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WILTS COUNTY COUNCIL.



The Public Health Committee.

ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
FOR THE YEAR
1942

WILTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR THE YEAR 1942.

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT,
COUNTY HALL,
TROWBRIDGE.

June, 1943.

MY LORDS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to submit my twenty-fourth Annual Report on the Public Health of the County of Wilts. This is again very brief in accordance with the desire of the Ministry.

In spite of fears to the contrary, the War has not brought increased sickness to the County, except in the case of tuberculosis which still gives rise to anxiety.

The year has been notable because of the appearance of smallpox after many years of freedom. It has also been notable for the continued success of the scheme for immunization against diphtheria, which I trust is now permanently established as an essential function of the County Council.

The great difficulty in the maintenance of the health service of the County has been the progressive calling-up of headquarters clerical staff, which towards the end of the year threatened a breakdown of essential services. Since the end of the year we have been somewhat reassured as the result of a special investigation by the Government Departments concerned.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient Servant,

CLAUDE E. TANGYE.

POPULATION.

The Registrar-General's estimate for 1942 355,800

This shows an increase of over 37,000 on the corresponding estimate for 1939, but a decrease of some 12,000 on the previous year owing to the fact that so many evacuees had returned to their homes.

BIRTHS AND DEATHS.

	TOTAL.		RATE.	
	1942	1941	1942	1941
Live Births	6248	5742	(per 1000 of population)	
Deaths	3932	4086	17.56	15.64
			11.05	11.13
Deaths from :—			(per 1000 births)	
Puerperal Sepsis	8	6	1.24	0.93
Other Puerperal Causes	10	10	1.55	1.55
TOTAL	18	16	2.79	2.48
Deaths of Infants under one year of age ...	272	268	(per 1000 live births)	
Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	619	589	43.53	46.68
Deaths from certain Infectious Diseases :—				
Scarlet Fever	2	3		
Diphtheria	2	19		
Typhoid and Paratyphoid Fever	—	—		
Cerebro-spinal Fever	10	18		
Infantile Paralysis	—	3		
Acute Encephalitis Lethargica	7	5		
Phthisis	107	134		
Other Tuberculosis	34	49		

The birth-rate continued to rise and the death-rate to fall. There was also a further fall in the infantile death-rate, 43.53, which compares with the national rate of 49. The mortality figures for infectious disease are, in almost every case, better than those for the previous year.

The comparative table below includes the three diseases which give rise to most anxiety during present conditions, and refers to the whole County area, including Swindon and Salisbury. Neither of the two patients who died from diphtheria was amongst the many thousands who had been immunized in the County area.

Disease.	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942
Deaths from Diphtheria	9	7	13	37	19	2
" Cerebro-spinal Fever	1	5	3	23	18	10
" Tuberculosis :—						
Phthisis	106	111	110	109	134	107
Other	29	22	19	28	49	34

ACUTE INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

No infectious disease threatened at any time in the year to assume epidemic proportions, and the figures given in the following table show that the incidence of most of the more important decreased very considerably during 1942.

Three cases of smallpox were notified in Swindon during the summer and admitted to the County Smallpox Hospital at Ogbourne. The infection was imported from the East and was a part of the Glasgow outbreak. A number of other patients were admitted for observation, only one of whom proved to be suffering from smallpox. A vaccination campaign in the county resulted in some 64,000 emergency vaccinations. This campaign in the Swindon area undoubtedly prevented a serious epidemic.

Disease.	Total Notifications during :—			
	1939	1940	1941	1942
Smallpox	—	—	—	3
Scarlet Fever	449	1180	711	543
Diphtheria	154	501	314	70
Enteric Fever (including paratyphoid)	8	2	31	5
Puerperal Pyrexia	86	86	120	98
Cerebro-spinal Fever	10	240	100	60
Infantile Paralysis	9	4	14	9
Acute Encephalitis Lethargica	1	4	2	6
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	18	18	29	25

The low figure for diphtheria is especially notable, and is the result of immunization. The 70 cases included only four of the 42,052 children who had been inoculated since the Scheme started, and these four made good recoveries.

The percentage of children immunised under five years of age was nearly doubled during the year, rising to 51%. The corresponding figure for school children rose to 95%. The ideal to aim at is inoculation for every child at one year of age, again on entering school and again at ten, the most important of these three inoculations being the first. A tribute should be paid to Head Teachers, who are largely responsible for the growing success of the scheme by arranging the use of schools as immunization centres for infants as well as school children.

MIDWIFERY AND MATERNITY SERVICES.

The shortage of midwives, district and institutional, became more pronounced during 1942 and caused a good deal of anxiety. However, both services were successfully maintained, and much credit is due to the efforts of those District Nursing Associations and their midwives, who, when gaps occurred, temporarily undertook the responsibility of midwifery in a neighbouring district as well as their own.

Emergency Maternity Homes.—The 40 maternity beds at Berryfield, Bradford-on-Avon, and the 30 maternity beds at the Old Cottage Hospital at Melksham, together with the 41 ante-natal beds at Woolley Grange, Bradford-on-Avon, continue to form a most valuable and efficient unit under Mr. Wilfred Shaw, of St. Bartholomew's Hospital. Its facilities, though primarily for evacuated expectant mothers, are available also in certain circumstances for County cases, thus easing the burden on other maternity homes whose accommodation has frequently been fully booked.

The Unit has for some time functioned as a Training School recognised by the Central Midwives Board. Originally intended for London County Council pupils only, the school has now been thrown open to suitable local pupils who are State Registered nurses.

To the end of 1942 a total of 2,064 cases had been confined at the unit.

CHILD WELFARE.

Evacuation and the influx of transferred war workers with their families has continued to increase our ordinary domiciliary and clinic work.

All our peace-time schemes for the treatment of orthopaedic, ophthalmic and ear, nose and throat defects, found in infants as a result of health visiting or otherwise reported, have continued and expanded. The accommodation for infants at the Marlborough Convalescent Home,

restricted by other war-time demands on the Home, has now been augmented by a Nursery of sixteen cots at Warminster, in the premises which were formerly the Warminster Isolation Hospital.

The number of Nursery Parties evacuated to country houses in Wiltshire under various auspices, and for which the County Medical Department is responsible in respect of special services, has been increased to ten. The improvement in town children's health after a few months' stay in these Nurseries in good surroundings and under efficient care is so obvious and so important to the national health that a peace-time continuation of the scheme seems essential.

WAR-TIME DAY NURSERIES.

During the year, six 40-place War-time Day Nurseries were opened in various parts of the County under the general direction of the Ministry of Health. The attendances of children of war-workers for whom these Nurseries were provided, was poor at first, but has in most cases much improved, three Nurseries now being practically full.

At the time of writing two further Nurseries are in operation and two more are in the course of erection.

CIVIL NURSING RESERVE.

From the inception of the Reserve until the end of the year under review, 1,768 applications for enrolment as Nursing Auxiliaries had been received, of which 1,031 had completed their training. In addition there were on the register 93 Trained Nurses and 39 Assistant Nurses.

The two weeks' intensive courses of training have continued to be provided generally at larger Centres outside the County, such as Plymouth, Bristol and Bath. One such course, however, was held in 1942 at Devizes and District Hospital, and since the end of 1942 a second has been concluded and a third is being arranged.

Close touch is kept with Employment Exchanges throughout the County, and every effort has been made in this and other ways to obtain as many recruits to the Reserve as possible. The numbers, however, remained disappointingly small, though at the time of writing enquiries are increasing slightly.

TUBERCULOSIS.

Medical Staff.—Dr. Harper, County Tuberculosis Officer, was released from the Royal Air Force on the 16th March, 1942, and returned to duty, with the result that Dr. Morgan, Assistant County Medical Officer, ceased to act as Tuberculosis Officer from that date. Dr. Teeuwen continued as an Assistant Tuberculosis Officer at the Swindon Dispensary, and Dr. Knight in that capacity at the Salisbury and Trowbridge Clinics. Both these appointments are temporary.

Notifications.—The total number of notifications in 1942 was 413 (296 Pulmonary and 117 Non-Pulmonary), compared with a total of 433 in 1941 and 436 in 1940. The last year for which notification was normal, viz., 1938, showed 293 notifications (188 Pulmonary and 105 Non-Pulmonary).

In addition to these 413 new cases, many others came within the Tuberculosis Scheme, but as they were evacuees, their numbers were ignored for statistical purposes in accordance with the instructions of the Ministry of Health.

The increased number of notifications for the years 1939, 1940 and 1941 was due in the main to transfers of existing cases from other areas. During 1942, however, there was a definite increase in the number of primary notifications of Wiltshire residents suffering from the disease, the actual figure being 321 (231 Pulmonary and 90 Non-Pulmonary), compared with 289 in 1941 (211 Pulmonary and 78 Non-Pulmonary). This increase was most marked in male patients, both pulmonary and non-pulmonary. The age group 25 to 35 showed the main increase in pulmonary cases, and this, in part, was attributable to the number of Wiltshire cases discharged from the Services suffering from the disease, although an increase was also noted in the civilian population. Amongst non-pulmonary males the increase arose in the age groups 10 to 20. It is extremely difficult to estimate the actual increase in tuberculosis amongst normal residents. Many of the new notifications are of persons who are at present in the County on war work, and who have never been notified previously; they therefore rank as primary notifications in Wiltshire, but they may not become permanent residents.

Cases under Supervision.—The number of cases of tuberculosis under supervision at the end of 1942 was 939 (656 Pulmonary and 283 Non-Pulmonary), compared with 852 in the previous year, and 839 in 1940. In the last pre-war year (1938) the number was 667 (426 Pulmonary and 241 Non-Pulmonary).

Dispensary Attendances.—The attendances at the Dispensaries showed a very large increase, the total being 4,183 compared with 3,681 in 1941, and 2,943 in 1940. It will be seen that 500 more attendances took place than in the previous year and the 1942 figure actually is double that for the immediate pre-war years. This was due not only to an increase in the routine attendances, but to large numbers of National Service candidates referred for reports to Medical Boards and ex-service cases referred by the Ministry of Pensions.

In October, 1942, it was found necessary to hold two clinics weekly at Swindon instead of one as hitherto, and this procedure was adopted also at Salisbury and Trowbridge towards the end of the year. This arrangement relieved the pressure on the clinics which previously had been very great.

Institutional Treatment.—The number of patients who received institutional treatment during the year was as follows:—

Institutions.	Men.	Women.	Children.	Total.
Winsley Sanatorium	53	39	2	94
Harnwood Hospital ...	80	69	4	153
Devizes Isolation Hospital ...	28	—	—	28
Preston Hall, Aylesford ...	5	—	—	5
Papworth Hall ...	1	—	—	1
St. Michael's Home, Axbridge ...	1	—	—	1
Brompton Hospital ...	—	1	—	1
Grosvenor Sanatorium ...	3	—	—	3
Camberley ...	1	—	—	1
London Chest Hospital ...	—	1	—	1
Chippenham Isolation Hospital ...	2	1	—	3
Cotswold Sanatorium, Glos ...	1	—	—	1
Kewstoke Hospital... ...	5	2	—	7
Leavesden Emergency Hospital ...	1	—	—	1
University College Hospital ...	1	—	—	1
St. Margaret's, Stratton ...	4	2	—	6
Children's Convalescent Home, Marlborough ...	5	11	1	17
Savernake Hospital, Marlborough ...	3	12	34	49
Children's Orthopaedic Hospital, Bath ...	8	7	36	51
Beckford Lodge ...	11	10	—	21
Westbury Hospital ...	—	2	—	2
Morland Hall ...	1	1	—	2
Salisbury General Infirmary ...	—	—	1	1
Bristol General Hospital ...	—	1	—	1
	214	159	78	451

The first group of institutions in general take pulmonary cases, and the second non-pulmonary.

Winsley Sanatorium provides 36 beds for the County, 21 for men and 15 for women. Harnwood Hospital provides 40 beds, 16 for men and 24 for women. In summer a number of shelters are utilised in addition, bringing the total beds up to 50.

As noted in the last report, the waiting list for patients requiring institutional treatment caused grave concern. In order to meet the position the County Public Health Committee made arrangements with the Devizes Isolation Hospital Committee whereby a ward of 18 beds was made available for the reception of male pulmonary patients, and the first patients were admitted in September, 1942. As a result, the waiting list at the end of 1942 had been reduced to 12 cases, 11 pulmonary and 1 non-pulmonary, and the position certainly had been considerably eased. There is still difficulty, however, in getting sufficient beds for female pulmonary cases.

The "daily average" number of in-patients under treatment during 1942 was 127.7, compared with 103.9 in the previous year. The main cause of this increase was the opening of the Tuberculosis Ward at the Devizes Isolation Hospital referred to above.

Tuberculous Ex-Service Cases.—The number of such continues to increase, and since the beginning of the war just over 100 have been reported. Not all of these are accepted by the Ministry of Pensions as being attributable to, or aggravated by, war service, but at present 55 "accepted" cases are on the register. Deaths and removals account for another 20, whilst a few cases are still under consideration by the Ministry of Pensions, with whom there is close co-operation.

Surgical Treatment of Pulmonary Cases.—Surgery is becoming more and more used in the treatment of pulmonary tuberculosis. This is now placed on a secure foundation as the most promising means of rendering patients sputum negative and possibly fit to return to work. Developments are in two directions:—

In-patient Treatment.—The recent establishment by the Ministry of a Thoracic Centre at Kewstoke, near Weston-super-Mare, has fulfilled a long-felt want in this area. Cases of pulmonary tuberculosis can now be admitted for certain highly specialised surgical procedures such as division of adhesions in artificial pneumo-thorax and for thoracoplastic operations. Seven cases were sent from the County before the end of the year.

Out-patient Treatment.—The number of out-patients attending for artificial pneumo-thorax refills in 1942 was 55. Of these 36 attended Winsley Sanatorium and 19 Harnwood Hospital. This treatment is given on an average about once every 14 days, and the present restriction to two centres leads to inconvenience for many patients.

Surgical Treatment of Non-Pulmonary Cases.—Cases of tuberculous glands have increased and there is a long waiting list. Tuberculosis of the kidney is also beginning to present a problem, which demands a high degree of surgical specialisation.

VENEREAL DISEASES.

Civilian patients attending at the Treatment Centres for the first time during 1942 numbered 495, compared with 325 in 1941, whilst new "Service" cases totalled 21, as against 34 in the previous year. Of the 516 patients examined during 1942, however, no less than 335, or 64.9%, were found to have non-venereal conditions, and there was only a small increase in the number of new cases of actual venereal infection during the year, the total civilian and "Service" cases numbering 181, compared with 138 in 1941. This figure was, however, less than in 1940, when there were 202 new cases.

The total numbers of patients attending the Clinics during the year were 803 civilian and 154 "Service," as against 601 and 163 respectively in 1941.

CANCER.

Details of attendances at clinics and hospital treatment are given in the table on page 8. It will be seen that compared with the figures for 1941, there has been a marked increase both in regard to attendances at each of the four clinics and to hospital treatment, and it is encouraging to note the growing use which is being made of the facilities available under the County Council's arrangements for examination and treatment.

The clinic which was opened in December, 1941, at the Royal United Hospital, Bath, has been well maintained, and is now attended by patients from Bath and Somerset, as well as from Wiltshire.

The increasing pressure on the in-patient accommodation at the Bristol Radium Centre led to negotiations with the Ministry of Health for the release of beds at the Kewstoke Emergency Hospital, Weston-super-Mare, for the reception of cancer patients, and since June many Wilts cases have been admitted there.

Patients requiring deep X-Ray treatment are, however, frequently dealt with as out-patients both at Bristol and Southampton, and in addition to meeting the cost of the treatment the County Council is often called upon to assist in necessitous cases with patients' travelling expenses.

The deaths from cancer were again slightly higher, numbering 619, as against 589 in 1941. The rate per thousand of the population, however, showed little variation, being 1.7, compared with 1.6 in 1941.

TREATMENT OF CANCER.

Attendances at Clinics.	YEAR 1942.				YEAR 1941.					
	Bath.	Salis- bury.	Trow- bridge.	Swindon. Total.	Bath.	Salis- bury.	Trow- bridge.	Swindon. Total.		
Patients attending during the year ...	46	50	75	121	292	8	32	61	115	216
Number of above examined for the first time during the year ...	37	24	30	57	148	7	8	20	46	81
Attendances of Patients ...	96	157	146	256	655	8	65	115	228	416
* Bath Clinic : First session 10/12/41.										
Treatment at Hospital.	Southampton.				Bristol.				Total.	
Recommended for In-Patient Treatment ...	9				68				77	
Recommended for Out-Patient Treatment...	21				40				61	
Total Recommendations for Treatment ...	30				108				138	
Treated as In-patients ...	10				65				75	
Treated as Out-patients ...	24				37				61	
Total Patients Treated ...	34				102				136	
	11				20				31	
	16				39				55	
	27				59				86	