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WALSINGHAM RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.



REPORT

of the

Medical Officer of Health

for the year 1941

to which is

appended the

Report of the Sanitary Inspector.

STAFF.

Medical Officer of Health :

L. G. ANDERSON, M.D. Liverp., Ch.B., D.P.H. Liverp.
(Now serving with The Royal Air Force).

Temporary Medical Officer of Health :

IRENE B. M. GREEN, M.D., B.S., D.P.H.

Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector :

H. E. GILBY, P.A.S.I., Cert. S.I.B., M. Inst. M. & Cy. E.
Cert. R.S.I. as Inspector of Meat and Other Foods.

Temporary Shorthand-Typist :

MISS E. M. WATERSON.

WALSINGHAM RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH. Year ending 31st December, 1941.

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to submit the Annual Report for 1941.

Vital Statistics.

The birth-rate has risen to 14.75 from last year's figure of 14.17 and is now above the national rate of 14.2.

The crude death-rate is 14.29, an increase on 1940, when it was 13.64. The area comparability factor has not been issued by the Registrar-General so it is impossible to give a standardised death rate. Of the 251 deaths registered during the year, 61% occurred at the age of 65 or over. The main causes of death were Heart disease and Cancer, the figure for the latter showing the larger increase.

The infant mortality rate has increased from 41.67 to 55.56. There were 16 infant deaths registered during the year and only 4 of these died after the age of one month. 8 deaths occurred within a few hours of birth and the other 4 within the first week. The majority of these early deaths were due to conditions of prematurity and congenital defect and are therefore not attributable to causes operative after birth.

Infectious Disease.

Infectious disease has been more prevalent in 1941, a total of 55 cases being notified (excluding measles and whooping cough). The chief causes of the increase were two localised outbreaks of scarlet fever at Shereford and Melton Constable which accounted for all but 10 of the 39 cases notified. In most cases the disease was mild in type without serious complications and with no deaths. The control of these epidemics was rendered specially difficult owing to the reluctance of some parents to allow their children to go to the Isolation Hospital and their very incomplete methods of home isolation. Scarlet fever is a disease of medium infectivity and close contact is necessary for its spread. Really efficient isolation of the first few cases, would probably have cut short the epidemics and prevented the occurrence of the majority of the later cases.

Exclusion from school is quite useless unless the children are at the same time prevented from mixing with others in and around their homes, until they are free from infection.

There were 2 cases of diphtheria both of which recovered and 3 cases of cerebro-spinal fever, one of which died.

The measles epidemic which began at the end of 1940 spread rapidly throughout the district and very few parishes escaped. 406 cases were notified during the year and most of them occurred in the first four months. The disease was fairly mild in type except when it attacked susceptible adults when it assumed a more serious form. There was only one death reported from complications. There were 15 cases of whooping cough notified and there were no deaths.

Tuberculosis.

Tuberculosis showed an increased incidence in 1941. There were 48 new cases 28 being the pulmonary type and there were 11 deaths. The total number of cases on the register at the end of the year was 152, an increase of 21 on last year. A certain number of these cases have been transferred from other areas and therefore do not signify increased infection acquired in the district. However, after these have been allowed for, there does appear to have been a definite increase in the incidence of the disease.

It may be that the exigencies of War are bringing into full employment the less robust members of the population and the added strain is sufficient to cause a break-down of resistance.

Lack of ventilation due to black-out conditions, with whole families crowded in small rooms during the long hours of darkness might well be expected to bring about a deterioration of health. It cannot be urged too strongly that frequent change of air in any closed space in which a number of people have to live is essential to their health and well being.

Ventilation and blackout can be efficient at one and the same time and permanent closure of air inlets should never be allowed on any living or working premises.

Diphtheria Immunisation Scheme.

At the end of 1940, an intensive campaign had been organised for the immunisation of children against diphtheria. General practitioners, district nurses and head teachers were all circularised and asked to co-operate in the Scheme.

In many villages the response was exceptionally good, specially amongst school children, and large groups were treated by me at centres set up on school premises by arrangement with the Norfolk Education Committee. Parents were encouraged to bring up younger members of their families to be treated at the same time and many of them took advantage of this offer. In a few parishes the local doctor attended the school treatment centre and was employed on a sessional basis.

Twelve out of thirty-one schools in the district had already been treated by Dr. Anderson in 1939. The remaining nineteen were therefore visited first before second visits were undertaken.

In addition to those treated at centres, some of the children were immunised by their own doctors under the Council's Scheme.

By the end of September, the entire district had been covered and the results were as follows:—

Pre-School Children.
(Aged 1—5).
35.6%

School Children.
(Aged 5—15)
92%

These results on the whole were good especially in the case of school children. They reflect great credit on the teachers and district nurses, without whose help they could not have been achieved and I should like to record here my sincere appreciation of all these and others whose strenuous efforts contributed so much to the success of the campaign.

As diphtheria is most fatal between the ages of one and five, a special effort was made to raise the percentage treated amongst the younger children. Birthday letters were sent to all the district nurses for distribution to the mothers of children on their first birthday, urging the necessity for immunisation at the earliest possible date.

The response in some places was disappointing so arrangements were made for the showing of a Ministry of Information film called "Defeat Diphtheria" in these parishes. This had the satisfactory result of bringing the percentage treated up to the average for the rest of the district.

I am hoping that all concerned will continue their efforts until every child between the ages of one and fifteen has had the benefit of immunisation. If immunisation could become a routine procedure for every child, diphtheria would soon cease to be a measurable cause of death and could ultimately be stamped out.

Contagious Disease.

Contagious disease, specially scabies, appears to be on the increase although not being notifiable no figures are available.

Most cases are reported to me by general practitioners or school nurses and are followed up by the Sanitary Inspector. Every assistance was offered to doctors with the treatment of their cases and admission to Institutions was arranged for many of these.

Conclusion.

In summing up, I may say that on the whole the health of the district has been satisfactory. There are signs that the strain of War is beginning to be felt by the less robust members of the community, particularly the elderly, but as a large number of healthy young adults are no longer part of the civil population, this deterioration may be more apparent than real.

In Conclusion, I wish to acknowledge the encouragement and help I continue to receive from the Chairman and Members of the Public Health Committee and the loyal co-operation of the staff.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient servant,

IRENE B. M. GREEN,

Medical Officer of Health.

STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER, 1941.

Area (in acres)	...	...	...	...	88,818
Registrar - General's estimate of resident population					
mid-1941	...	...	...	...	17,560
Number of inhabited houses (end of 1941) according to rate-books	...	...	...	...	6,400
Rateable Value (end of 1941)	...	...	...	...	£58,477
Sum represented by a Penny Rate	...	...	...	...	£250

EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR,
which relate to the net births and deaths after correction for inward and outward transfers as furnished by the Registrar-General.

		Total.	Males.	Females.		
Live Births	Legitimate	243	123	120	Birth-rate per 1,000 of estimated resident population...	14.75
	Illegitimate	16	9	7		
	Total	259	132	127		
Still Births	Legitimate	7	2	5	Rate per 1,000 total births	34.75
	Illegitimate	2	—	2		
	Total	9	2	7		
Deaths	Total	251	136	115	Crude Death rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population	14.29

Note.—Owing to population fluctuations of an unusual character due to the War, no comparability factor has been issued whereby an adjusted death rate might be calculated.

Deaths from puerperal causes:—

	Deaths.	Rate per 1,000 births.
(a) Puerperal sepsis	1	3.47
(b) Other puerperal causes	0	0.00
Total	1	3.47

Death rate of infants under one year of age:—

	Totals.	Males.	Females.
Legitimate	15	8	7
Illegitimate	1	—	1
Totals	16	8	8

All infants per 1,000 live births	...	55.56
Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births	...	55.35
Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births	...	58.82

The causes of death are given in following table supplied by the Registrar-General:—

CAUSES OF DEATH.						MALES.	FEMALES.
All Causes...						136	115
1	Typhoid and Paratyphoid	...	...	...	...	—	—
2	Measles	...	...	...	...	1	—
3	Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	...	—	—
4	Whooping Cough...	...	...	...	...	—	—
5	Diphtheria	...	...	...	...	—	—
6	Influenza	...	...	...	...	1	5
7	Encephalitis Lethargica	...	...	...	...	—	—
8	Cerebro-spinal Fever	...	...	...	...	1	—
9	Tuberculosis of Respiratory System	...	...	...	...	4	3
10	Other Tuberculous Diseases	...	...	...	...	1	3
11	Syphilis	...	...	...	...	1	—
12	General Paralysis of the Insane	...	...	...	...	—	—
13	Cancer	...	...	...	...	20	19
14	Diabetes	...	...	...	...	2	1
15	Cerebral Hæmorrhage, etc.	...	...	...	...	12	9
16	Heart Disease	...	...	...	...	25	29
17	Aneurysm	...	...	...	...	—	—
18	Other Circulatory Diseases	...	...	...	...	9	3
19	Bronchitis	...	...	...	...	9	6
20	Pneumonia (all forms)	...	...	...	...	3	5
21	Other Respiratory Diseases	...	...	...	...	—	3
22	Peptic Ulcer	...	...	...	...	1	1
23	Diarrhœa, etc. (under two years)	...	...	...	...	—	—
24	Appendicitis	...	...	...	...	—	1
25	Cirrhosis of the Liver	...	...	...	...	—	—
26	Other Diseases of the Liver	...	...	...	...	—	—
27	Other Digestive Diseases	...	...	...	...	4	2
28	Acute and Chronic Nephritis	...	...	...	...	5	1
29	Puerperal Sepsis	...	...	...	...	—	1
30	Other Puerperal Diseases	...	...	...	...	—	—
31	Congenital Debility, Prematurity, Malformations, etc.	...	...	...	...	5	7
32	Senility	...	...	...	...	—	—
33	Suicide	...	...	...	...	—	—
34	Other Violence	...	...	...	...	8	4
35	Other Defined Diseases	...	...	...	...	24	12
36	Causes Ill-defined or Unknown	...	...	...	...	—	—
Special Causes (included in No. 35 above)							
	Smallpox	...	...	...	...	—	—
	Poliomyelitis	...	...	...	...	—	—
	Polioencephalitis	...	...	...	...	—	—

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES (other than Tuberculosis).

The incidence of notifiable disease during the year is shown in the two subjoined tables; the first table sets out the total notifications, whilst the second shows the distribution according to age.

Disease.	Total Cases.	Admitted to Hospital.	Deaths.
Smallpox	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever	39	7	—
Diphtheria	2	1	—
Enteric Fever	—	—	—
Puerperal Pyrexia	—	—	—
Pneumonia	6	—	—
Cerebro-spinal Fever	3	2	1
Erysipelas	4	—	—
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	1	—	—
Acute Poliomyelitis	—	—	—
Totals	55	10	1

Disease.	Under One Year	1—	2—	3—	4—	5—	10—	15—	20—	35—	45—	65—	Total Cases
Smallpox	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever	—	1	—	1	2	19	8	2	2	3	1	—	39
Diphtheria	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	2
Enteric Fever	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Puerperal Pyrexia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pneumonia	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	1	1	2	—	6
Cerebro-spinal Fever	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	3
Erysipelas	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	1	—	1	4
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Acute Poliomyelitis	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	2	1	—	2	2	19	8	5	7	5	3	1	55

MEASLES AND WHOOPING COUGH REGULATIONS.

The following notifications have been received:—

Measles	...	...	406	Deaths. 1
Whooping Cough	...	...	15	—

TUBERCULOSIS.

Particulars of the new cases of Tuberculosis, deaths from the disease, and the total number of cases in the area during 1941 are given in the following tables:—

Age Periods.	NEW CASES.				DEATHS.			
	Respiratory		Non-Respiratory		Respiratory		Non-Respiratory	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
0—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1—	—	1	2	1	—	1	—	2
5—	2	4	2	5	—	—	—	—
15—	2	1	1	1	—	1	—	—
25—	3	4	2	3	1	—	—	—
35—	5	1	1	—	—	1	—	1
45—	1	2	—	1	1	—	1	—
55—	—	—	—	1	2	—	—	—
65 upwards	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTALS	15	13	8	12	4	3	1	3

Type of Case	Males	Females	Total
Respiratory	47	30	77
Non-Respiratory	39	36	75
TOTALS	86	66	152

FACTORIES, WORKSHOPS AND WORKPLACES TABLES.

1.—INSPECTION.

Including Inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors or Inspectors of Nuisances.

Premises. (1)	Number of		
	Inspections. (2)	Written Notices. (3)	Prosecutions. (4)
FACTORIES			
with mechanical power ...	7	1	—
without mechanical power ...	4	—	—
WORKPLACES	5	1	—
Total	16	2	—

2.—DEFECTS FOUND.

Particulars (1)	Number of Defects.			Number of Prosecutions (5)
	Found (2)	Remedied (3)	Referred to H.M. Inspector (4)	
Nuisances under the Public Health Acts:—				
Want of Cleanliness	1	1	—	—
Want of Ventilation	—	—	—	—
Overcrowding	—	—	—	—
Want of Drainage of floors ...	—	—	—	—
Other Nuisances	1	1	—	—
Sanitary { insufficient	—	—	—	—
Acommo- { unsuitable or defective	—	—	—	—
dation { not separate for sexes	—	—	—	—
Offences under the Factory and Workshop Act:—				
Illegal occupation of underground Bakehouse	—	—	—	—
Breach of special sanitary requirements for Bakehouses	—	—	—	—
Other Offences	—	—	—	—
Total	2	2	—	—

WALSINGHAM RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

REPORT OF THE SANITARY INSPECTOR for the Year 1941.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting to you the Annual Report of work carried out during the year 1941. For the purpose of economy this is presented in abbreviated form.

The following table shows the number of inspections made for all purposes during the year:—

NATURE OF INSPECTION.	No. OF VISITS
Housing Inspections	8
Housing Re-visits	24
Inspections in connection with the Housing (Rural Workers) Acts	—
Public Health Inspections	190
Public Health Revisits	274
Inspections of Cowsheds and Dairies	580
Inspections of Slaughterhouses and Foodshops	69
Inspections of Sewers, Sewer Ditches, Sewage Works, etc.	186
Inspections in connection with Scavenging Arrangements	150
Investigations in connection with Infectious Disease	73
Rooms disinfected	46
Inspections of Public Conveniences	15
Inspections of Factories and Workshops	16
Inspections of Petroleum Stores	9
Miscellaneous visits to owners etc.	152

Emergency Work.

Inspections in connection with the Civilian Deaths Scheme ...	35
Inspections in connection with the Government Evacuation Scheme	181
Inspections in connection with the Salvage Scheme ...	326
Visits in connection with Gas Contaminated Foodstuffs ...	37
Visits in connection with A.F.S. Water Supplies ...	35

TOTAL 2,406

Housing and Public Health.

The following items have been dealt with, and are the result of informal action:—

Additional means of lighting and ventilation provided to rooms	5
Windows repaired or made to open	8
Floors repaired or relaid	7
Plaster to walls or ceilings repaired	3
Dampness remedied	2
Walls repaired	5
Stairs repaired	2
Handrails on stairs provided	2
Doors repaired	1
Firegrates and coppers repaired	7
House roofs repaired	10
Chimney stacks repaired	5
Outbuildings repaired	1
Sanitary conveniences repaired or reconstructed	2
E.C.'s converted to W.C.'s	35
Lavatory basins provided and fixed	8
Baths provided and fixed	4

Additional sanitary conveniences provided	...	...	...	4
Sanitary pails provided	...	...	...	5
Rainwater guttering and fallpipes repaired or renewed	...	...	...	2
Wells cleaned or repaired	...	...	...	3
Drains unstopped, trapped or repaired	...	...	...	12
New ashbins provided	...	...	...	11
Ditches cleansed	...	...	...	2
Miscellaneous items dealt with	...	...	...	2

Housing (Rural Workers) Act.

No application for assistance was received during the year.

Cowsheds and Dairies.

During the year 580 visits (including re-visits) were made to cowsheds and dairies. As a result the attention of producers was drawn to 235 infringements of the Milk and Dairies Order 1926, respecting the cleanliness and structural condition of the premises and the registration of producers.

At the end of the year a preliminary survey of the remaining cowsheds and dairies was proceeding and the number of registrations at the present time is as follows:—

Wholesale Producers	...	125
Retail Purveyors	...	95
Dairymen	...	5

Six retailers of milk residing elsewhere are registered to retail milk within the District.

Graded Milk.

The number of producers holding licences to produce "Accredited" milk was 41, whilst 4 Producers hold licences to produce "Tuberculin Tested" milk.

108 samples of milk were taken from "Accredited" producers premises and 27 of these failed to pass the prescribed test. The average number of samples taken per producer was 2.57.

42 Bulk samples of milk for biological examination for Tuberculosis were also taken. None of these proved to be positive.

While every credit is due to the Milk Producer who is keen enough to produce a graded milk, there remains a serious loophole in the present legislation which allows the ordinary producer to place on sale a milk product which, although it must be produced in premises for which there are certain minimum requirements, may nevertheless be produced in such a manner that it would fail to pass any recognised test indicating cleanly methods of production.

It appears desirable that all producers of milk for human consumption should be required to comply with a minimum cleanliness standard for the product. The war period has been notable for the number of foodstuffs to which standards of composition now apply, and it is to be hoped that, after the cessation of hostilities, a milk cleanliness standard will soon become operative.

Slaughterhouses and Foodshops.

69 Slaughterhouse and Foodshop inspections were made during the year.

Total weight of foodstuffs disposed of so as not to be used for the food of man 2 cwts. 98 lbs.

Treatment of Foodstuffs Contaminated by Poison Gas.

During the year a number of volunteers drawn from local shopkeepers was recruited to deal with this matter. The squad has since been gas trained and works under the direction of myself acting in the capacity of Gas Contamination Officer. The squad now comprises an integral portion of the Air Raids Precautions Services, and a system whereby assistance could be afforded in case of necessity to any adjoining authority has been worked out.

Personal equipment for Squad Members is stored at the Council Offices, and a decontamination centre and lorry for transport have been earmarked.

Ministry of Food Prosecutions.

Assistance was given to the Ministry in prosecutions undertaken for contraventions of food rationing legislation and for food wastage. Convictions were recorded in all cases.

Sewerage and Drainage, Etc.

SEWER DITCHES.

Many of the sewer ditches in the district were cleaned out during the year but lack of adequate labour prevented the full programme of this work being completed.

SEWERAGE WORKS.

Fakenham—Pumping plant has received the usual careful attention during the year. Examination of the condition of the rising main was deferred owing to labour difficulties. Engine and pumps have worked a total of 2,854½ hours in the period under review, an average of about 7 hours 50 minutes pumping per day. Total rainfall was 26.20 inches.

Melton Constable—Extensive works of repair were satisfactorily carried out during the year. The plant is now working fairly efficiently but trouble has been experienced owing to the large quantities of oil discharged into the sewers and there is no doubt that the total exclusion of this would result in a greatly improved effluent.

Public Cleansing.

Scavenging is regularly carried out in the following parishes:—Fakenham, Little Walsingham, Great Walsingham, Blakeney, Stiffkey, Great Ryburgh, Hempton and Briston.

The scheme in Fakenham is run by direct labour, all the remainder are in the hands of Contractors. There has been a general increase in the cost of maintaining the services during the past year.

Water Supplies.

A total of 62 samples of water were taken during the year from 11 different sources of supply. These were made up as follows:—

Routine samples from public water supplies	...	49
Initial samples from private wells	... ..	10
Repeat samples from private wells	... ..	3
Sources of water supply found to be unsatisfactory	..	9
Number of premises where an alternative supply was provided	... ..	15

Fakenham and Hempton Public Water Supply.

Following an analysis of this water made on the 11th December, 1941, the Public Analyst reports as follows:—

"This water is of great organic and bacteriological purity. It is of excellent quality for drinking purposes."

This report is fully endorsed by the consistently high standard shown by the weekly bacteriological check samples.

Salvage.

An increasing amount of work has been involved in the maintenance of this scheme which still relies to a very large extent upon voluntary efforts for the maintenance of local collections in Parishes. Towards the end of the year the voluntary car pool system for the transport of the salvage to the central depot at Fakenham broke down, and a lorry has since been hired for this purpose, a regular collection being made towards the end of each month. Considerable labour difficulties have been experienced on the disposal side of the scheme.

A summary of the salvage dealt with during the year reveals the following facts:—

Material	Received			Disposed of		
	tons.	cwts.	lbs.	tons.	cwts.	lbs.
Wastepaper (all grades)	109	9	56*	124	11	104
Bones	4	0	0*	4	11	56
Rags	2	0	28	1	2	0
Bottles and Jars	6	15	0	3	15	0
Miscellaneous Metals	1	5	86		nil	
Exhausted H.T. Batteries	4	8	88		nil	

The income of £891 8s. 5d. received during this period has enabled the scheme to remain self-supporting, whilst substantial contributions have also been made to charities. This is undoubtedly a very fine example of what can be done by voluntary effort.

Apart from the previously mentioned aspects of the salvage of waste materials, a survey of the district was made in connection with the National Survey of Fixed and Demolition Scrap. It is estimated that about 20 tons of scrap metal was reported to the appropriate authority under this heading. A survey of unnecessary railings made on behalf of the Ministry of Works and Buildings was commenced at the end of the year.

Civilian Deaths Scheme.

Administrative work was maintained but no call was made on the service. Nine stretchers were made and distributed to focal points in the district for use in connection with the scheme.

Government Evacuation Scheme.

A further 15 premises were requisitioned for the accommodation of evacuees, schedules of condition were made, and in the majority of cases a number of repairs carried out so that the premises were put into a reasonably habitable condition.

A number of the properties have since been released from requisition owing to the drift of the evacuee families back to the cities.

* Note. The apparent difference in the totals of these materials received and disposed of is constituted by stocks previously held.

Conclusion.

It will be seen that much of the work of the Public Health Department remains of an emergency character. Maintenance of even essential public services has been increasingly difficult owing to the worsening labour situation. Local Parochial Sanitary Committees at Fakenham and Melton Constable have adopted the Wages and Conditions Schedule of the Eastern District Council for Local Authorities (Non-Trading) Services and the employees of these bodies have since been scheduled under The Essential Works (General Provisions) Order 1941. It is to be hoped that the improved wages and working conditions together with the provisions of the Essential Works Order will eliminate further labour difficulties.

The continued maintenance of a scheme whereby night scavenging is carried out in portions of the parish of Fakenham where both public water supplies and sewers are available is to be deprecated.

Housing conditions generally continue to deteriorate and it is virtually impossible to obtain housing accommodation of any description in many parts of the district. The condition of many condemned properties is now such that they are not now merely "unfit for habitation" but are also a potential danger to their occupants. Re-housing is now being effected where possible.

I should like to express my thanks to the Public Health Committee for their continued confidence, and to the Clerk of the Council, Medical Officer of Health, and other members of the staff whose ready co-operation is so greatly appreciated.

I am, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

H. E. GILBY.

Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor.

