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Contributors

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WITHAM URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR 1943.

Public Health Offices,
St. Peter's Close,
Bicking, Braintree.

Mr. Chairman, Madam and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit to you a short report on the health and sanitary conditions of the Urban District for the Year 1943. War-time conditions again necessitate that this forms a brief review instead of the usual statistical account. No separate report is being submitted by the Sanitary Inspector, whose work for the year is incorporated in this report.

Again it is pleasing to be able to state that the general health of the district remained satisfactory throughout the year.

GENERAL HEALTH SERVICES.

There were no changes in the general health services provided in the district during the year.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.Water.

During the year 1943 a constant and sufficient water supply of good quality was maintained. No restriction on consumption has so far been imposed but a circular has been issued asking the population to economise in the use of water and so conserve supplies against a possible drought in the summer of 1944. The average daily consumption was as follows :-

Domestic purposes	24.93	gallons per head.
Trade	7.89	" " "
Total	<u>32.82</u>	" " "

The distribution from the waterworks was

Main supply into houses	95% approx.
" " " stand pipes	2% "

The remaining 3% are supplied from private wells.

A sample taken from Bradwell Springs on the 29th January, 1943, was reported on by the County Bacteriologist as follows :-

CHEMICAL RESULTS in PARTS PER 100,000.

Appearance	Clear and bright.	Odour	Nil.
Colour	Normal.	Free Carbonic Acid	3.9
Reaction pH	Neutral 7.0	Total solids dried	
Electric Conductivity		at 180°C	43.5
at 20°C	655	Alkalinity as Calcium	
Chlorine in Chlorides	2.8	Carbonate.	27.5
Hardness: Total	36.0	Temporary	25.5
Nitrogen in Nitrates	0.32	Permanent	10.5
Free Ammonia	0.0000	Nitrogen in Nitrites	Absent.
Albuminoid Ammonia	0.0000	Ammoniacal Nitrogen	-
Oxygen absorbed in 4 hrs. at 27°C	- 0.010	Albuminoid Nitrogen	-
Metals	Absent.		

BACTERIOLOGICAL RESULTS.

Number of "Bacteria" growing) on Agar per c.c. or ml. in)	<u>1 day at 37°C</u>	<u>2 days at 37°C</u>	<u>3 days at 20°C</u>
	2	27	66
Presumptive Coliform Reaction.	Present	-	Absent 100 c.c.
Bact. Coli	Present	-	Absent 100 c.c.
Cl.welchii Reaction	Present	-	Absent 100 c.c.

This sample is clear and bright and of normal colour. The water contained a distinct trace of free carbonic acid but is neutral in reaction and free from iron and other metals. It is very hard in character but contains no excess of saline or mineral matter in solution and is of satisfactory organic and bacterial purity.

These results are consistent with a wholesome water, suitable for drinking and domestic purposes, but the hardness will, of course, be disadvantageous.

A sample taken from the Braintree Road Waterworks, Witham, on the 29th January, 1943, was reported on by the County Bacteriologist as follows :-

CHEMICAL RESULTS IN PARTS PER 100,000.

Appearance	Very faintly opalescent - no visible deposit.		
	Turbidity, less than 5 parts per million (Silica Scale).		
Colour	Normal.	Odour	Nil.
Reaction pH	Neutral: 7.9	Free Carbonic Acid	0.5
Electric Conductivity at 20°C	1900	Total solids dried at 180°C	127.0
Chlorine in Chlorides	46.0	Alkalinity as Calcium Carbonate	30.0
Hardness: Total	5.0	Temporary 5.0 Permanent	0.0
Nitrogen in Nitrates	0.00	Nitrogen in Nitrites	- Absent
Free Ammonia	0.125	Ammoniacal Nitrogen	-
Albuminoid Ammonia	0.0004	Albuminoid Nitrogen	-
Oxygen absorbed in 4 hrs. at 27°C	0.015		
Metals: Iron - 0.005.	Other metals absent.		
	Free chlorine reaction 0.5 parts per million.		

BACTERIOLOGICAL RESULTS.

Bacteriological sample dechlorinated on collection.

Number of "Bacteria" growing) on Agar per c.c. or ml.in)	<u>1 day at 37°C</u>	<u>2 days at 37°C</u>	<u>3 days at 20°C</u>
	0	1	2
Presumptive Coliform Reaction	Present	-	Absent 100 c.c.
Bact. coli.	Present	-	Absent 100 c.c.
Cl.welchii Reaction	Present	-	Absent 100 c.c.

This sample is reasonably clear and bright in appearance, practically neutral in reaction and free from metals apart from an insignificant trace of iron. The water is soft in character has a high content of salinity, is of good organic quality and the highest standard of bacterial purity. A distinct residual chlorine reaction (present as chloramines) was present. These results are normal, satisfactory and consistent with a wholesome water, suitable for drinking and domestic purposes.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

Witham Sewage Works.

Samples taken of the effluent by the Southend Waterworks Company, numbered 38, of these 35 were satisfactory and 3 were unsatisfactory. Those taken by the Essex County Council produced 5 satisfactory results.

Silver End Sewage Works.

Samples taken by the Essex County Council number 4, all of which were satisfactory.

Public Cleansing and Salvage.

The combined collection of refuse and salvage instituted in 1940 continued throughout 1943.

HOUSING.

A total of sixteen licences to occupy condemned houses were granted during the year, these being extensions of the original period in the case of eight houses licensed for the first time in 1940.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

Milk.

Inspections were carried out of all the premises in the District engaged in the production or sale of milk. No samples were taken during the year.

Meat.

The number of animals slaughtered during the period was 7,180 of which 7,003 were inspected (97.53%). As a result of inspections the total weight of Meat and Offal condemned was 83,270 lbs. (37 tons 3 cwts 2 qrs) of which 32 tons 19 cwts 3 qrs was affected with Tuberculosis.

Of all the animals inspected, 11.25% were found to be affected with Tuberculosis, and 5.62% by other diseased conditions.

Visits paid by the Sanitary Inspector during the year were 500, of which 487 were paid to the slaughterhouse and 13 to butchers' shops.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

The following list shows the number of cases of infectious Disease reported during the year:-

Scarlet Fever	25	Diphtheria	2
Measles	197	Erysipelas	1
Whooping Cough	3	Pneumonia	3
Dysentery	6		

One case of Diphtheria proved fatal.

All the cases of Dysentery occurred at Bridge Home, the Witham Branch of the Royal Eastern Counties Institution.

Diphtheria Prophylaxis.

During 1943, Sessions were held monthly at the Child Welfare Centre Congregational Hall, Newland Street, Witham, and have been well attended by children of pre-school age and a small number of school children.

At the end of 1943, the total number of children immunised in the Urban District was as follows :-

Children aged 5 - 15 (i.e., school children)	979
Children under 5 years (i.e., pre-school children)	519

These figures represent approximately 88.6% and 88.8% of the child population in the respective age groups.

Tuberculosis.

New cases notified during the year numbered 16, and were made up as follows :-

	<u>Respiratory.</u>		<u>Non-Respiratory.</u>	
Male.		Female.	Male	Female.
9		3	1	3

The deaths of 13 patients on the Tuberculosis Register occurred during the year.

EVACUATION.

Again as in the two previous years, the number of evacuees diminished. The general health of the children remaining in the Urban District continued to be satisfactory.

I wish to thank the Council Officers who have kindly assisted me in compiling this report.

I am Mr. Chairman, Madam and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

T. G. BENJAMIN.

Acting Medical Officer of Health.

August, 1944.