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A N N U A L R E P O R T

O N T H E

HEALTH AND SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES  
OF THE BOROUGH OF WEYMOUTH AND  
MELCOMBE REGIS FOR THE YEAR 1939.

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E. J. GORDON WALLACE M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.

Medical Officer of Health.





Health Centre,  
Westham Road,  
Weymouth.

October, 1940.

To His Worship the Mayor, Aldermen and Council-  
lors of the Borough of Weymouth and Melcombe  
Regis.

Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report for the year 1939 on the Health and Sanitary Circumstances of the Borough.

On the 19th July, 1940, a Circular (No.2067) was issued by the Ministry of Health indicating that in view of the increasing pressure of work in the public health departments of local authorities and the need for strict economy in the use of paper, interim reports only should be made for the year 1939, and that these "should be confined to essential and urgent matters which have affected the public health during the year, especially any matters arising from or connected with the war, outbreaks of infectious disease and measures for maternity and child welfare, together with any exceptional administrative measures taken or recommended by the Medical Officer of Health".

The Circular further states that suitable arrangements should be made for careful preservation of all records, statistics, etc. so that after the termination of the war a report could be made dealing more fully with the period from the beginning of 1939 to the end of the last complete year, giving separate statistics for each year in order that the annual records may, as far as practicable, be continuous and complete.



This report will, therefore, be a very brief document and almost the only statistics included will be those received from the Registrar General on the 3rd October, 1940.

It is unfortunate that it is not at present possible to give a complete report for the past year which was an exceptionally busy one for the Health Department but, nevertheless, careful records have been kept of the work done and no doubt these will be published in due course.

The Meteorological Report for 1939 is likewise not incorporated in this Report.

Members of the Council will be aware of the additional work placed on the Health Department in the local organisation of the Casualty Services for Civil Defence. In spite of war work, the health services have been maintained and even expanded in certain directions. Our efforts to preserve and improve the lives and amenities of your fellow citizens seem puny in the face of mass murder and the indiscriminate destruction of the material resources of the world.

Nothing could be more tragic than that the wealth of nations should be used to cause death and destruction instead of to assist in the provision of decent and healthy standards of living. It is well-known that, from the earliest times, wars have produced famines and epidemics. Under conditions of modern warfare, the strength of a nation depends on the health and vigour of its civilian population as well as on the efficiency of its armed forces.

A heavy responsibility therefore rests on those in authority whose duty it is to direct how the health of the nation may best be maintained.

It is a pleasure once more to thank the members of the Council for their kindness and consideration, and my fellow officials and the Health Department Staff for their valuable co-operation and unstinted help in the work of the Department.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient Servant,

*E. J. Gordon Wallace*

Medical Officer of Health.



GENERAL INFORMATION.

Area (in acres) excluding 331 acres of Tidal Water	7007.
Resident Population, middle of 1939, (estimated by Registrar General).....	33,560.
Number of Inhabited Houses (end of 1939).....	10,488.
" " " " (end of 1938).....	10,235.
Rateable Value (1st April, 1940).....	£318, 199.
Sum represented by a Penny Rate.....	£1, 247.

VITAL STATISTICS (supplied by Registrar General).

Resident Population	+ (a) 33,560.
	+ (b) 34,660.

Comparability Figure 0.84.

Number of Cases of Infectious Diseases Notified.

Smallpox. Nil.	Enteric Fever	1.
Scarlet Fever 21.	Pneumonia	12.
Diphtheria 21.	Puerperal	
	Pyrexia	4.
	Erysipelas	4.

Live Births.

	+Inf. Mort. etc.		+Birth Rate.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.
Total.	260	248	252	244
Legitimate.	247	240	239	236
Illegitimate.	13	8	13	8

(+) Separate figures as supplied by the Registrar General for the treatment of Statistics rendered necessary by evacuation, etc. in accordance with his Circular issued on 29th May, 1940.

<u>Still Births.</u>	M.	F.	
Total	10	7	
Legitimate	10	7	Rate per 1000
Illegitimate	-	-	(live & still)
			= 33.13.

		M.	F.
<u>Deaths of Infants</u>	Total.	10	10
<u>under 1 year of age.</u>	Legitimate	10	9
	Illegitimate	-	1

Birth Rate per 1,000 of the Estimated Resident population :- 14.78.

<u>Deaths</u>	Total	M.	F.
	397	186	211

Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population :- 11.45.

Corrected death rate:- 9.6

Deaths from Puerperal Causes:-

Puerperal Sepsis	Nil.
Other Puerperal Causes	2

Death Rate from Puerperal Causes (Maternal Mortality) = 3.8

Infant Mortality.

All infants per 1,000 live births (infantile mortality)	39.37
Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate births.	39.20
Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate births	47.60

Comparison of Weymouth Vital Statistics with those of (1) England and Wales, (2) 148 Smaller Towns.

	<u>Weymouth.</u>	<u>England &amp; Wales.</u>	<u>148 Smaller Towns</u>
Birth Rate.	14.78	15.0	15.6
Death Rate.	9.6	12.1	11.2
Maternal Mortality..	3.8	2.82	Not available.
Infant Mortality..	39.37	50.0	40.0



General Provision of Health Services for the Area.

With few additions these were the same as detailed in last year's report.

All specimens for bacteriological and pathological examination were sent to the new Laboratory established by the County Council at Dorchester, which has greatly added to the efficiency of the Health Services of this area.

The Public Midwifery Service continued to function satisfactorily and during the 20 months ended 31st March, 1940, the 5 midwives employed by the Nursing Associations attended a total of 383 confinements, an average per midwife of 46 cases in 12 months. The cost to the Corporation for this work was £293.11.6d (ranking for grant) which includes all clerical work, collection of fees, etc. as compared with a cost of £465.16.4d for the first year's working of the Scheme.

Every credit is due to the Nursing Associations and their Central Midwifery Committee for their efficient and economical administration of the Scheme.

The Ante-Natal Scheme whereby any expectant mother can be examined by the Medical Practitioner of her own choice made further progress, and 168 women took advantage of the Scheme. Only 15 of these, however, received the full number of three examinations, 65 were examined twice and 88 once.

During the year arrangements were made for Weymouth Midwives to attend refresher courses at the Southampton Borough Hospital, but only one midwife was able to take advantage of this Scheme before it was held up by the outbreak of war.

A new Child Welfare Clinic was opened in the Women's Institute Hall, Wyke Regis, and to begin with sessions were held fortnightly. To meet the needs of a large number of evacuees weekly sessions were instituted in September - an arrangement which has continued owing to the increasing use made of this Clinic - despite the fact that almost all the evacuees have returned to their own homes.



Among the surprises of the Evacuation in September was the unheralded arrival of approximately 100 expectant mothers despite earlier official assurances that this class of evacuee would not be sent to Weymouth. A large house was immediately requisitioned and converted into an Emergency Maternity Home of 17 beds, and in the meantime these patients who went into labour were admitted to private nursing homes in the Town. The Home was opened early in October, and its amenities were much appreciated by those evacuees who remained in Weymouth.

From September onwards all Clinics were conducted in the St. John Ambulance Hall, a short distance from the Health Centre which was taken over for other purposes. An additional Child Welfare Clinic was held on Monday afternoons and an Antenatal Clinic on Friday afternoons.

All the Clinics were conducted by Dr. Joyce B. Williams who was appointed full-time Assistant Medical Officer on the outbreak of war.

Water Supply During the year 67 samples of the public water supply were submitted for bacteriological examination. This increase in the number of samples taken was due to the fact that the results did not always show the high standard of purity previously maintained. The complete cooperation which exists between the Health Department and the Waterworks Company was most useful in the investigations which followed, and the Company called into consultation Dr. J.F. Beale, one of the highest authorities on water supplies in the country.

Although the Spring water enjoyed a high degree of natural purity, it was decided that treatment with chlorine would give an additional margin of safety and the appropriate apparatus was therefore installed at the Pumping Station. The supply is ample for the Borough's requirements which amount to over  $1\frac{1}{2}$  million gallons per day.



Sanitary Inspection of the Borough, Housing Etc.

The time of the three Sanitary Inspectors was very fully occupied with the many investigations and duties they are called upon to perform. Details of the Inspectors' work will not be included in this Report, but all the usual records have been kept. The summary of Inspection work shows that 398 visits were made to inspect the cleanliness of houses before new tenants took possession, slaughterhouses were visited on 819 occasions, and summer camps were inspected 50 times.


Supervision of drainage work was continued and the drainage of 302 premises was converted to main drainage from cesspools, earthclosets etc. Careful supervision was exercised on premises used for the preparation of food, and regular visits were made to the two plants licensed for the pasteurisation of milk. In the case of one of these plants, a licence was issued for a period of 3 months only. During this time the samples taken indicated that adequate care was being taken in the necessary treatment of the milk and a fresh licence was issued for the remainder of the year. Under Section 25 of the Housing Act, 1936, 66 houses were represented in Clearance Areas. An Inspector of the Ministry of Health held the usual Inquiry on the 1st August, and the Ministry subsequently confirmed clearance orders in respect of 60 houses, including the Governor's Lane Area, which had been represented in the previous year. Not all of the 66 houses represented were dealt with at the Inquiry as the Council had not by that time made the necessary Orders.

Six underground tenements were closed under Section 12 and demolition orders made in the case of 2 houses.

Undertakeings were accepted that 3 houses would not be used for human habitation and specifications agreed upon to make fit another 3 houses.

This work is now suspended for the duration of the war, but complaints about unfit houses have still to be investigated and dealt with by the best available methods





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