Urban District of Woodhall Spa

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

1951

With Compliments

of

The Medical Officer

of Health

Health Offices.
Horncastle.

Horncastle Rural District.
Horncastle Urban District.
Woodhall Spa Urban District.

WOODHALL SPA URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Annual Report
of the
Medical Officer of Health
1951

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL

Medical Officer of Health

S.A. O'HAGAN, M.B., B.S., D.P.H.

Sanitary Inspector

N.R. BOLTON, M.S.I.A., A.R.S.I.

To the Chairman and Members,
Woodhall Spa Urban District Council.

Mr. Chairman, Mrs Flury and Members,

In presenting the statutory annual report of your Medical Officer of Health, I must offer some explanation for the delay beyond the usual date of publication. As you are aware, my predecessor left the district and it was for me to discover for myself what matters had affected the health of the district during the year and to offer my comments upon them. It would not have been wise to have attempted this without some first-hand experience of the district, and this is not quickly obtained.

Figures speak for themselves, but not unfortunately, always truthfully, and the statistics for so small a population have to be carefully considered before they can be used as any basis for discussion.

Certain matters do, however arise from the statistical section of this report.

It will be seen that pneumonia notifications are some ten times as frequent in Woodhall Spa as in Horncastle, but before rushing to the conclusion that the Spa was a deadly place, it would be necessary to think very much further. Firstly "pneumonia" is not a clear-cut disease like measles and its course is so much modified nowadays by treatment that it is often, in fact, aborted at a stage in which a conscientious doctor is hard pressed to say whether in fact it was an actual pneumonia.

Other factors, too, had to be considered - whether there was any real difference in the age distribution of the population between the two towns, or whether the climate was affected significantly by the number of trees in the Spa. In the end, although a ten-fold disparity in notifications occurs, it may well be of little significance. Obviously, though, investigations will have to continue.

Quite a lot of space has been devoted to water-supply, and much of the statistical work appears to reflect badly upon the Spa.

Reflection again, however, shows that the majority of small towns or villages of this size have no supply to be criticised, or have benefitted by recent developments

and installed a brand new system. These statistics unfortunately give no credit to the men who, sixty years ago, when few towns many times the size of the Spa were water-conscious, installed a sound modern scheme which remains generally adequate today. It is in the nature of iron to rust, and maintenance is necessary and costs money - a great deal of money at the present time. At the same time research proceeds and asbestos-cement mains are being used to replace cast iron. As far as we know at present, this will solve many difficulties but perhaps in sixty years our successors will know what new ones we shall have left for them to solve.

A similar situation exists in regard to sewage disposal - that we have difficulties, and that we are able to deal with them is common knowledge - but we are not justified in criticising the far-seeing men who, many years ago provided the Spa with a system that compared well with any in country, because after a life time of 24-hours a day work replacements and repairs fall due and changes in national habits result in a great increase in volume of sewage to be dealt with.

It is fashionable too, to complain of the state of Church of England schools and to compare them with the modern County Council buildings. Nevertheless, it was upon the experience of the Church in designing schools in the 19th century that the Local Authorities architects were able to design their improvements.

The health of the children attending the Church of England school in Woodhall Spa does not appear in any way inferior to those lucky enough to have brand new schools, although it must be admitted that the task of the teachers is eased by more adequate buildings and that shortage of space and staff renders it especially difficult to deal with the backward pupil.

I cannot conclude my introductory letter without thanking you, Mr. Chairman, and all members of the Council, and all the officers of the Council for their help whilst I have been your Medical Officer.

Yours faithfully,

Medical Officer of Health

STATISTICS

AREA OF URBAN DISTRICT: 1874 acres.

REGISTRAR GENERAL'S MID-YEAR ESTIMATE OF RESIDENT POPULATION: 1,978

DENSITY OF POPULATION: 1.05 persons per acre.

NUMBER OF INHABITED HOUSES:	(PERMANENT)	532
	(CARAVANS ETC.)	4
	(FLATS)	29

SUM REPRESENTED BY PENNY RATE: £48

RATEABLE VALUE OF URBAN DISTRICT: £12,143

VITAL STATISTICS

Live Births

		1950	1951
Legitimate	Males	12	12
	Females	17	7
		29	19
Illegitimate	Males	-	-
	Females	1	-
		1	-
Total Live Births		30	19
Crude live Birth Rate per thousand Estimated Population		15.66	9.61

	1950	1951
Standardised live Birth Rate per Thousand Estimated Population.	18.00	11.72
Live Births per Thousand Population England and Wales	15.8	15.5
Still Births		
Males	-	-
Females	1	-
	1	-

The total number of still-births is so small that it is unwarrantable to make comparisons with other figures, except in so far as it affects the total birth rate.

Total Birth Rate per thousand Estimated Population	16.18	9.61
Standardised Total Birth Rate per Thousand Estimated Population	19.74	11.72
Deaths		
Males	14	11
Females	19	14
	33	25
Crude Death Rate per Thousand Estimated Population	17.22	12.64
Standardised Death Rate per Thousand Estimated Population	12.39	9.10
Death Rate per Thousand Population England and Wales	11.6	12.5

Age at Death, 1951.

Years of Age.	0-1	1-4	5-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & Over
Deaths	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	7	16
% of Total Deaths	0	0	0	0	0	3.6	3.6	10.6	25.2	57

Premature Deaths

Causes of Death at ages under 65 years:

Cancer of Uterus	1
Nephritis	1
Coronary Disease	1
Accident	1
Influenzal Pneumonia	1

Maternal Mortality

No maternal death has occurred in the present series of records, since prior to 1944. This is extremely satisfactory.

Death Rates of Infants under 1 year of age.

No death has occurred during the year, and only 3 amongst the 123 children born in 1947 - 1951.

A valid death rate for the present year cannot be calculated but over the 5 years the rate will have validity and is given.

	1947 - 1951
Death Rate of infants under 1 year of age per thousand live births.	24.4
Death Rate of infants under 1 year of age per thousand live births, England and Wales	29.6

No. of Deaths, 19-1.

Cause of Death	0-1	1&4	5-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & Over
Cancer	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	5	7	12
All Causes	0	0	0	0	0	2.0	2.2	10.0	26.2	87

Premature Deaths

Causes of Death at ages under 65 years:

Cancer of Uterus 1

Bronchitis 1

Coronary Disease 1

Accidents

Congenital Abnormalities 1

Maternal Mortality

No maternal death was recorded in the present series of records, since prior to 1945. This is extremely fortunate.

Death Rate of Infants under 1 year of age.

No deaths has occurred during the year, and only 3 amongst the 1301 children born in 1947 - 1951.

A valid death rate for the previous year cannot be calculated but over the 5 years the rate will have validity and is given.

Death Rate of Infants under 1 year of age per thousand live births. 1947 - 1951 26.4

Death Rate of Infants under 1 year of age per thousand live births. 1951 26.4

It will be noticed that 13 deaths of a total of 25 are recorded as due to diseases of the heart amd circulation. Review of the ages at death of these cases shows, however, that in all cases but one the disease had appeared only after the full span of life had been accomplished. Many of these cases would in other times and other places have been classified simply as "old age". There is thus no genuine increase in heart or circulatory disease.

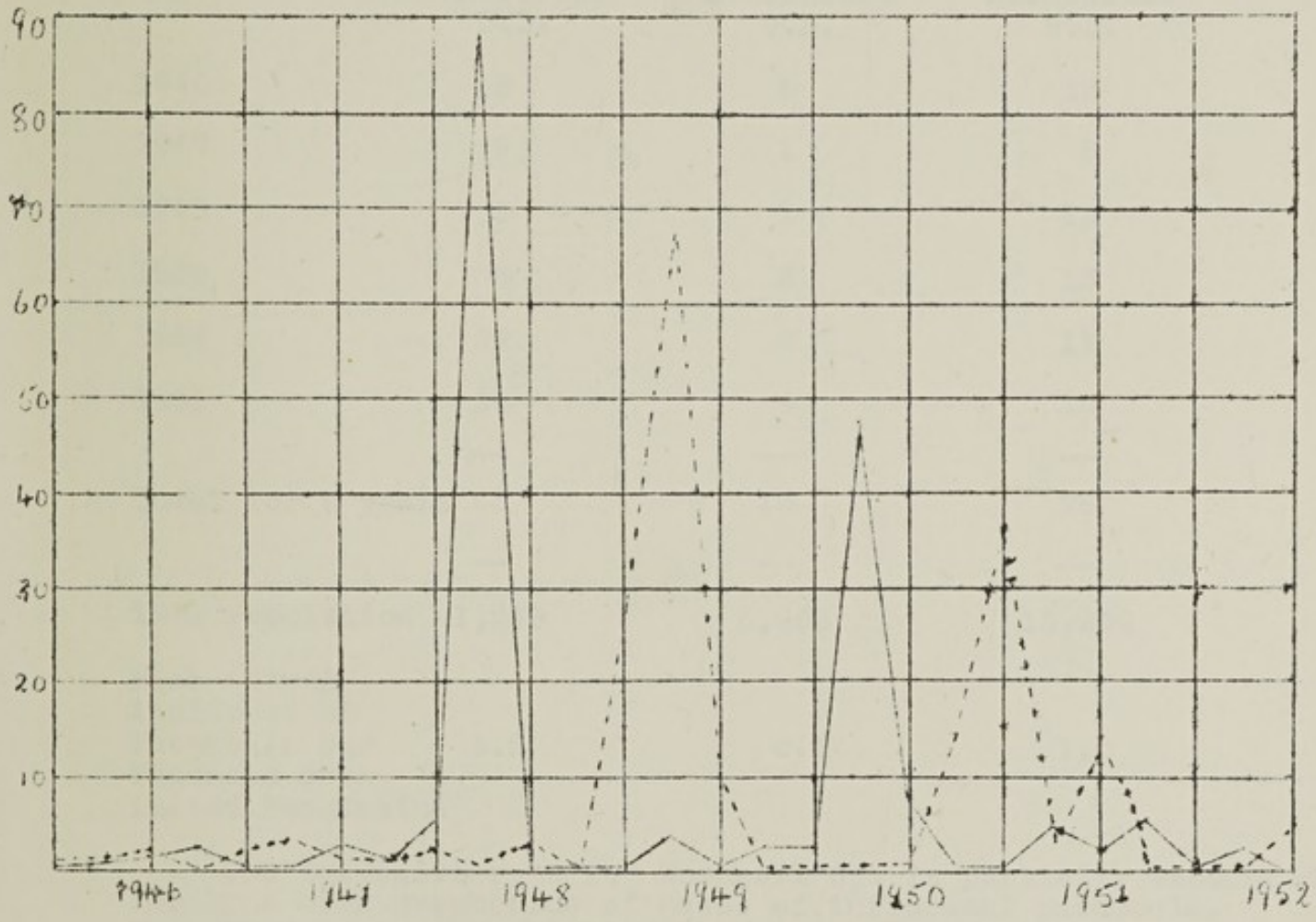
INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Disease	Number of Cases 1950	Number of Cases 1951	Deaths, 1951
Tuberculosis	1	1	-
Erysipelas	1	1	-
Measles	50	16	-
Pneumonia	22	20	-
Scarlet Fever	2	2	-
Whooping Cough	56	12	-
All others	-	2	-

Cause of Death as shown in the Registrar General's Short List.

Short List No.	Causes of Death	Males	Females	Total
1.	Tuberculosis, respiratory	-	-	-
2.	Tuberculosis, other	-	-	-
3.	Syphilitic disease	-	-	-
4.	Diphtheria	-	-	-
5.	Whooping Cough	-	-	-
6.	Meningococcal infections	-	-	-
7.	Acute Poliomylitis	-	-	-
8.	Measles	-	-	-
9.	Other infective and parasitic diseases	-	-	-
10.	Malignant neoplasm, stomach	1	-	1
11.	Malignant neoplasm, lung, bronchus	-	-	-
12.	Malignant neoplasm, breast	-	-	-
13.	Malignant neoplasm, uterus	-	1	1
14.	Other malignant & lymphatic neoplasms	-	-	-
15.	Leukaemia, aleukaemia	-	-	-
16.	Diabetes	-	-	-
17.	Vascular lesions of nervous system	3	2	5
18.	Coronary disease, angina	-	1	1
19.	Hypertension with heart disease	-	1	1
20.	Other heart disease	3	2	5
21.	Other circulatory disease	-	1	1
22.	Influenza	2	-	2
23.	Pneumonia	-	-	-
24.	Bronchitis	-	-	-
25.	Other diseases of respiratory system	-	1	1
26.	Ulcer of stomach & duodenum	-	-	-
27.	Gastritis, enteritis & diarrhoea	-	1	1
28.	Nephritis & nephrosis	1	-	1
29.	Hyperplasia of prostrate	-	-	-
30.	Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion	-	-	-
31.	Congenital malformations	-	-	-
32.	Other defined & ill-defined diseases	1	3	4
33.	Motor vehicle accidents	-	1	1
34.	All other accidents	-	-	-
35.	Suicide	-	-	-
36.	Homicide & operations of war	-	-	-
	TOTALS	11	14	25

The incidence of whooping cough and measles follows a regular cycle, and in the case of Woodhall Spa this is illustrated by the graph below.



——————— Whooping Cough.

- - - - - - - - Measles

Review of other infectious diseases over the period 1939 - 1951 shows little of significance, since their incidence follows closely that in other areas. An exception is pneumonia. The notifications of this disease are tabulated below for the years 1946 - 1951 and Horncastle Urban and Rural districts are shown for comparison.

Year	Woodhall Spa U.D.	Horncastle U.D.	Horncastle R.D.
1946	6	5	18
1947	9	1	8
1948	5	1	10
1949	3	2	13
1950	22	2	11
1951	20	4	18
Total for 6 years	65	15	78
1951 Population	1,978	3,805	13,230
Mean annual incidence of Pneumonia per Thousand Estimated Population	5.5	0.6	1.0

The excessive rate for Woodhall Spa is partially accounted for by a high proportion of cases of influenzal pneumonia. The absence of any mortality in the last 2 years is suggestive that many of these cases may have been of virus origin. Virus pneumonia first came into prominence during the 1939 - 1945 war in epidemic form. It is an unpleasant illness, but death or serious after-effects are very rare. Not much is certainly known of its manner of spread, but it would seem that the congregation of large numbers of people in ill-ventilated places, especially in inclement weather, may play a part, as also may any inefficiency of cleansing of communal cutlery, crockery and glassware.

Protection against infectious diseases

Diphtheria immunization is maintained at a satisfactory level, the numbers of children under 5 years of age who have been immunized in each recent year showing a close correlation with the births during the preceding year. There has been only one case of diphtheria in the urban district since 1939. In view of the crowded state of the C of E school, this reflects satisfactorily upon the state of immunity of the school population.

Smallpox Vaccination.

The overall vaccination state of the children of Woodhall Spa is much less satisfactory, although it compares very favourably with that in other parts of the County.

Of the 19 children born during the year, 12 had been vaccinated by the years end.

Table of Births, Vaccinations and Immunizations against Diphtheria

Year	Births	Children under 5 years immunized.	Vaccinated
1944	41	61	) Figures not Available
1945	23	93	)
1946	26	92	)
1947	32	134	)
1948	17	32	)
1949	25	24	14
1950	30	26	16
1951	19	36	24

It will be seen from this table that in 1944 - 1947 the number of children immunized considerably exceeded the births. This was the result of the intensive campaign by the then Medical Officer of Health, Dr. G.A.W. Neill, by which the immunization rate for the whole of his district rose to well over 70%, at which level it has remained.

Protection against Whooping Cough and Measles.

It is not usual to provide immunization as a routine, but trials of a vaccine against whooping cough, carried out by the Medical Research Council, have shown some success, and although not of the dramatic nature of diphtheria immunization, it is now widely practiced by some doctors.

In the case of measles, permanent immunity can be conferred only by an actual attack of the disease, but the attack may be modified or totally prevented by an injection of serum shortly after exposure to the infection. If the attack is prevented, the child is likely to develop the disease in the next epidemic a year or two later. Nevertheless, in the case of very young or delicate children who have been exposed to infection, parents should consult their doctor as to the advisability of postponing or modifying the incipient attack.

GENERAL HEALTH SERVICE

With the exception of the Home Help Service, every branch of the General Health Services have operated satisfactorily.

The Home Help Service is barely existent in the Urban District. When it is considered how invaluable this service is to ensure freedom from domestic worries and dependence on the charity of friends and relatives during convalescence from illness or childbirth, and the ever increasing use being made of the service elsewhere, it is deplorable that three years after the scheme was scheduled to begin, so little progress has been made in Woodhall Spa.

It is perhaps not widely known that where friends or relatives of the patient are willing to undertake the work they will usually be enrolled by the County Council as members of the Home Help Service, and paid by the County Council according to their scale. In other areas many Helpers have entered the Service by this means and have continued helping others and finding new pleasure themselves, long after the original case has recovered.

National Assistance Act 1948, Sect. 47.

No case under this section came to the notice of your Medical Officer during the year.

Sanitary Circumstances of the Urban District.

Water Supply.

The surface water from sandy uplands clothed in heather supplies the town, and is also supplied to an area of Horncastle Rural District in the vacinity of Tattershall and Coningsby.

The water is extremely soft, slightly acid, and shows plumbosolvent action. Following the discovery of the plumbosolvency, Horncastle Rural District Council discontinued their use of the source until the solvency had been controlled. Apparatus was to be installed in the supply equipment for the Rural District to eliminate plumbosolvency and the apparatus was in fact supplied in August 1952.

The town water supply, which showed, at the time of examination, a lower degree of plumbosolvency was not treated, on account of the initial capital cost of the equipment required. In view of the known corrosive action of these waters upon pipes, and the poor state of many of the supply pipes, it appears that it may in the long run be cheaper to install alkalizing plant rather than to suffer further corrosion of the cast-iron pipes, irrespective of the possible danger to health from plumbosolvency.

The bacteriological quality of the water was tested upon numerous occasions and at various points along the distribution system.

The reports on the bacteriological quality are appended.

Class I	(very satisfactory)	43
Class II	(satisfactory)	14
Class III	(suspicious)	6
Class IV	(unsatisfactory)	12

Samples taken from the water works showed Class I results on 8 occasions and Class II on the remaining 2 occasions, showing that the water is normally satisfactory at that point.

Samples taken in Horncastle Road were also satisfactory, as were those from the Council Offices, (except 1, Class IV) but at points further down the distribution system an increasing proportion of suspicious and unsatisfactory samples were reported.

The chlorinating apparatus at the water works is not controlled in its rate of supplying chlorine by the rate of flow of water, so that the dosing has to be controlled by hand whilst the pumps are running and any inequalities in rate of dosing are, to some extent, smoothed out in the storage reservoir on Horncastle Road which holds two days normal supply.

It is evident from the lower grade samples from the distal parts of the distribution that dificulty is experienced in maintaining a chlorine residuum throughout the system. It would appear that the failure to maintain a chlorine residuum is connected with growth of iron organisms in the main, these being harboured by the corrosion of the pipe and thick lining of scale. Thus the sterilization of the water is tied up with the metal-solvency of the water, and the two matters should be considered together.

In 1952, Messrs. Wallace & Tiernan advised the Council upon suitable plant for chlorinating&alkalizing both the supplies, and plant was installed for the Rural District supply, but not the town supply.

Sewage Disposal

During 1951 the town's sewers and disposal plant continued to operate satisfactorily, although it was reported that each morning the sewage in the collecting chamber had "backed up" the sewer to a considerable distance, thus preventing their being self-cleansing. The pumps were able to dispose of the accumulations during the day and the sewage plant was able to provide a satisfactory effluent, in which it was noted, small fishes of the Bull-head species were able to live.

The two filter beds, whose walls have shown increasingly severe cracks, continued to operate during the year without break-down.

The bed nearest the road did, however, collapse in 1952 and it must be admitted that the liklihood of the other also collapsing is very considerable.

Public Cleansing.

Regular weekly collection of refuse was maintained and disposal was to the tip in Green Lane, beside the sewage disposal plant. It would be desirable to improve the protection of the refuse from the flies and vermin, but soil for cover has been difficult to obtain.

Street cleanliness has been very much before the Council and the activities of litter-bugs have wasted much man-power.

Swimming Pool, Jubilee Park.

No difficulties were experienced in maintaining the break-point system of chlorination, although it was necessary to operate the plant for a high proportion of the 24 hours, since the plant requires 19 hours to effect a complete change of water.

REPORT OF SANITARY WORK DURING THE YEAR

	Total Number of Houses Erected during the year.	12
	(1) By the Local Authority.	-
	(2) By other Local Authorities	10
	(3) By other bodies or persons	2
	Inspection of Dwellin-Houses during the year	
I	(1)(a)Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects.(under Public Health or Housing Acts)	17
	(b)Number of inspections made for the purpose	23
	(2)(a)Number of dwelling-houses (included under Sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925.	-
	(b)Number of inspections made for the purpose	-
	(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation.	-
	(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceeding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation.	4

II Remedy of defects during the year without service or formal notices

No. of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers. 2

Action under Statutory Powers during the Year

(a) Proceedings under Sections 9, 10 and 36 of the Housing Act, 1936 :-

(1) No. of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs. -

(2) No. of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after services of formal notices:-

(a) By owners -

(b) By Local Authority in default of owners -

(b) Proceedings under Public Health Acts:-

(1) No. of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied. -

(2) No. of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices:-

(a) By owners -

(b) By Local Authority in default of owners. -

(c) Proceedings under sections 11,12 & 13 of the Housing Act, 1936:- -

(d) Proceedings under Sections 25 & 26:- -

IV Housing Act, 1936. - Overcrowding

(a) (1) No. of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year. 2

(II) No. of families dwelling therein. 2

(III) No. of persons dwelling therein. 20

(b) No. of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year. -

(c) (I) No. of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year. -

(II) No. of persons concerned in such cases -

(d) No. of houses again overcrowded after being previously relieved. -

Housing Act, 1949.

(a)	No. of applications for grants received.	-
(b)	No. of grants made.	-
(c)	No. of applications for grants made by Local Authority.	-

V Moveable Dwellings, Tents, Vans Etc.

No. of site licences	5
No. of individual licences.	5
No. inspected during year - Sites	10
- Dwellings	20
No. of contraventions remedied.	-

FOOD PREMISES.

VI Bakehouses

No. in district	2
No. of inspections	27
No. of contraventions	-
Defects remedied	-

VII Control of milk supplies

No. of distributors on register	4
No. of dairies on register	2
No. of inspections of dairies.	24
Contraventions remedied	-
No. of milk samples taken - Satisfactory	1
- Unsatisfactory	-

VIII Ice Cream and Meat Products.

No. of manufacturers (a) Ice cream	2
(b) Meat products.	-
No. of premises registered for sale of Ice cream	5
No. of contraventions found	-
No. of contraventions remedied	-
No. of samples of ice cream taken	
Grade I	6
Grade II	3
Grade III	2
Grade IV	1

IX Slaughter-Houses

No. on register	-
No. of inspections	-
Contraventions of by-laws	-
Defects Remedied.	-

X Other food premises

No. of inspections	-
No. of contraventions found	-
No. of contraventions remedied	-

Condemned Foods

XI 18 - 16 oz. tins Libby's Evaporated Milk

1 - 14½ lbs. Cooked Boneless Ham in Natural Juice

1 - 3 lbs. 6 oz. "DOR" Cooked Shoulder Ham.

Drainage and Sewerage

XII Closets

No. of Houses with privy vaults in district.	4
No. of houses with pail closets in district.	15
No. of pail closets repaired	-
No. of houses with water closets in district	564
No. of water closets repaired	3
No. of water closets substituted for dry receptacles	-

XIII Drains etc.

Drains examined, tested, exposed, etc.	7
Drains unstopped, repaired, etc,.	3
Waste pipes disconnected, repaired, etc.	1
Existing soil pipes, etc. renewed or repaired	-

XIV **Sewers**

New lengths of sewer laid.	-

XV **Tanks, Filter Beds, etc.,**

Alteration to sewage disposal works	-
Any inadequacy of sewage disposal works or complaints as to smells	-

Cesspools

Cesspools emptied, cleansed, etc.,	1
Cesspools abolished	-

GENERAL

XVI **Offensive Trades**

No. of premises in district	-
No. of inspections	-
Contraventions of by-laws	-
Contraventions remedied	-

XVII **Knackers Yards**

No. licenced	-
No. of inspections	-
Defects remedied	-

XVIII **Shops Act, 1950.**

No. of shops inspected	37
Contraventions remedied	1

XVIV **Water Supply**

Wells: new sunk	-
Closed as polluted	-
Public Supply: Area Supplied	
Monument Road & Misers Row.	Part
Percentage of houses internal supply.	97.9%
Communal Supply	.8%
Number of samples obtained for analysis	
(a) from wells	1
(b) from public supply	69
Any insufficiency and where	-

XV **Disinfection etc.**

Rooms disinfected:	
(a) ordinary infectious disease	-
(b) Tuberculosis	-
Rooms stripped and cleansed	-
No. of premises disinfected	-

XVI **House Refuse**

No. of houses using dustbins	541
Is refuse removed by householder or Public Scavenger?	Public
How frequently is refuse removed from each house?	Wkly.
No. of complaints of non-removal	3
Method of final disposal	Controlled
Are existing arangements for refuse removal satisfactory?	Yes

XVII **Nuisances**

Total number of nuisances during the year	5
(1) Abated as result of informal action by Sanitary Inspector.	5
(2) Reported to Council	
Statutory notices issued	-
" " not issued	-

Details of Nuisances abated after informal intimation

a.	Smoke	-
b.	Accumulation of refuse	-
c.	Foul ditches and stagnant water	-
d.	Fowls, pigs, and other animals	1
e.	Dampness	2
f.	Yards repaved or repaired	1
g.	Other nuisances	2

XVIII **Rats and mice distruction.**

No. of rodent operatives employed	1
No. of premises treated:-	
(a) dwelling-houses	2
(b) other premises	2
Are there any serious reservoirs of rats in the district.	No.

Annual salary as Inspector.	Other Appointments Held	Salary for such other appointments
£298	Surveyor Waterworks engineer Building Inspector	£252

Any Assistant. No.

FACTORIES ACT, 1937 & 1951

1. - Inspections for purposes of provisions as to health (including inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors).

Premises (1)	M/c line No. (2)	Number on Register (3)	Number of Inspections (4)	Written notices (5)	Occupires prosecuted (6)
(i) Factories in which Sections 1,2,3,4 & 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	1	1	4	-	-
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Sect. 7 is enforced by the Local Authority.	2	10	26	-	-
Other premises in which sect. 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out workers premises	3	-	-	-	-
TOTAL		11	30	-	-

2. Cases in which defects were found. Nil