TOTNES RURAL DISTRICT

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE HEALTH OF THE DISTRICT

FOR THE YEAR 1963

R.P. RYAN, MB., BS., D.P.H.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TOTNES RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

To the Chairman and Members of the Public Health Committee.

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present my annual report for the year 1963. The chief feature of 1963 was the winter, which was the most severe for at least two hundred years. The South-west of England was thereby robbed of the climatic advantage which it enjoys over the rest of the country, but in spite of that, the health of the district, taken as a whole, did not suffer.

Statistics. In considering the statistics it must be borne in mind that there is a much larger proportion of old people living in the district than is the rule in the whole country. This is shown by the numbers of births (217) and deaths (281) and by the area comparability factors for births (1.27) and deaths (0.71). The preponderance of elderly people is in part due to the choice of the district as a place of retirement by many people from less favoured areas, and by the presence in the district of a large hospital for the mentally sick, to which many patients are admitted towards the end of their lives, from other parts of the county.

Health Services. Section B of the report is concerned with the general provision of health services. In this connexion I should like to stress the value to rural communities of small local hospitals. Although this district is very well served by large hospitals in Newton Abbot and Torquay, these towns are far enough away from various parts of the district to make visiting difficult. In a small hospital the patient has, too, the benefit of a more personal atmosphere and often the care of his own family doctor.

Infectious Diseases. Apart from an outbreak of measles in one part of the district in June infectious diseases did not present a grave problem during the year. Only three deaths were attributed to communicable diseases, one to pulmonary tuberculosis and two to syphilis.

Sanitary Circumstances. Several areas in the district are still in need of new or enlarged sewage works, and I have referred to these in Section D. In the past, proposals for new works by the rural district have been reduced and economies insisted on by the central government with the result that the new installations have quickly become inadequate. It is to be hoped that these considerations of national policy will not hold up new works in the future.

Food Hygiene. Regulations requiring 100% inspection of meat came into effect during the year. This had no effect on the practice in the district, but makes it necessary for relief to be provided in case of sickness or absence on holiday of the public health staff.

Housing. Legislation is at present before parliament which will permit local authorities to require improvement of rented dwellings, which fulfills the hope expressed by Dr. Hunt in the last annual report.

General Health. In Section G I refer to the questions of Smoke and Smoking and to the fluoride content of the water.

I should like to record my gratitude to the chairman and members of the committee for their support and encouragement, and to members of the public health staff, in particular Mr Waine and Mr Bennett, for the help they gave so generously to a newcomer.

I have the honour to be,

Your Obedient Servant,

.....

R.P. Ryan.

Medical Officer of Health.

PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN:	Councillor J.D. Warren.
VICE CHAIRMAN:	Councillor Lt. Col. A.F. Hanks, M.C.
THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL:	Councillor C. Bartlett, C.B.E.

together with

All the members of the Council.

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF

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Erratum

Figures for illegitimate and legitimate infant deaths and death rates have been reversed.

R.P.R.

SECTION A.

STATISTICS

Area .....80,970 acres.

River frontage of tidal waters .....17 miles.

Number of inhabited houses 5,415

Dwellings owned by the council 600

Council dwellings per 1000 population 42

Rateable value (1st April 1963) .....£431,841.

Estimated product of 1d. rate .....£842, 1s. 2.03d.

Estimated mid-year population 15,120

Population at 1961 census .....14,968.

Births

Live births (110 males and 107 females) 217

Illegitimate births (6 males and 8females) 14

Illegitimacy rate 6.45%

Crude birth rate per 1000 population 14.2

Corrected birth rate per 1000 population 18.0

Still births (1 female) 1

Infant Mortality

Total infant deaths (all in first week of life) 7

Legitimate infant deaths 1

Illegitimate infant deaths 6

Legitimate infant deaths per 1000 legitimate live births 71.4

Illegitimate infant deaths per 1000 illegitimate live births 29.5

Total infant deaths per 1000 live births 32.2

Neo-natal mortality rate per 1000 live births 32.2

Early neo-natal mortality rate per 1000 live births 32.2

Perinatal mortality rate per 1000 live and still births 36.7

Maternal mortality (including abortion)

Number of deaths .....Nil

Rate per 1000 live and still births .....Nil

Deaths

Total deaths (151 males and 130 females) 281

Crude death rate per 1000 population 18.6

Corrected death rate per 1000 population 13.2

Classification of Deaths.	Male	Female	Total
Tuberculosis	-	1	1
Syphilitic disease	2	-	2
Other infective and parasitic diseases	-	1	1
Malignant neoplasms, stomach	3	3	6
lung, bronchus	6	3	9
breast	-	3	3
uterus	-	1	1
Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	10	6	16
Leukaemia, aleukaemia	1	1	2
Diabetes	1	-	1
Vascular lesions of nervous system	23	26	49
Coronary disease, angina	34	17	51
Hypertension with heart disease	2	1	3
Other heart disease	19	17	36
Other circulatory disease	2	3	5
Influenza	1	-	1
Pneumonia	10	21	31
Bronchitis	9	3	12
Other diseases of respiratory system	1	2	3
Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	-	1	1
Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea	-	1	1
Nephritis and nephrosis	1	1	2
Hyperplasia of prostate	1	-	1
Congenital malformations	1	2	3
Other defined and ill defined diseases	16	12	28
Motor vehicle accidents	2	-	2
All other accidents	4	4	8
Suicide	2	-	2
Total all causes	151	130	281

The corrected birth and death rates both show a rise over 1962, but the difference is not great. The infant mortality rates are very much higher than last year and substantially higher than the national average. However the total number of infant deaths is small and variation of this kind must be expected in a small population as a result of the operation of chance. The number of deaths due to cancer of the lung is one more than last year. The number of deaths of adult males aged 15-25 years was four. Three of these deaths were accidental and two of them were due to road accidents. This bears out the observations made by my predecessor in his review of young adult male deaths for the annual report 1962.

SECTION B

GENERAL PROVISIONS OF HEALTH SERVICES

1. Hospitals

The Rural District is served by hospitals in Totnes, Dartmouth, Paignton, Newton Abbot, Ashburton, Torquay and Bittaford.

2. County Council Health Services.

Under the National Health Services Act 1946, the County Council provides the following services:

Domiciliary midwives, home nurses, health visitors, supervisory care of expectant and nursing mothers and children under five, ambulance services, vaccination and immunisation procedures, home help services and the care of persons suffering from illness or mental disorders and the aftercare of such persons.

9 district nurse/midwives work in the district together with three health visitors and a nursing assistant. Child welfare clinics are held at regular intervals in South Brent, Stoke Gabriel and Kingswear. The home help service is provided by the County Council. A chiropody service has now been introduced for the handicapped, the aged and expectant mothers. Chiropody clinics are held in South Brent and Stoke Gabriel.

3. Laboratory Services.

Bacteriological examination of pathological specimens and samples of milk, water and ice cream are carried out at the Public Health Laboratories at Exeter and Plymouth. The chemical analysis of water is undertaken by public analysts at Exeter.

4. Mass Miniature Radiography Service

No visit was made by the mass x-ray unit to the parishes of the rural district during 1963. However the unit paid its usual visit to the Borough of Totnes and I have no doubt that many residents of the rural district attended for x-ray in the Borough. Two new cases of pulmonary tuberculosis which required either observation or treatment, and two cases of carcinoma of the lung were discovered. It is particularly important for men aged 40 years and over to attend for x-ray when they get the opportunity as it is in this group that most of the fresh cases of tuberculosis are discovered. (See below Section C.)

5. Home and Domestic Help Service.

The full time home help organiser appointed by the County Council is now responsible for all the parishes in the rural district. Her office is at 14, Midvale Road, Paignton and she has the use of an office in the Medical Dept., when she visits Totnes each week.

SECTION C.

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

1. Diseases notified during the year.

Notifications received during the year were as follows:-

Measles	105
Dysentery	8
Whooping cough	7
Tuberculosis	6
(Pulmonary 5, non-pulmonary 1)	
Pneumonia	3
Food poisoning (Salmonellosis)	2
Meningiococcal meningitis	1
Erysipelas	1
Puerperal pyrexia	1
Total	134

Measles was again most prevalent in the month of June when 51 cases were notified. Most of these were children living in the Staverton and Landscove areas.

The incidence of measles in the district does not follow the national pattern of a large increase in the winter and spring of even numbered years, which reflects events in the large towns. Large outbreaks occur in individual parishes in the district at longer intervals when the number of susceptibles is high. Consequently measles tends in this area to rarer but more sweeping visitations.

Seven of the eight cases of dysentery notified occurred in the members of one family. The number of cases of tuberculosis notified, six, was one more than last year. The ages of the patients were, males:- 35, 53, 70, 73, and 74 years; females:- 59 years. The tendency of tuberculosis to attack old men is well illustrated by this.

The two cases of Salmonellosis which were notified were in members of the same family and came to light as a result of investigation into Salmonellosis of cattle. Four other cases of Salmonellosis in another family came to my attention by way of the public health laboratory service. In the latter outbreak all the patients were members of the same family and lived on a dairy farm. It was necessary to exclude them from work in the dairy until bacteriological investigations showed them to be free from infection. Compensation was paid under the Milk and Dairies Regulations 1959. No secondary cases of Salmonellosis followed these two outbreaks. Attempts to trace the source of the infection were fruitless in both outbreaks. Unfortunately, as is commonly the case, there was a considerable delay in information reaching me about these cases.

2. Outbreaks of other infectious diseases

In July an outbreak of infective hepatitis occurred among some children attending school in Buckfastleigh. This was followed by a large number of cases, occurring over a period of months, in that town, and in one of its housing estates, which lies within the Rural District. Infective hepatitis is not a notifiable disease, and I have only an approximate knowledge of the extent of this outbreak.

3. Immunisation and Vaccination

Vaccination and immunisation are available to give protection against smallpox, poliomyelitis, whooping cough, diphtheria, tetanus and tuberculosis. These procedures are carried out by local medical practitioners and also under the Devon County Council Health Services, at local schools and local Infant Welfare Clinics.

4. Smallpox Vaccination

It is desirable that routine smallpox vaccination should be carried out in infancy. This provides protection at least until the age of school entry, and makes it likely that subsequent revaccination will result in a rapid revival of immunity with a smaller risk of untoward reaction. The best time for smallpox vaccination is during the second year of life.

Those who work in such establishments as hospitals, laboratories and laundries should be fully protected by vaccination. This is also true of certain groups of workers such as ambulance drivers and local authority staff, who may come into contact with the disease during routine work. Outbreaks of smallpox in this country in recent times have shown how susceptible these groups are. The public memory of these outbreaks is very short.

5. Detection and prevention of Tuberculosis

Tuberculin skin testing (Heaf testing) is carried out annually on all children attending county primary schools in the district and also on children aged 13 years. This test indicates whether the child has been infected with tuberculosis. The early onset of tuberculosis can be detected in the child, and if a fresh infection is discovered, an investigation is made into the child's family. The object is the detection of previously unsuspected cases of tuberculosis. Thirteen-year-old children who are found never to have been infected with tuberculosis are offered B.C.G. vaccination.

6. International vaccination certificates

International certificates of vaccination were authenticated during the year as follows:-

Smallpox - 98
Cholera - 10.

These figures refer to the whole of Area No. 10 Devon County, that is Totnes Borough, Totnes Rural District, Ashburton and Buckfastleigh Urban Districts.

SECTION D.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

1. Water

On 1st October 1963 the South Devon Water Board, renamed the South West Devon Water Board, took over responsibility for the water supply to Paignton, and as a result is now the sole authority supplying water to the whole district. The quality and quantity of the water supply throughout the district was satisfactory throughout the year. Frequent bacteriological examinations (at least weekly) were made of the raw water and of the water going into supply after treatment (weekly samples from points of supply throughout the district), All the results were satisfactory. No form of contamination occurred throughout the year.

A chemical analysis of water from the Avon dam, after treatment on 13th August 1963 gave the following results:-

CHEMICAL RESULTS IN PARTS PER MILLION (Mg./L.)

Appearance:	Bright with particles.	Turbidity (A.P.H.A. units)	less than 3.
Colour (Hazen)	8	Odour	Normal
pH	8.9	Free Carbon Dioxide	Absent
Electric Conductivity	79	Dissolved Solids dried at 180°C	53
Chlorine present as Chloride	7	Alkalinity as Calcium Carbonate	15
Hardness: Total	25	Carbonate 15	Non carbonate 10
Nitrate Nitrogen	0.0	Nitrate Nitrogen	Absent
Ammoniacal Nitrogen	0.015	Oxygen Absorbed	1.2
Albuminoid Nitrogen	0.038	Residual Chlorine	Absent
Metals Aluminium:	0.03		

Iron, Zinc, Copper, Lead, Manganese: Absent.

The fluorine content of the water supplied throughout the district is less than 0.1 parts per million.

The water is non plumbo-solvent.

Dwellings Supplied from Public Water Mains

Parish	1961 Pop.	No. dwellings with piped water (direct)	No. dwellings relying on stand pipes
Ashprington	327	72	Nil
Berry Pomeroy	366	48	Nil
Buckfastleigh W.	284	42	Nil
Churston Ferrers	1,582	610	6
Cornworthy	292	40	Nil
Dartington	1,183	83	Nil
Dean Prior	305	13	Nil
Diptford	308	76	Nil
Dittisham	508	169	Nil
Halwell	219	56	2
Harberton (Harberton Ward) (Harbertonford Ward)	897	70	5
Holne	348	58	Nil
Kingswear	696	237	Nil
Littlehempston	203	35	Nil
Marldon	1,179	461	1
Morleigh	112	26	Nil
North Huish	355	68	Nil
Rattery	371	87	Nil
South Brent	1,803	469	Nil
Staverton	612	97	Nil
Stoke Gabriel	967	349	Nil
Ugborough	2,051	340	Nil

2. Refuse

Refuse is collected weekly in the district and its disposal is carried out by tipping at six sites in the area. The collection of litter from litter baskets and bins is a heavy additional burden on the collection services, especially in the summer, when even a weekly emptying is sometimes insufficient in the more popular parts of the district. The disposal of refuse in the eastern parishes of the district is still giving rise to concern as the existing tips are being filled, and it is difficult to find new sites. Owners are reluctant to allow sites to be used for tips.

3. Sewage Works and Sewerage Systems

The extension of sewers from Dartington to the hamlet of Week and the enlargement of theDartington sewage disposal plant were completed during the year. Extension of the existing works at Marldon, which is urgently required, is at present under discussion. A new sewage works is needed to replace the overloaded works at Galmpton. Agreement was reached with the Urban District of Buckfastleigh for the sewage at Dean Prior to be taken for treatment to the works at Kilbury. New works are required at Capton and Berry Pomeroy. Tenders have been accepted for works at Capton and work is expected to begin in 1964.

4. Factories.

This local authority is responsible for enforcing the provisions in the Factories Act, 1961 relating to sanitary conveniences and the regulations made in connection with these in all factories. The local authority is also responsible for enforcing the provisions of the Act dealing with cleanliness, overcrowding, temperature, ventilation and drainage of floors in all factories not using mechanical power. Part 8 of the Act deals with home work and theprovisions relating to this are enforced by the district council. Details regarding the administration of the Act are given in Appendix A of this report.

5. Caravans

There were 13 licensed sites operating in the district during 1963. These sites catered for 19 residential and 89 holiday caravans. All the sites were used to their full capacity at some time during the year and standards of hygiene were on the whole well maintained. On one occasion the attention of the owner was drawn to a nuisance arising from the inadequacy of a soakaway from a septic tank. The nuisance was then abated.

6. Pest and Rodent Control.

Under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949, this local authority has an obligation to ensure that, as far as is practicable, the area is kept free from rats and mice. For this purpose frequent inspections are necessary and, in addition, occupiers of land are required to give notice to the local authority whenever it comes to their knowledge that rats or mice are present on the land in substantial numbers. In the case of food premises, the notification must be made to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

Under the Act, the local authority may serve on the owner or occupier of any land, notice requiring him to take steps for the destruction of rats or mice on the land, and may also require the carrying out of any structural repairs or any other works. If such a notice is not complied with, then the local authority may carry out the destruction of the pests and recover the necessary expenses from the persons concerned.

7. Health, Safety and Welfare in Offices

The Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Bill was passed into law during 1963 and comes into effect in August 1964.

8. Visits and Inspections made during the Year.

Number of inspections of dwelling houses	146
Number of inspections of moveable dwellings	77
" " factories	16
" " food premises	33
" " shops	13
Number of inspections regarding meat inspection	232
" " " sewerage	13
" " " drainage	99
" " " water supply	20
" " " nuisances	77
" " " rodent control	66
" " " pest control	23
" " " refuse collection and disposal	111
" " " miscellaneous matters	47

SECTION E.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

1. Food Premises

There were 86 food premises operating in the district during the year and this figure includes 17 cafes, 11 hotels and 58 retail shops. The majority of these premises were visited during the year for the purpose of advising on food hygiene and ensuring that the food hygiene regulations were being complied with.

2. Food Hygiene

All food handlers should know the requirements of the food hygiene regulations. Events in 1964 in Aberdeen show the importance of maintaining high standards of hygiene in food handlers.

3. Unsound Food

The amount of unsound food condemned was:-

18 tins of fruit.
3 tins of meat.
1 tin of vegetables.

Total weight was 239½ lbs.

4. Meat Inspection.

Regulations requiring 100% inspection of meat came into operation during 1963. It had always been the practice in the Rural District to inspect all the meat so these regulations made no difference. The meat inspected included:-

Steers	62
Heifers	83
Sheep	498
Pigs	416
Calves	5

The meat condemned totalled 649¼ lbs. in weight. Three entire carcases were condemned and the numbers of carcases in which some part or organ was condemned totalled 94.

SECTION F.

HOUSING

1. Unfit Houses

During the year 11 houses were represented as being unfit. Undertakings to make them fit were accepted for nine of them. One demolition order was placed which was later revoked and one closing order was made.

2. Improvement of Houses

21 dwellings were made with the aid of discretionary housing improvement grants and another 13 were improved with the help of statutory grants. The majority of these grants as usual went to owner/occupiers. Legislation is at present before parliament which will enable local authorities to require the improvement of rented accommodation and when this is law it will be possible to see that rented accommodation benefits too.

3. Overcrowding.

One dwelling was known to be overcrowded at the end of 1963

4. Houses in Multi-occupation

One house in South Brent is known to be in multi-occupation.

5. Dwellings for the Elderly

Two old persons' bungalows were completed during the year in the parish of Cornworthy.

SECTION G.

GENERAL HEALTH

Smoke and Smoking. Smoke, whether derived from public air pollution (chimneys) or private air pollution (smoking) is an important cause of preventable disease, in particular lung cancer and bronchitis. The numbers of deaths attributed to these two causes in 1963, 9 and 12 respectively, were more than could be expected in a rural area such as this. To a certain extent this may be explained by the removal to the district of people who have been living in smoky towns. Studies in New Zealand and South Africa have shown that migrants from this country are much more liable to these diseases than New Zealanders and South Africans of the same stock. Implementation of the Clean Air Act and the prohibition of the advertising of cigarettes are the measures most likely to influence the mortality from lung cancer and bronchitis. Local publicity campaigns against smoking are futile in the face of the immense advertising expenditure of the tobacco companies.

Fluoride Deficiency. For the first time the ministry of health has asked for the fluoride content of the water supply to be included in the annual report. It is unfortunate that the water supply, which is irreproachable in other respects, is seriously deficient in fluoride. The remedy for this is simple and cheap.

APPENDIX A.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH IN RESPECT OF THE YEAR 1963 FOR THE RURAL DISTRICT OF TOTNES IN THE COUNTY OF DEVON

Prescribed Particulars on the Administration of the Factories Act, 1961

PART 1 OF THE ACT

1. Inspection for purposes of provisions as to health.

Premises	Number on Register	Number of		Occupiers Prosecuted.
		Inspections	Written Notices	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Factories in which sections 1,2,3,4, and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	2	2	-	-
Factories not included in (1) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	50	16	-	-
Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out-workers premises).	14	14	-	-
Total	66	32	-	-

2. Cases in which DEFECTS were found

Particulars	Number of cases in which defects were found.				Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted
			Referred		
	Found	Remedied	To H.M. Insp.	By H.M. Insp.	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Want of cleanliness (S.1)	2	2	-	-	-
Overcrowding (S.2)	-	-	-	-	-
Unreasonable temperature (S.3)	-	-	-	-	-
Inadequate ventilation (S.4)	-	-	-	-	-
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6)	-	-	-	-	-
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)					
(a) Insufficient	-	-	-	-	-
(b) Unsuitable or defective	2	2	-	-	-
(c) Not separate for sexes	-	-	-	-	-
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Outwork)	-	-	-	-	-
Total	4	4	-	-	-

Part 8 OUTWORK. SECTIONS 133 and 134

During 1963 there were three out workers in the district.

Nature of work	Section 133		
	No. of outworkers in August list.	No. of cases of default in sending lists to Council	No. of prosecutions for failure to supply lists.
Making wearing apparel	2	Nil	Nil
Altering wearing apparel	1	-	-
Total	3	-	-

Section 134

No. of instances of work in unwholesome premises	Notices Served.	Prosecutions.
Nil	Nil	Nil

Part B OUTWORK. SECTIONS 137 and 134.

During 1957 there were three out workers in the district.

Section 137				
Nature of work (6)	No. of outworkers in August list.	No. of cases of default in sending lists to Council	No. of prosecutions for failure to supply lists.
Making wearing apparel	2	Nil	Nil
Altering wearing apparel	1	-	-
Total	3	-	-

Section 134			
No. of instances of work in unwholesome premises	Notices Served.		Prosecutions.
Nil	Nil		Nil