

[Report 1942] / Medical Officer of Health, Worthing Borough.

Contributors

Worthing (England). Borough Council.

Publication/Creation

1942

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BOROUGH OF WORTHING.

Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the Year

1942

- by -

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Medical Officer of Health.

Public Health Department,
Town Hall,
WORTHING.

JULY, 1943.

July, 1943.

TO:

HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR, ALDERMEN and COUNCILLORS
of the BOROUGH of WORTHING.

Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting a short report on the health of the Borough for the year 1942.

The report is arranged in accordance with the instructions of the Ministry of Health who stress the need for brevity, and request that all records be carefully preserved for future reference.

The general standard of the health of the citizen continues to be satisfactory, while the nutrition, at any rate in the case of the school children, appears to be slightly better than in pre-war days; further, most of the babies being born are remarkably fine specimens, which reflects well on the ante-natal care of the mothers.

The birth rate for the Borough is 13.3 per 1,000 of the estimated population, representing an increase of 2.9 on the previous year's figure, the birth rate for England and Wales as a whole for 1942 being 15.8. The Borough Rate for 1942 is the highest since 1920 when it was 18.5.

The infantile mortality rate is 35.4 per 1,000 registered live births, being 13.6 lower than that of the country as a whole.

Prematurity accounted for the majority of these deaths.

There has been a marked decrease in the incidence of whooping cough and measles as compared with last year.

The cases of infectious diseases notified during the year are appended:-

Scarlet Fever.....	27
Erysipelas	8
Cerebro-Spinal Fever	2
Encephalitis Lethargica	1
Puerperal Pyrexia	14
Pneumonia	15
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	1
Poliomyelitis	2
Typhoid Fever	1
Measles	351
Whooping Cough	79
1942 Total	501
1941 Total	967

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION.

This work was continued throughout the year.

The response was quite good, but might have been better.

There is a small but fairly steady stream applying for protection, actually nearly 300 more were inoculated this year than last.

Figures of the work done under the scheme are appended.

YEAR 1942.

<u>Classification.</u>	<u>Number immunised.</u>
Pre-school age	754
Between 5 and 16 years	649
Total	<u>1,403</u>

It is satisfactory to note that since 1940 we have been immunising a higher proportion of children under school age than in previous years.

I am very happy to be able to state that not a single case of Diphtheria was notified in the Borough throughout the year.

The available records of the incidence of Diphtheria in the Borough go back for 38 years; this is the first time during this period that such a record has been established. Actually the last case to occur was notified in October, 1941.

SWANDEAN ISOLATION HOSPITAL.

During the year, 156 cases were admitted and 165 discharged.

The following are details of the admissions:-

Scarlet Fever	....	115
Erysipelas	....	1
Cerebro-Spinal Fever	.	4
Typhoid Fever	....	3
Measles	....	12
Whooping Cough	....	7
Others	....	14
Total		<u>156</u>

VITAL STATISTICS.

The following table shows birth and death rates :-

Live birth rate	)	
per 1,000 of	)	- 12.9
estimated population	)	
Crude death rate	)	
per 1,000 of	)	- 20.5
estimated population)		

The death rate is given as a crude death rate as no comparability figure is available at present for correction.

In dealing with this crude death rate, it is interesting to note that 60.39% of the deaths occurred in people over 70 years of age and 23.29% in people over 80 years of age.

DISINFECTION AND DISINFESTATION.

In October 1941, the Scabies Order came into force.

Under this Order, the powers of a Local Authority to deal with households affected with scabies and vermin were extended greatly, and so a much needed want has been supplied.

A temporary cleansing station has been established, and is being used extensively for the treatment of scabies and appears to be much appreciated.

During the year, 286 cases of scabies came under treatment. This makes a marked contrast with the figures of 15 to 20 which were usual in pre-war days.

All known cases infected with scabies or infested with vermin are being followed up actively.

During the year, 3,519 articles, exclusive of Swandean Hospital, were put through the steam sterilizing plant, which included 17 bundles of clothing, each bundle being counted as one article.

Of this total number of articles, 1,630 were in connection with the Scabies Order.

In addition, 65 rooms were disinfested for verminous conditions, and 153 rooms disinfected in connection with infectious diseases.

It might be mentioned here that a considerable pest of mosquitoes was noticed last year. The Sanitary Inspectors paid 138 visits in connection with this pest, and 2,408 treatments of various tanks were carried out.

FOOD INSPECTION.

There has been no relaxation whatever in food inspection during the war.

Considering the many war-time difficulties, the standard of the food supplied has been remarkably good.

Brief details of the work carried out are given in the report of the Chief Sanitary Inspector.

INFANT LIFE PROTECTION.

At the end of the year, 36 Foster Mothers had charge of 50 children.

All foster homes are kept under constant observation. On the whole, conditions are quite good and the children's health well maintained.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE.

Registered births :-

(a) Live births	-	705
(b) Still births	-	<u>19</u>
Total		<u>724</u>

Death rate of infants under one year per 1,000 live births - 35.4

Maternal deaths :-

From sepsis	1
From other causes..	1

Maternal mortality per 1,000 total births - 2.8

There is an improvement in the Infantile Mortality Rate over last year. An analysis of the causes of death is appended :-

Prematurity.....	9
Pneumonia and Bronchitis..	2
Asphyxiated (accidents)...	2
Measles.....	1
Scarlet Fever	1
Debility at Birth and subsequently ...	3
Cerebral Haemorrhage.....	2
Others.....	5
Total	25

Of this total, nine died less than one week after birth, among whom were five who did not survive 24 hours. Only two of the infants died from infectious disease, namely, one case of Scarlet Fever and one case of Measles.

Of the twelve infants who died of prematurity or debility, only two of the mothers had attended our ante-natal clinics.

These cases are important, for the health of the mother may play a major part.

The greatest care is taken to watch the nutrition of expectant mothers and to see that their diet is satisfactory. Vitamin extracts are available for all who attend the clinics.

As indicated above, there were only two maternal deaths out of 724 registered births. With these particular patients, nothing could have been done beforehand to alter the unfortunate course which the cases took.

The following number of women were admitted to various hospitals during the year under the Council's Maternity Scheme:-

<u>Hospital.</u>	<u>Number admitted.</u>
Worthing Hospital Maternity Home	44
Southlands Hospital	22
Sussex Women's and Maternity Hospital, Brighton.	7
Brighton Municipal Hospital	<u>1</u>
Total	<u>74</u>

Maternity cases are admitted to hospital under the Council's hospital scheme where there are medical reasons why hospital treatment is desirable, where housing conditions are unsuitable for confinement in the home, and in cases of obstetric emergency.

When in 1941 the Borough was declared an evacuation area, arrangements were made by the Ministry of Health for expectant mothers to be evacuated for their delivery if they so desired.

During the year under review, 104 women made application to participate in the scheme, 81 went finally.

Special brands of dried milk, extra nourishments and vitamin extracts are supplied to young children and to nursing mothers at cost price. In necessitous cases, these nourishments are issued free or at reduced cost.

The total cost to the Corporation during the year was £101. 9. 6.

The very considerable drop in the cost of this service over previous years is due to the Government's Scheme of Milk Supply to Mothers and Children.

I append a summary of the work done by the Health Visitors during the year in connection with Maternity & Child Welfare:-

Total Visits to Children	.....	9,286
Total visits to Mothers	.....	1,205

Attendances at Infant Welfare Centres

Number of clinics held	.....	123
Total attendances	.....	11,521

Individual Children who attended at:-

Worthing centre	.....	1,213
Durrington Centre	.....	171

Ante-natal Clinics:-

At 31 sessions 266 women made 581 attendances.

The Health Visitors made also 470 visits in connection with Infant Life Protection and 345 visits in connection with infectious diseases, mostly measles and whooping cough.

WATER.

The regular examination of the water showed a high degree of purity consistently.

CIVIL DEFENCE.

Civil Defence work continues to occupy a great deal of time and energy. The Casualty Services have responded very well to all calls that have been made on them.

The Chief Sanitary Inspector has supplied me with the following brief extract from report of work done by the Sanitary Inspectors:-

PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTIONS

This shows an increased number of inspections over the previous two years. 4,022 premises were inspected, including 176 visits to bakehouses and restaurants; 202 to dairies and cowsheds; 46 to ice cream premises; 152 to butchers' shops; 690 to other food premises; 433 to factories and 67 to schools.

383 complaints were received and investigated.

1,049 inspections were made of Air Raid Shelters; wilful damage and misuse were frequently detected.

697 public health nuisances or contraventions were recorded and 576 were remedied before the end of the year.

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT.

64 Samples of various food were analysed under Section 3, for nature, substance or quality; one farmer was prosecuted and convicted on nine summonses. He appealed and failed. Three dairymen were cautioned.

MILK

A record number of samples were taken - 152, all of which were analysed for bacterial cleanliness and pathogenic organisms:-

	Tuberculin Tested	Pasteurised	Ordinary	Unsatisfactory
For bacterial cleanliness	7	-	-	-
" " "	-	16	-	2
" " "	-	-	60	16
For tubercle bacilli	4	-	-	-
" " "	-	-	42	2
For brucella abortus (Bang)	11	-	-	7
" " "	-	-	3	7
For phosphatase	-	9	-	7

* Results not yet received.

Appropriate action was taken in respect of the unsatisfactory samples.

The standard of cleanliness of milk showed an improvement; the percentage of samples containing tubercle bacilli showed an increase and samples analysed for Brucella Abortus (Bang) showed alarming results.

All other articles of food analysed under the Food and Drugs Act proved to be genuine.

MEAT AND FOOD INSPECTION.

Meat.

13,384 animals were slaughtered at the local slaughterhouse under the National Slaughtering Scheme. This figure shows a reduction as compared with 1940 and 1941, but it is higher than pre-war years.

509 attendances were made at the slaughterhouse and a vast amount of late night work was carried out by the District Sanitary Inspectors to ensure that every carcass was examined.

The amount of meat found to be diseased was over 21 tons which included 85 entire carcasses, 60 of which were beasts. This meat was salvaged for animal feeding or fat rendering.

Other Foods.

The amount and varieties found to be unfit for human food showed an enormous increase over pre-war years. Articles condemned included the following:-

Meat Products	...	1,383 lbs and 38 tins.
Tinned Fish	...	128 tins.
Wet Fish	...	661 lbs.
Tinned Fruit & Vegetables	...	553 tins.
Raw Fruit	...	2,799 lbs.
Raw Vegetables	...	1,246 lbs.

This can be attributed to war-time conditions and circumstances, i.e. damage at sea, storage, delayed transport, bomb damage or rationing and "point" requirements.

Diseases of Animals Acts.

No serious outbreak of disease occurred during the year.

DISINFECTION.

The number of articles removed to Swandean for disinfection was higher than the previous year owing to a 100% increase of articles

appertaining to persons affected with Scabies

RATS AND MICE

312 visits were made to rat or mice infested premises. The rat menace has shown an increase. This again can be attributed to war-time conditions such as the keeping of poultry and rabbits in back gardens, and military billets, etc. There was, however, no major infestation.

CIVIL DEFENCE.

The duties connected with the Rescue Service; Decontamination Service (Roads, Clothing and Food) and Mortuary again demanded an enormous amount of over-time.

METEOROLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS.

This work which was taken over from the Clerical Staff at the end of 1939, was again carried out by the Sanitary Inspectors.

I am,

Yours obediently,

H. J. Phillips

Medical Officer of Health.