, 1962		Programme for 1963
By Local Authority	By Private Enterprise	By Local Authority
2,519	667	241

Houses required :—

To abate overcrowding	...	...	...	...	...	4
To overcome unsatisfactory conditions	...	...	...	...	...	780
Total number of applicants for Council Houses at the end of 1963	...	...	...	...	...	895
Temporary housing units occupied	...	...	...	...	...	225

TABLE 2.

Details of Post-War Houses :—

Temporary Bungalows	...	...	...	...	225
Permanent Bungalows	...	...	...	...	84
Woolaway Bungalows	...	...	...	...	1
Brick Bungalows	...	...	...	...	10
Bedsitting Room Flats	...	...	...	...	33
Five bedroomed houses	...	...	...	...	8
Four bedroomed houses	...	...	...	...	44
Three bedroomed houses	...	...	...	...	1,290
Two bedroomed houses	...	...	...	...	420
Two bedroomed flats	...	...	...	...	236
One bedroomed flats	...	...	...	...	129
Three bedroomed maisonettes	...	...	...	...	6
Two bedroomed maisonettes	...	...	...	...	15
					2,501
Two bedroomed flats	...	...	...	...	2
One bedroomed flats	...	...	...	...	2
Three bedroomed maisonettes	...	...	...	...	2
Two bedroomed maisonettes	...	...	...	...	12
					18

TABLE 3.

	Houses erected during 1962	In course of erection	Conversions
Local Authority ...	66	398	—
Private Enterprise	100	134	8

TABLE 4.

1. Houses to be completed between 1st January and 31st December, 1963	...	...	...	...	...	281
2. Houses expected to be in contract between 1st January and 31st December, 1963, but not completed	...	...	...	...	...	241
						522

IMPROVEMENT GRANTS.

Discretionary.

Number of applications and houses dealt with during the year 1962 :—

			Applications	No. of dwellings
Received	...	...	21	22
Approved	...	...	19	20
Rejected	...	...	2	2

Number of dwellings in current years applications where improvements have been completed	...	...	11
--	-----	-----	----

Number of dwellings from previous years applications where improvements have been completed	...	15
---	-----	----

Standard Improvement Grants.

Number of applications and dwellings dealt with during the year January—December, 1962 :—

			Applications	No. of dwellings
Received	...	...	37	37
Approved	...	...	36	36
Rejected	...	...	1	1

Number of dwellings in current years applications where improvements have been completed	...	...	20
--	-----	-----	----

Number of dwellings from previous years applications where improvements have been completed	...	9
---	-----	---

ANNUAL REPORT
of the
CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR
for the year 1962.

To the Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses.

Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have much pleasure in submitting my Annual Report for 1962. The year has been one of considerable change as regards the staffing of the Department. In January we welcomed our new Medical Officer of Health—Dr. H. Morrison who succeeded the late Dr. L. Fay, and Miss N. Baird who followed Mr. Wilkinson as Chief Clerk. In June the newly created post of third Public Health Inspector was filled by Mr. L. G. Hopes who came to us from the Exeter City Council.

The usual routine visits and inspections have again been carried out and full details of such appear later in the Report. It had been hoped that with the advent of a third Inspector to have resumed the long delayed and very important work of "house-to-house" inspections which were last carried out in 1955. Such inspections together with the judicious use of Improvement Grants are often the means whereby an extra lease of life can be given to old dwellings, which would otherwise soon fall into such a state of irreparable decay that the only answer would be the negative one of a Clearance or Demolition Order. However this was not to be, for in May the new Housing (Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation) Regulations 1962 came into force and since then much of the Public Health Inspectors' time has been occupied therewith. The problems encountered in this work have been extremely difficult, complex and very often frustrating due to the conditions brought about by overcrowding, lack of basic amenities, and ill-planned layouts. The work of inspection has meant an inordinate number of visits and re-visits to nearly all premises, including many outside normal working hours. In addition a considerable volume of work has been carried out under the Housing Act in connection with Clearance Areas and Closing Orders, etc., and repairs have been effected to alleviate housing defects in over 170 premises through either informal or Statutory action under the Public Health Act, 1936.

At the time of writing this Report it would appear that forthcoming legislation is likely to increase the responsibilities of the Health Department in the near future. The Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Bill has already had its second reading and its implementation will entail an initial systematic and detailed inspection of all such premises in the Borough and subsequent routine visits thereafter. The new Meat Inspection Regulations which were circulated in draft form to interested bodies last August are likely to become operative before the end of 1963. They set out a detailed criteria for the inspection of meat, prescribe the method of marking meat after inspection and empower Local Authorities to levy charges for the meat inspection service. When it is considered that over 33,000 animals were inspected during the current year, it must follow that the increase in the volume of work entailed in this particular field is likely to be considerable.

In conclusion I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Chairman and Members of the Health Committee, the Medical Officer of Health and all members of the staff for their unfailing help and kindness at all times.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

G. M. PAWSON,

Chief Public Health Inspector.

SUMMARY OF VISITS AND INSPECTIONS

Housing and General Sanitary Work.

Houses inspected under the Public Health Acts	...	...	...	176
Houses inspected under the Housing and Rent Acts	...	...	...	134
Houses inspected under the Taunton Corporation Act	...	...	...	62
Re-inspections under above Acts	...	...	...	524
Houses in Multiple Occupation inspected and re-visited	...	...	...	318
Miscellaneous housing inspections	...	...	...	142
Smoke observations, etc.	...	...	...	40
Moveable dwellings	...	...	...	29
Dealers in old metal	...	...	...	1
Infectious diseases and disinfections	...	...	...	7
Drainage, in connection with	...	...	...	328
Factories	...	...	...	37
Verminous or infested premises	...	...	...	87
Interviews	...	...	...	388
Noise, in connection with	...	...	...	14
Offensive trades	...	...	...	2
Offices and shops	...	...	...	99
Pet shops	...	...	...	25
Cinemas and Places of Entertainment	...	...	...	16
Refuse collection and disposal	...	...	...	8
Rag Flock premises	...	...	...	20
Rodent Control (excluding visits by Rodent Operator)	...	...	...	107
Schools	...	...	...	12
Miscellaneous visits	...	...	...	556

Housing Repairs.

During the year 100 complaints were received with regard to housing repairs, and these were dealt with either informally or by Statutory action under Section 92 of the Public Health Act, 1936. It was not found possible to carry out any routine housing inspections.

During the year the following work was carried out :—

Drains cleared	...	...	...	45
Drains renewed or repaired	...	...	...	15
Sewers cleared	...	...	...	36
Cesspools emptied	...	...	...	2
Inspection chambers built	...	...	...	13
Inspection chambers—new covers provided	...	...	...	2
New gullies provided	...	...	...	4
Yard surfaces renewed	...	...	...	5
Eaves gutters renewed	...	...	...	6
Eaves gutters repaired	...	...	...	5
Rainwater pipes renewed	...	...	...	14
Waterclosets provided	...	...	...	1
W.C. pans renewed	...	...	...	14

W.C. flushing cisterns provided	...	...	13
Roofs renewed	...	...	5
Roofs repaired	...	...	34
Chimney stacks renewed	...	...	5
Chimney stacks repaired	...	...	7
Chimney flashings renewed	...	...	1
Walls re-built	...	...	8
External walls repaired	...	...	19
Ceilings repaired or renewed	...	...	8
Floors renewed	...	...	16
Floors repaired	...	...	11
Skirting boards renewed	..	...	4
Sub-floor ventilation improved	...	...	2
Wall rendering renewed or repaired	...	...	14
Dampness abated	...	...	23
Fireplaces renewed or repaired	...	...	10
Staircases repaired	...	...	1
Staircases—handrails provided	...	...	1
Doors renewed or repaired	...	...	7
New windows provided	...	...	5
Windows repaired	...	...	14
Window sills renewed	...	...	1
Windows—new sash cords provided	...	...	9
Natural lighting improved	...	...	3
Ventilation improved	...	...	5
Water service pipes renewed	...	...	12
Water heating system installed	...	...	11
Baths provided	...	...	11
Wash-hand basins provided	...	...	11
Kitchen sinks renewed or repaired	...	...	7
Ventilated food cupboards provided	...	...	15
Total	...	...	455

Housing Act, 1957.

During the year a certain number of houses were found on detailed inspection to be so structurally defective as to be incapable of repair at a reasonable cost, and as a result two small Clearance Areas were represented. One in East Reach comprised six separate dwellings and a shop; and the other in Whitehall comprised four dwellings.

For a long time there has been a considerable number of undemolished houses in confirmed Clearance Areas. This has been due to the presence of original tenants who have presented peculiar problems as to re-housing, or because of certain other difficulties. This problem has almost been resolved by the demolition of 35 of these houses. A further 16 houses were also demolished either as a result of Demolition Orders, Undertakings, or some form of development.

Closing Orders were made in respect of three Underground Rooms and one attic room. One Closing Order and one Undertaking not to let were terminated upon completion of the necessary works of repair. Undertakings not to let for human habitation were accepted in respect of seven houses, a caravan, and a chalet.

HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

Houses in multiple occupation are usually found to be the larger type of three or four storied Victorian house, formerly occupied by one large family; but which now cannot be economically utilised unless converted into flats or let in lodgings.

Such houses provide a very lucrative investment for a comparatively small outlay and a minimum of effort. Unscrupulous landlords batten on human misery and taking unlimited advantage of the housing shortage have deliberately overcrowded these houses—completely disregarding the hazards to health and safety that arise mainly from a lack of amenities.

The legislation relating to these types of house introduces a relatively new field of work for Public Health Inspectors by requiring owners to provide baths and wash-hand basins together with a supply of both hot and cold running water, besides facilities for space heating and cooking. Another new feature is the enforcement of Management Orders where conditions are such as to warrant such rigorous measures being taken. Measures to abate overcrowding include powers to reduce the number of occupants in any particular house as and when lettings become vacant.

In the six months ending December, 1962 a total of twenty-nine houses in multiple occupation were inspected. These contained 131 lettings with a total of 222 occupants. The number of visits necessary to ensure a complete and comprehensive inspection of each letting was 318; and as some of the lettings were occupied by either young married couples or single persons who were at work during the day, it necessarily followed that numerous visits had to be made in the evenings outside normal working hours. In most instances it has been found necessary to serve very full and comprehensive schedules on the Owners to carry out repairs and provide the amenities as laid down in the Regulations.

The work of inspecting these premises has produced considerable difficulties as the type of letting is invariably mixed, consisting of both family occupation and single bed-sitting rooms in the same house. Ideally each flat should be self-contained with its own kitchen, bathroom and other amenities; whereas in bed-sitting rooms some sharing is permitted. Where rooms in a house are fully occupied, the provision of bathrooms and water closets is delayed until suitable rooms become vacant.

Cases can arise where an owner who has received notification of the defects and lack of amenities, immediately replies by serving notices of eviction on the tenants. If alternative accommodation is not available, it would seem that the only possible action would be compulsory purchase. I feel that some provision should have been made in the existing Act for this contingency by giving security of tenure to the tenants as soon as the house has been inspected and whilst the necessary repairs and improvements are being carried out.

As so often happens with legislation which comes within the province of the Public Health Department, no fixed legal standards have been set out and it is probable that when appeals are made to the County Court, then maybe such standards will be fixed.

One encouraging feature which has resulted from the activity of the Public Health Inspectors in this particular field has been the tendency for plans which have been submitted in connection with the conversion of large houses into multiple lettings, for them to show a very pronounced and higher standard in relation to the provision of amenities.

It is not possible at this stage to estimate accurately the extent of the problem in Taunton, particularly when it is realised that any premises where there is more than one letting could be liable for consideration under the Regulations. The work of inspection is of necessity slow, but is very worthwhile and will eventually bring a much needed improvement in a sphere of housing, which previously had been neglected due mainly to a complete lack of statutory powers capable of dealing with an ever growing and worsening situation. Provided further time does not have to be diverted to other matters it should be possible for the Public Health Inspectors to complete the inspection of the premises where the problem is most acute within the next two years, when a more accurate picture of the situation should be possible.

Complaints.

During the year 582 complaints were received at the Health Department having reference to the following matters :—

Housing conditions	...	...	...	...	...	100
Drainage	...	...	...	...	...	90
Rats or mice	...	...	...	...	...	160
Unsound food	...	...	...	...	...	117
Miscellaneous	...	...	...	...	...	39
Insect Pests	...	...	...	...	...	76

All these complaints were investigated and appropriate action taken.

Public Health Act, 1936—Section 24.

During the year 36 sewers were found to be choked, and were cleared by the Corporation. Sewers dealt with under this section are those that were maintainable by owners of property under previous Public Health Acts.

CLEAN AIR ACT, 1956.

During the year seven proposals for new boiler installations were considered and in three cases the chimney heights were raised in accordance with our recommendations.

A source of excessive smoke emissions has been eliminated by the conversion of two boilers at an industrial premises from hand firing of solid fuel to automatic oil firing. Complaints of excessive grit emission from another large installation caused some difficulty but with the co-operation of the National Coal Board and the company concerned, new techniques were adopted and some improvement has taken place.

At present the main efforts in the abatement of domestic smoke are concentrated on the more densely populated areas in the country, but I am disturbed that houses are still being erected in Taunton without being fitted with modern efficient fireplaces capable of operating on smokeless fuel. This could well mean that the householders concerned will be put to additional expense of conversion in the future for which no government grant would be considered.

RENT ACT, 1957.

During the year no applications for Certificates of dis-repair were received.

VERMIN

During the year 39 premises were treated for various forms of insect pests with satisfactory results. Such work was carried out by the Rodent Operator under the direction of one of the Public Health Inspectors.

Rodent Control.

The Corporation's Rodent Operator continued the systematic search for rodents, and treatment of premises where infestation was found. The following work was carried out during the year :—

Treatment at private dwellings	...	...	...	249
Visits involved	...	...	...	1,257
Treatments at business premises	...	...	...	55
Visits involved	...	...	...	528
Treatments at Council premises	...	...	...	61
Visits involved	...	...	...	303
Survey visits	...	...	...	217
Wasps' nests destroyed	...	...	...	8
Other vermin, etc.	...	...	...	40

Disinfection.

Disinfection of premises and bedding after the occurrence of disease, or after death, was carried out to 3 houses.

SPECIAL CLASSES OF PREMISES AND OCCUPATIONS SUBJECT TO CONTROL BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

Public Health Act, 1936.

Offensive Trades—

Tanners	...	...	...	...	...	1
Hide and Skin Depots	...	...	...	...	...	1
Rag and Bone Merchants	...	...	...	...	...	2

The Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act, 1960.

The Owners of the two residential sites have been putting into effect the requirements of the Model Standards as to hard standings and paths, fire fighting appliances, water supply, sanitary accom-

modation, baths, laundry facilities, refuse bins, storage space and car parks. Both Owners have been co-operative and the sites are rapidly coming into conformity with the Act. One Owner has extended his site by the inclusion of a small area of land formerly covered by two houses which were the subject of a Clearance Area; and this has enabled the capacity of the site to be increased by two caravans. The other site was found on its initial inspection to be overcrowded, but this has been gradually reduced each time a caravan dweller has been re-housed by the Council.

The number of licensed individual caravans is seven; whilst several others are occupied by personnel employed on building site operations which are exempt from licensing requirements.

The Rag, Flock and Other Filling Materials Act, 1951.

Registered premises	...	...	...	...	...	...	10
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These premises are regularly inspected, and during the year one sample of rag flock was analysed and found satisfactory.

Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1907—Section 86

Dealers in old metal and places of business registered under this Section	...	...	...	...	...	...	11
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Pet Animals Act, 1951.

Licences to keep pet shops	...	...	...	...	...	6
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The conditions prevailing at the above premises during the year were found to be satisfactory.

Sampling of Swimming Bath Water.

During the year 144 samples of the water at the St. James' Street Baths, taken at the inlets and outlet ends, were tested for residual chlorine. All the samples were found to be satisfactory.

Two new swimming pools were constructed for use at private schools. Consultations took place with those responsible; and following technical advice an automatic filtration and chlorination has been installed at the larger pool. Similar plant should be installed at the other pool next year.

FOOD INSPECTION.

Visits in connection with the inspection and supervision of foods and food premises; and the sampling of food for bacteriological examination :—

Slaughterhouses	...	...	...	...	...	847
Wholesale Meat Depots	...	...	...	...	...	101
Butchers and Fishmongers	...	...	...	...	...	92
Dairies and Ice Cream Premises	...	...	...	...	...	93
Bakehouses and Confectioners	...	...	...	...	...	146
Grocers and Greengrocers	...	...	...	...	...	171
Food preparation premises	...	...	...	...	...	86
Restaurants and Hotels, etc.	...	...	...	...	...	130
Licensed Premises	...	...	...	...	...	104
Other visits	...	...	...	...	...	184
Total						1,954

This total shows an increase of 712 visits over the previous year's total of 1,242, and is a clear indication of the better supervision of such premises which has been made possible with the increase in staff.

Milk Supply.

There are 8 registered Dairies, and 29 registered Distributors of Milk operating within the Borough.

The Milk (Special Designation) Regulations, 1960 greatly reduced the duties of the Council, so that sampling is no longer carried out. The Council are still responsible for the registration of persons at Distributors of Milk.

Ice Cream.

During the year 7 premises were registered for the Storage and Sale of Ice Cream; and the total number of registrations under the Food and Drugs Act is as follows :—

Manufacture and Sale	...	...	...	...	3
Storage	...	...	...	...	1
Storage and Sale	...	...	...	...	117

Food Preparation Premises.

The total of such premises is 51, and 3 of these were new registrations. These premises are mainly butchers, fried fish and chip shops, and bakehouses where meat pies or faggots are manufactured. These premises receive frequent visits and their products are subject to periodic sampling.

BACTERIOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF FOOD

The taking of samples of ice cream, liquid egg and water has been the regular practice for many years; but during the year it has been extended to include meat, meat products and artificial cream. These last mentioned items are sampled either at the premises of the producer, or as sold to customers in the shops. At the moment the examination of meat, meat products and artificial cream is limited to the presence of pathogenic organisms; but it is hoped that in the near future it will be possible for the tests to include a plate count for *b. coli* and other bacteria. This is a natural corollary to the inspection of food premises under the Food Hygiene Regulations, as such results would be of inestimable value in making a true assessment of the degree of hygiene practised in the various food premises. Even without the benefit of a plate count it has been found that the mere fact of sampling has a very salutary effect on all members of the food trade from factory managers to shop assistants, and tends to keep all concerned "on their toes."

Details of the various samples taken are given below :—

Artificial Cream.

The total number of samples taken was 57, of which about 20% were taken at the place of manufacture and the rest from confectionery which was exposed for sale in the shops. No evidence of pathogens was found; but during the course of sampling a batch of chocolate coated sponge rolls were found to be affected with mould, and this eventually led to the vendors being prosecuted.

Ice Cream.

The total number of samples taken was 73; of which 49 were from the large national manufacturers, and 24 from two local producers who use the "Cold Mix" method of manufacture.

Details are as follows :—

			Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
Hot Mix	...	...	48	1	—	—
Cold Mix	...	...	18	3	2	1

A thorough investigation of the three unsatisfactory Cold Mix samples in Grades 3 and 4 was carried out; and it was found that the probable cause was a contaminated tin of the Cold Mix powder, because immediately it was discarded and a fresh tin started the

producer again achieved his usual high standard of results. Confirmation was not possible as the laboratory were not in a position to check the purity of the powder.

Liquid Egg.

46 samples were taken at the producer's factory, and of these 43 were found to be satisfactory. The other three were found to be contaminated by Salmonella classified respectively as Menston, Thompson and Typhi-murium. Each batch of contaminated egg was immediately recalled by the producer, and arrangements made for its pasteurisation.

Meat Products, etc.

117 samples were taken and all found to be nil-pathogenic. The details of the various items taken are as follows :—

Beef Burgers	...	...	1	Beef-minced	...	...	7
Beef-pressed	...	...	2	Black Puddings	...	...	6
Brawn	...	...	5	Chicken croquettes	...	...	1
Chicken and Veal Pie	...	...	1	Chitterlings	...	...	1
Faggots	...	...	10	Ham	...	...	7
Luncheon Meat	...	...	4	Pasties	...	...	9
Polonies	...	...	5	Pork Pies	...	...	8
Pork-roast	...	...	4	Sausages	...	...	27
Salami	...	...	4	Steak and Kidney Pies	...	...	3
Tongue	...	...	2	Tripe	...	...	10

Water.

199 samples were taken including 25 of raw water from Fulwood works and 4 from a well. Two unsatisfactory results were given, but subsequent checks proved satisfactory.

Food Inspection.

As a result of inspection of food at foodshops and warehouses, the following commodities were condemned :—

CANNED FOOD

Meat	...	...	...	...	293	Tins
Tongues	...	...	...	...	5	"
Soup	...	...	...	...	37	"
Fish	...	...	...	...	72	"
Milk and Cream	...	...	...	...	84	"
Fruit	...	...	...	...	380	"
Fruit Juice	...	...	...	...	44	"
Tomatoes	...	...	...	...	46	"
Peas	...	...	...	...	110	"
Beans	...	...	...	...	43	"
Carrots	...	...	...	...	14	"
Other Vegetables	...	...	...	...	62	"

OTHER FOODS

Tea and Coffee, etc.	...	...	...	3 Pkts.
Cereals	...	...	...	37 „
Condiments	...	...	...	14 „
Poultry	...	...	...	75 Birds
Cooked Meats	...	...	...	206 lbs.
Flour	...	...	...	2 „
Cakes, Biscuits and Mixes	...	...	...	135 Items
Cheese	...	...	...	13 lbs.
Cooking Fat	...	...	...	5½ „
Jams	...	...	...	23 Jars
Jellies and Moulds	...	...	...	909 Pkts.
Pickles and Sauces	...	...	...	50 Jars
Fresh Fish	...	...	...	108 lbs.
Fresh Fruit	...	...	...	100 „
Miscellaneous	...	...	...	100 „

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT, 1955

During the year there was one prosecution concerning the sale of pre-packed chocolate rolls affected with mould and a fine of £10 was imposed.

The output of factory prepared and packed perishable products is rising and as many of these companies retail over large areas of the country by a network of van salesmen, an efficient system of code marking of the products is essential. Unless this code marking is known to the retailer he has no guide as to the date of manufacture other than the visual appearance of the products. A number of retail companies date-stamp perishable products on arrival and until such time as the manufacturers disclose their code marking or alternatively indicate the date by which the food should be used based on the recommended shelf life, all retailers should consider adopting a simple method of ensuring that the date of delivery is known and the shelf life not exceeded. They cannot delegate their responsibility to the manufacturer, although manufacturers should do everything possible to ensure that the shelf life of their products is known by all concerned in their handling.

The trend towards the all purpose self-service shop continues with the main preparation and pre-packing areas sited away from the salesroom, and the greater proportion of the staff working in the preparation and storage areas rather than in the saleroom. It is important that the same standards of hygienic construction now expected in the saleroom are also provided in the preparation areas to which the public have no access.

Summary of works carried out at all premises in 1962

	Butchers & Fish- mongers	Bakers and Dairies, etc.	Grocers and Green- grocers	Catering Establish- ments	Licensed Premises	Total
Works of Major Reconstruction ...	—	—	7	8	1	16
Food Rooms						
Walls renewed or repaired ...	—	—	3	4	5	12
Walls redecorated ...	2	1	6	8	18	35
Ceilings renewed or repaired ...	—	—	1	1	7	9
Ceiling redecorated ...	2	1	4	8	15	30
Floors repaired or renewed ...	1	—	1	3	8	13
Improvement of lighting ...	—	1	1	1	—	3
Improvement of ventilation ...	—	1	1	2	3	7
Renewed or repaired drainage ...	1	—	1	1	3	6
Equipment, etc.						
New sinks provided ...	—	—	—	4	1	5
Hot water supply provided ...	—	—	—	3	—	3
New drainage boards provided ...	—	—	—	5	—	5
Preparation tables, etc. retopped ...	—	—	1	3	2	6
New equipment, etc. provided ...	—	1	1	10	3	15
Dustbins provided ...	1	1	1	4	—	7
Means of protection of food pro- vided ...	—	8	3	1	—	12
Refrigerators provided ...	—	—	4	2	—	6
Sanitary Accommodation						
New W.C.'s or urinals installed ...	—	—	—	2	1	3
New flushing cisterns provided ...	—	—	—	2	1	3
Sanitary accommodation repaired ...	—	1	1	2	1	5
Sanitary accommodation redecor- ated ...	—	—	—	—	3	3
Sanitary Notices fixed ...	1	3	1	5	—	10
Toilet Accommodation						
Wash-hand Basins provided ...	1	1	—	4	1	7
Hot water supply provided ...	2	—	1	1	1	5
Toilets requisites provided ...	1	—	1	4	—	6
Provision of lockers ...	—	—	—	1	—	1
Miscellaneous.						
Protective clothing provided ...	—	1	—	—	—	1
Treatments for infestations ...	—	—	—	5	1	6
Provision of first-aid materials ...	—	—	—	2	—	2
Totals ...	12	20	39	96	75	242

Meat Inspection.

The slaughtering of food animals is carried on in two licensed slaughterhouses and a bacon factory. It will be seen that there has been a considerable increase (39%) in the number of animals slaughtered during the year.

The following animals were slaughtered during the year :—

Beasts	...	...	...	...	...	256
Cows	...	...	...	...	...	89
Sheep and Lambs	...	...	...	...	...	1,729
Calves	...	...	...	...	...	53
Pigs	...	...	...	...	...	31,119

The inspection of the above carcasses revealed disease as set out in the following table :—

	Cattle (excl. cows)	Cows	Calves	Sheep Lambs	Pigs
Number killed	256	89	53	1,729	31,119
Number inspected	256	89	53	1,729	31,119
Whole carcasses condemned for disease other than T.B.	—	2	—	18	67
Carcasses from which some part or organ was condemned	34	—	—	52	2,691
Percentage of number inspected * affected with disease other than T.B.	13.3%	—	—	4.0%	8.9%
Tuberculosis only—					
Whole carcasses condemned	—	—	—	—	—
Carcasses from which some part or organ was condemned	1	—	—	—	*1,413
Percentage of number inspected affected with T.B.	.4%	—	—	—	4.5%
Cysticercus Bovis—					
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	2	—	—	—	—
Carcasses subjected to treatment by refrigeration	2	—	—	—	—
Carcasses generalised and totally condemned	—	—	—	—	—

Note....*Macroscopic examination indicated that of this total 455 or (32%) are likely to have been *Corynebacterium equi* infections of the sub-maxillary lymph nodes.

In addition, the following meat was condemned at butchers' premises on account of bone taint and other causes :—

Beef	...	...	...	...	1,559 lbs.
Pork	...	...	...	...	127 „
Mutton	...	...	...	...	257 „
Veal	...	...	...	...	33 „

METEOROLOGICAL READINGS

After considerable research among old records it has been found that the first instance of meteorological readings being taken was in 1889—the year of the big flood. It makes very interesting reading, and I cannot do better than quote from the Annual Report of that particular year :—

“Snow fell during February 24th, 25th, 27th, 28th and March 1st and 4th, and this was followed by rain, no less than 4.16 inches being registered during the three days ending Friday the 8th, 2.76 inches of which fell on the Friday. A great thaw accompanied the rainfall, and the result of the pouring down of a vast quantity of water from so large an area of hill country, and well-drained land, can easily be imagined. In a few hours the river had overflowed its banks, and Tangier, and that part of North Town near the river, including Staplegrove Road, Wood Street, Bridge Street and Station Road, were submerged to a depth of from 4 to 5 feet.”

“To obviate so disastrous an inundation in the future, your Authority determined to offer two prizes—one of £100, and a second of £50—for the two best schemes for the prevention of floods; and a number of plans were sent in. Mr. Appleton, C.E., of Torquay, was appointed Arbitrator, and his award was made to those schemes signed respectively “Palma non Sine Pulvere,” and “Hydraulic Engineer.” The estimates varied from £1,807 as a minimum, to £21,680 as a maximum. Neither scheme has been carried out, but work has been done to mitigate to some extent the evils previously existing. The island below the Bridge has been removed, the river has been widened in parts, new Penstocks have been put in, and it is intended to utilize the old Canal in case of Flood. Still, there is serious obstruction below the town, as can easily be seen by walking along the river from Obridge to Bathpool, and until these constricting points are materially relieved, some amount of flooding in exceptionally wet seasons appears to be inevitable.”

The only comparable conditions were those of the second big flood which occurred as recently as October, 1960. In that month rain fell on 26 out of the 31 days, culminating in fall on the 26th October of 1.99 inches giving a record monthly total of 10.66 inches. In that same year rain fell on 216 days, and totalled 40.76 inches.

However it was not until 1896 that regular readings began to be taken, and in that year the main features of the weather were as follows :—

Mean Barometer	Mean Temperature	Total Rainfall	Days rain fell
*29.96 (29.93)	50.58 (49.63)	23.4in. (28.95in.)	146 (179.2)

(* Figures in brackets indicate Annual Average over a period of 43 years)

It was not until 1899 that figures for hours of recorded bright sunshine were available; and in that year 1,830 hours were recorded—a figure which compares very favourably with the annual average of 1,552.5 hours. The number of sunless days was 76, which is ten more than the average.

As a matter of interest I give a few of the outstanding features of the weather in Taunton since records first began. The records as to sunshine are not entirely complete; but the maximum number of hours ever recorded in one year were 1,930 in 1911—this figure exceeds the average by nearly 400. The only other figures which were anywhere near this record were 1,830 in 1899; 1,780 in 1906; 1,815 in 1949; and 1,831 in 1959.

In July, 1911 the number of hours of sunshine—395 was a record for any one month. In fact on only three other occasions has the figure of 300 ever been exceeded! they, 350 in June, 1925, 301 in June, 1957, and 312.25 in June, 1962. *Uere*

The maximum number of completely sunless days was 103 in 1902, which compares most unfavourably with the average of 66.

The maximum shade temperature was 92°F in July, 1911 when that month's average was 64.7°F. Other high temperatures were 90°F in 1923, and 86°F in 1955.

In 1908 the temperature fell to 12°F in January which according to the records was the coldest temperature recorded for ten years. Since then however 31 degrees of frost were recorded in 1917, 34 degrees in 1945, and 28 degrees in 1947.

The average rainfall for Taunton is 28.95 inches. The years of exceptionally heavy rainfall were 35.21 in 1903, 39.23 in 1912, and 38.12 in 1938. On 28th June, 1917 there was a record fall for any period of 24 hours of 4.33 inches;! This figure has never been exceeded, and the nearest approach occurred in June, 1957 when there was a fall of 2.3 inches.

The lowest annual rainfall was 20.02 inches in 1953, followed by 21.45 inches in 1905.

The number of days on which rain falls in a year is not necessarily relative to the total rainfall. The maximum number of such days was 221 in 1923 (when the total was 31.71 inches—approximately 3 inches above average) closely followed by 210 in 1951, and 206 in 1916. The average number is 179.2 days per year.

At the present day figures of meteorological readings are sent regularly to the Meteorological Office and the Somerset River Board. In addition many requests for information from the press, insurance companies and students are dealt with each year. During the past year a full inspection of the Station was carried out by the Meteorological Office, who expressed satisfaction with the work that was being done, and asked if it would be possible for the Station to become a full climatological one. This would be difficult to undertake at the present due to the cost of the additional equipment that would be required.

The figures below set out the main readings for 1962 as compared for those in the previous year and the annual averages :—

	Mean Bar- ometer	Mean Tem- perature	Hours of Sunshine	Sunless days	Total Rainfall	Days Rain fell	rain on .04in. Days of more
1962	30.00	48.17	1601.0	61	26.10	166	110
1961	29.94	50.90	1662.25	61	25.20	167	117
Average	29.93	49.63	1552.50	66	28.95	179	124

The year started off with January having 24 days of rainfall compared with the average of 12; whilst the total of 5.05 inches was 2 inches above average. However this wet start was offset by a particularly dry February when only .62 inches of rain fell over 9 days. June was an outstandingly fine month with 312.25 hours of sunshine and no sunless days—the average sunshine for this month is 220 hours, so we enjoyed almost a 50% bonus of sunshine. June as may well be imagined was very dry as only .13 inches (average 1.58) of rain fell on 4 days (average 11). However once again nature managed to maintain her balance as in the next succeeding two months the sunshine was remarkable for its absence. The highest recorded temperature was 80°F on July 25th, but this was exceptional as generally speaking the summer temperatures were not particularly high. December produced the lowest temperature of the year with 15°F; and snow fell to an approximate depth of 15 inches (equivalent rainfall 1.31 inches) which was more than had been recorded for many years.

METEOROLOGICAL READINGS FOR 1962

Month	Barometer			Thermometer			Sunshine			Rainfall			
	Mean	Max.	Min.	Mean	Max.	Min.	Hours	Max. Reading	No. of Sunless Days	Inches	Days Rain fell	Days with 0.04in. or more	Max. Reading
January	29.89	30.53	28.74	41.60	56	18	56.75	6.00	10	5.05	24	18	.85
February	30.22	30.68	29.53	41.02	55	24	79.75	8.25	7	0.62	9	5	.19
March	29.86	30.36	29.10	37.81	54	16	123.50	9.75	6	0.99	10	8	.32
April	29.95	30.46	29.08	46.52	69	27	170.75	12.25	3	1.43	16	11	.38
May	29.98	30.28	29.48	50.97	64	29	192.0	15.00	2	1.65	16	12	.34
June	30.19	30.60	29.74	57.55	75	34	312.25	15.25	—	0.13	4	1	.08
July	30.01	30.30	29.67	59.42	80	39	163.25	12.25	2	1.30	13	6	.56
August	29.95	30.28	29.15	58.50	71	40	162.25	11.50	3	4.08	17	10	1.80
September	29.93	30.44	29.33	54.83	69	33	130.75	8.00	1	2.79	19	13	.97
October	30.15	30.38	29.62	49.66	67	29	108.75	7.75	2	1.02	9	6	.40
November	29.88	30.56	28.92	42.88	58	22	48.75	6.75	14	4.14	15	10	1.36
December	30.02	30.74	29.26	37.26	55	15	52.25	5.25	11	2.69	14	10	.78*
TOTAL	30.00	—	—	48.17	—	—	1,601.0	—	61	26.10	166	110	—

*Snow

FACTORIES ACT, 1937

1. INSPECTIONS for the purposes as to provisions as to health

Premises	Number on Register	Number of		
		Inspections	Written Notices	Occupiers prosecuted
(1) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	23	4	—	—
(2) Factories not included in (1) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	237	29	5	—
(3) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding outworkers' premises) ...	6	4	—	—
TOTAL	266	37	5	—

2. Cases in which DEFECTS were found

Particulars	Number of cases in which defects were found				Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted
	Found	Remedied	Referred		
			To H.M. Inspector	By H.M. Inspector	
Want of cleanliness	—	—	—	—	—
Overcrowding	—	—	—	—	—
Unreasonable temperature	—	—	—	—	—
Inadequate ventilation	—	—	—	—	—
Ineffective drainage of floors ...	—	1	—	—	—
Sanitary Conveniences—					
(a) Insufficient	2	2	—	—	—
(b) Unsuitable or defective ...	6	5	—	3	—
(c) Not separate for Sexes ...	—	—	—	—	—
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to outwork)	2	2	—	1	—
TOTAL	10	9	—	4	—

OUTWORK (Sections 110 and 111)

Nature of Work	No. of out-workers in August list	Section 110		Section 110	
		No. of prosecutions for failure to supply lists	No. of instances of work in unwholesome premises	Notices served	Prosecutions
Making of wearing apparel ...	293	—	—	—	—

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