

[Report 1955] / Medical Officer of Health, Great Torrington Borough.

Contributors

Torrington (England). Borough Council.

Publication/Creation

1955

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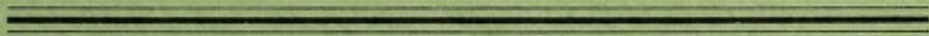
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Borough of Great Torrington



ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

AND THE

**Borough Surveyor
and Sanitary Inspector**



FOR THE YEAR ENDING
31ST DECEMBER, 1955.

Public Health Staff.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH:

C. F. R. BRIGGS, M.B., B.S.: L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S.

BOROUGH SURVEYOR and SANITARY INSPECTOR:

P. F. R. E. SYMONS, M.R.S.H., M.S.I.A.

COMMITTEES:

HOUSING, SANITARY, BUILDING & IMPROVEMENTS.

WATERWORKS MANAGEMENT.

SPECIAL SEWERAGE.



COUNCIL OFFICES,
6, HALSDON TERRACE,
TORRINGTON.

Madam MAYOR, ALDERMEN AND COUNCILLORS,

We beg to Submit our Annual Report for the year ending
31st December, 1955.

During the year the general health of the Borough was very
good. There was no major epidemic of infectious disease.

The corrected birth rate per 1,000 population was 14.0.
That for the whole of England and Wales was 15.0.

The corrected death rate was 14.4. per 1,000 population,
compared with 11.7 for the whole of England and Wales.

We are,

Yours faithfully,

C. F. R. BRIGGS,

Medical Officer of Health.

P. F. R. E. SYMONS,

Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor.

Borough of Great Torrington.

✻ 1955 ✻

CHIEF INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS.

Agricultural.
Glove-making.
Milk Factory.
Cattle-breeding Centre.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|---------------|
| Area (statute acres) .. | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3,592 |
| Mid-year Population | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2,860 |
| Number of Inhabited Houses... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 950 |
| Rateable Value | ... | ... | ... | ... | £16,328 |
| Product of Penny Rate | ... | ... | ... | ... | £65 10s. 2½d. |

VITAL STATISTICS.

| | | | Male | Female | Total |
|--------------|-----|-----|------|--------|-------|
| Live Births | ... | ... | 19 | 16 | 35 |
| Legitimate | ... | ... | 19 | 15 | 34 |
| Illegitimate | ... | .. | — | 1 | 1 |
| Still Births | ... | ... | 1 | — | 1 |

Comparability factor for Births—1.14

| | | England & Wales |
|--|------|-----------------|
| Corrected Birth Rate per 1,000 population | 14.0 | 15.0 |
| Still Birth Rate per 1,000 related Live Births | 27.8 | 23.1 |

The total number of births which took place in the Borough was 64. The average for the previous 5 years was 70. Of the total births the parents were, in 29 cases, resident outside the Borough. 52 Births took place in Torrington Cottage Hospital.

| | | | Male | Female | Total |
|--------|-----|-----|------|--------|-------|
| Deaths | ... | ... | 26 | 31 | 57 |

Comparability factor for Deaths—0.72

| | | England & Wales |
|--|------|-----------------|
| Corrected Death Rate per 1,000 population | 14.4 | 11.7 |
| Deaths of Infants under 1 year per 1,000 related Live Births | 57.1 | 24.9 |



CAUSES OF DEATH.

| | | | Male | Female |
|------------------------------------|-----|-----|------|--------|
| Coronary disease, angina | ... | ... | 1 | 3 |
| Other heart disease | ... | ... | 6 | 13 |
| Vascular disease of nervous system | ... | ... | 4 | 3 |
| Other circulatory disease | ... | ... | 1 | 2 |
| Bronchitis... | .. | ... | — | 2 |
| Cancer of lung | ... | ... | 2 | — |
| Cancer of breast | ... | ... | — | 2 |
| Cancer, other | ... | ... | 5 | — |
| Disease of prostate | ... | ... | 1 | — |
| Disease of kidney | ... | ... | 1 | — |
| Other disease | ... | ... | 3 | 5 |
| Accidents... | ... | ... | 1 | 1 |
| Suicide | ... | ... | 1 | — |

AGE AT DEATH TABLE.

| Age at Death | | | Male | Female |
|--------------|-------------|-----|------|--------|
| Under 1 year | .. | ... | 1 | 1 |
| 1—5 | ... | ... | — | — |
| 6—15 | ... | ... | 2 | — |
| 16—25 | ... | ... | — | — |
| 26—35 | ... | ... | — | — |
| 36—45 | ... | ... | 1 | 1 |
| 46—55 | ... | ... | 3 | — |
| 56—65 | ... | ... | 4 | 1 |
| 66—75 | ... | ... | 5 | 9 |
| 76—85 | ... | ... | 7 | 13 |
| Over 85 | ... | ... | 3 | 6 |
| | Average Age | ... | 63.5 | 75.5 |

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Fourteen cases of pneumonia were notified, in association with the influenza epidemic in the early months of the year. There was no other epidemic.

The following cases of infectious disease were notified during the year :-

| | | | | |
|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|----|
| Pneumonia | ... | ... | ... | 14 |
| Dysentery... | ... | ... | ... | 4 |
| Measles | ... | ... | ... | 1 |
| Scarlet Fever | ... | ... | ... | 1 |
| Puerperal Pyrexia | ... | ... | ... | 1 |

TUBERCULOSIS.

Two new cases of tuberculosis, one pulmonary and one non-pulmonary, were notified during the year.

The following cases were on the Register at the end of the year :-

| | | | Male | Female |
|---------------|-----|-----|------|--------|
| Pulmonary | ... | ... | 7 | 5 |
| Non-pulmonary | ... | ... | 4 | 2 |

VENEREAL DISEASE.

Facilities for clinic treatment exist in Barnstaple. No case of venereal disease came to our notice.

CARE OF EXPECTANT MOTHERS.

Expectant mothers receive attention from their own doctors and from the District Nurse/Midwife, and attend the Cottage Hospital if necessary.

Cheap milk (1½d per pint) is available for expectant mothers, orange juice at reduced price, and free cod-liver oil or vitamin capsules.

Free dental treatment is provided for expectant mothers.

DOMICILIARY MIDWIFERY SERVICE.

The Domiciliary Midwifery Service is provided by the Queen's Institute District Nurse/Midwife, resident in Torrington. She has a motor car and full equipment, including a portable gas-and-air machine and oxygen resuscitation apparatus.

CARE OF YOUNG CHILDREN.

The Child Welfare Clinic, for all children up to school age, is held once a fortnight under the supervision of the Health Visitor. Cheap milk is provided for nursing mothers. Milk powder at reduced prices is provided for infants, and cod-liver oil, orange juice and other vitamins.

HEALTH VISITING SERVICE.

All maternity cases are visited, as a routine, by the County Health Visitor after confinement. Tuberculous and other patients are visited in their homes when necessary.

DOMESTIC HELP SERVICE.

County grants are made towards the cost of domestic help when circumstances warrant this.

HOME NURSING.

The Home Nursing service is combined with the Domiciliary Midwifery service, and is conducted by the Queen's Institute District Nurse /Midwife. A large part of the nursing is devoted to elderly patients: no special arrangements are made for the nursing of sick children, though patients of all ages are nursed in their homes when required. Some diabetic patients receive daily visits from the Nurse for insulin injections: other routine injections are given as required. Ample equipment is available for domiciliary nursing.

AMBULANCE SERVICE.

The Devon County Council Ambulance is operated by the British Red Cross Society. It has been maintained by Heard's Garage, Torrington, and all calls have been answered promptly and most efficiently.

| | | | |
|--------------------------|-----|-----|--------|
| Patients carried in 1955 | ... | ... | 503 |
| Total mileage... | ... | ... | 15,847 |

TORRINGTON COTTAGE HOSPITAL.

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----|-----|-------|
| Patients admitted during 1955 | ... | ... | 256 |
| Out-Patients seen | ... | ... | 694 |
| Total Out-Patient attendances | ... | ... | 1,283 |
| Maternity cases | ... | ... | 52 |

BLOOD DONORS.

86 volunteers gave blood when the South Western Division of the National Blood Transfusion Service visited Torrington in October.

WATER SUPPLY.

During the year considerable work was done in connection with the inspection and clearing of the deep land drains in the Belle Vue and Deep Moor catchment areas in an effort to ensure that the maximum amount of water, from the deep springs in that area, reaches the impounding reservoir.

The Summer was particularly dry and, in common with many other parts of the country, a water shortage was experienced. However, as a result of the Councils' foresight in providing for such emergency, no real hardship was experienced by either domestic or commercial users. When the Town's new water scheme was inaugurated provision was made, and an agreement entered into, for a tapping to be made from the North Devon Water Board's main to our covered service reservoir at Mays Hill. In periods of extreme drought, therefore, our supply can very easily be augmented, but water charges during the Summer period are relatively high.

A great deal of publicity was given to the fact that the town was short of water, but again we wish to stress the fact that no real hardship was experienced by any consumer, and during the whole of the Summer period only 453,000 gallons of water (approximately 5 days' supply) was drawn from the North Devon Water Board.

Following the inauguration of the new water treatment plant,—incorporating settlement tanks, chemical treatment plant and rapid sand filters—the quality of the water supplied to the Borough has greatly improved and incrustation of mains should be eliminated. Some discussion is still taking place, however, on the advisability or otherwise of using precipitated chalk instead of sodium carbonate in the settlement tanks.

Apart from difficulties arising from old and corroded service pipes, distribution of water in the Borough has been perfectly satisfactory. The water is not plumbo-solvent.

RAINFALL.

Records of rainfall are kept by C. T. Davenport, Esq., of Caynton House, Torrington, and we wish to express our appreciation of his help.

Details of rainfall in recent years are as follows :-

| | 1955 | 1954 | 1953 | 1952 |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| January | 5.0 ins. | 2.13 | 0.91 | 4.55 |
| February | 3.86 | 4.25 | 2.15 | 1.07 |
| March | 1.08 | 2.89 | 1.05 | 3.07 |
| April | 1.52 | 0.43 | 2.73 | 3.68 |
| May | 4.25 | 2.94 | 3.77 | 2.84 |
| June | 3.34 | 3.19 | 1.63 | 1.51 |
| July | 2.18 | 4.30 | 4.84 | 1.32 |
| August | 0.30 | 2.82 | 3.31 | 8.85 |
| September | 1.72 | 4.29 | 4.45 | 5.13 |
| October | 2.67 | 4.81 | 2.96 | 5.00 |
| November | 3.12 | 7.32 | 2.94 | 4.45 |
| December | 6.77 | 3.82 | 1.60 | 4.01 |
| Year's Total | <u>35.81</u> | <u>43.19</u> | <u>32.34</u> | <u>45.48</u> |

SEWERAGE & SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

The whole of the town's sewers are now connected to the sewage disposal plant. The sewage from New Street and Mill Street gravitates to the works direct but that from the remainder of the town gravitates to pumping stations at Lady Wash and Town Park and is then pumped to the gravitational sewers in New Street and Mill Street.

The sewage disposal plant, which has been enlarged to deal with the additional flow, has continued to work satisfactorily and all samples of final effluent have given results within the accepted standards.

Great difficulty has again been experienced in connection with the drying out of sludge, particularly since the whole of the town's sewers have been connected to the works. This problem is under active consideration.

HOUSING.

Further development has taken place on the Council's housing site at Calvesford Road. 3 houses and 10 maisonettes have been completed and occupied during the year.

Plans are under consideration for the construction of a cul-de-sac road on the above estate and it is proposed to erect a further 12 houses during 1956.

PREVENTION OF DAMAGE BY PESTS ACT, 1949.

The Council have continued to operate a joint scheme in co-operation with the Torrington Rural District Council. One full time operator is employed and the work has been carried out very satisfactorily. The few complaints received have been dealt with quickly and efficiently.

INSPECTION OF MEAT AND OTHER FOODS.

Slaughtering has been carried out regularly at the two private slaughter-houses within the Borough and Tables A and B give details of animals slaughtered, meat condemned, etc.

TABLE A.

Carcases and Offal inspected and condemned in whole or in part.

| | Cattle excluding Cows | Cows | Calves | Sheep and Lambs | Pigs | Horses |
|--|-----------------------------|------|--------|-----------------------|------|--------|
| Number killed | 91 | 8 | — | 251 | 305 | — |
| Number inspected | 91 | 8 | — | 251 | 305 | — |
| All Diseases except Tuberculosis and Cysticerci | | | | | | |
| Whole Carcases con- demned | — | — | — | — | 1 | — |
| Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned | 54 | 5 | — | — | 11 | — |
| Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than Tub- erculosis and Cysticerci | 59.34 | 62.5 | — | — | 3.93 | — |
| Tuberculosis only | | | | | | |
| Whole Carcases con- demned | — | — | — | — | 1 | — |
| Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned | 3 | — | — | — | 20 | — |
| Percentage of the number inspected affected with Tuberculosis | 3.29 | — | — | — | 6.88 | — |
| Cysticercosis | | | | | | |
| Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Carcases submitted to treatment by refriger- ation | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Generalised and totally condemned | — | — | — | — | — | — |

TABLE B.

Summary of Meat condemned with cause and weight.

| Part or Organ Condemned | Cause | Weight in lbs. |
|--|---|----------------|
| 2 Beasts' Heads | 1 T.B., 1 Actino ... | 58 lbs. |
| 3 Beasts' Lungs | Tuberculosis | 26 lbs. |
| 1 Beast's Viscera | Tuberculosis | 60 lbs. |
| 24 Beasts' Livers | 1 Abscesses, 1 Cysts, 1 An- gioma, 23 Distomatosis | 330 lbs. |
| 37 Part Beasts' Livers ... | Distomatosis | 182 lbs. |
| 7 Sheep and Lamb Carcases | All "Emergency slaughter" Various conditions | 340 lbs. |
| 3 Part Sheep's Carcases (2 hind legs, 2 forelegs) | Injuries | 17 lbs. |
| 2 Sheep's Offal and Viscera | Abscesses (Emergency slaughter) | 45 lbs. |
| 2 Pigs' Carcases and Offal ... | 1 T.B. 1 Multiple Malignant Tumours | 205 lbs. |
| 20 Pigs' Heads | Tuberculosis | 189 lbs. |
| 2 Pigs' Plucks | 1 T.B., 1 Pericarditis | 7 lbs. |
| 4 Pigs' Kidneys (2 pairs) ... | Retention Cysts ... | 1½ lbs. |
| 13 Pigs' Livers | 6 Cystic, 7 Cirrhotic ... | 40 lbs. |
| 1 Pig's Carcase skinned ... | Urticaria | 7 lbs. |

The following, TABLE C, gives details of other foodstuffs inspected, and condemned, during the year.

| Food | Reason for Condemnation | Weights |
|--|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| 3 Tins Pork Luncheon Meat or Brawn | Tins blown and decomposition ... | 10 lbs. 5 ozs. |
| 1 Tin Brisket of Beef ... | Tin blown | 5 lbs. |

SALE OF ICE CREAM.

No ice-cream is manufactured within the Borough. Pre-packed ice-cream is sold from registered premises and all such premises have been inspected.

SUMMARY OF VISITS AND INSPECTIONS MADE DURING THE YEAR.

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Housing | 200 |
| Water | 336 |
| Plans and Planning | 14 |
| Alterations under Bye-laws | 12 |
| Buildings in course of construction (excluding Council Houses) | 8 |
| Drains, including Inspection and Testing | 20 |
| Food Premises and Food Inspection .. | 8 |
| Ice-cream Retailers | 9 |
| Milk Retailers and Dairies | 6 |
| Refuse Collection and Disposal | 10 |
| Salvage | 8 |
| Rats and Mice | 4 |
| Inspections under Petroleum Acts | 6 |
| Infectious Diseases and Disinfestation | 3 |
| Cemetery | 72 |
| Cattle and Pannier Markets | 60 |
| Sewers | 79 |
| Sewage Disposal Works and Sewage Pumping Stations | 171 |
| Public Conveniences | 6 |
| Recreation Field | 32 |
| Allotments | 4 |
| Nuisances | 10 |
| Meat Inspection | 239 |
| General or Miscellaneous | 55 |
| Total | <u>1,372</u> |

