

Taking Epsom's Pulse (or what Medical Officer of Health Reports can do for you)

Ross MacFarlane

Epsom & Ewell History & Archaeology Society, 2nd October 2024



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Some particulars relating to the history of Epsom / compiled from the best authorities; containing a ... description of the origin of horse racing, and of Epsom races, with an account of the mineral waters, and the two celebrated palaces of Durdans and Nonsuch, &c., &c. To which is added, an appendix, containing a botanical survey of the neighbourhood ... By an inhabitant [i.e. H. Pownall].

Pownall, Henry, of Epsom, Eng.

Date: 1825

Books

Online

1 volume online

Note on local government

1850: Epsom made a local board district.

1894: Epsom made an urban district.

1934: Creation of Epsom and Ewell urban district (addition of parishes of Ewell and Cuddington)

1937: Epsom and Ewell made a municipal borough.

London's Pulse: Medical Officer of Health reports 1848-1972

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The Medical Officer of Health reports

The reports provided statistical data about births, deaths and diseases, but they also allowed the authors to express the diversity of their local communities and their own personal interests.

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“If you go back to the 19th century, every part of the country had a Medical Officer of Health, and every year they would write an annual report on the health of their local communities”





Gutter ice-cream and other London health hazards laid bare in archive

Thousands of reports from capital's medical officers from 1848 to 1970s published online by Wellcome Library

Maeve Kennedy

Monday 28 October 2013 19:49 GMT



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Medical officer reports. Photograph: Wellcome Images

If anyone offered to buy you an ice-cream from a London street vendor in 1914, the only safe response was to step away sharpish. From this week the horror stories recorded by the capital's army of medical officers are being published online by the Wellcome Library, and the ice-cream was anything but appetising.

"The itinerant ice-cream vendors are probably the filthiest tradesmen in London," the records note. "Their ice-cream is, or may be, made in the gutter, and the stain of its place of origin adheres to it throughout its existence."

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Ice cream made in the gutter, slums built on cesspits and cobwebs in food: Documents reveal revolting conditions the first health inspectors faced

- 5,000 documents published online showing health reports since 1848
- Describes ice-creams 'made in gutter' and biscuits containing 'cobwebs'
- New pictures show series of health campaigns run across the capital
- "The reports provide a fascinating portrait of London life and the lives of Londoners", Simon Chaplin, head of publisher Wellcome Library said

By MARTIN ROBINSON

PUBLISHED: 12:56, 29 October 2013 | UPDATED: 20:17, 29 October 2013



Horror stories detailing how Londoners were fed ice-creams 'made in the gutter', lived above open cesspits and sold putrid foods containing 'cockroaches and cobwebs' were revealed for the first time today.

These 5,000 documents, published online, show how the capital's medical officers fought to protect the public from filthy conditions, rancid produce and gradually improve their health.

The Wellcome Library in London has also released a series of fascinating photographs showing more than a century of efforts to educate millions about how to live longer.



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- ▶ Went to The Nice Guy
- ▶ James Jagger and wife Aishwika Sharma celebrate marriage with party in the English countryside where guests included parents Mick and Jerry Hall (and new step-father Rupert)
- ▶ Ex-TOWIE star Abigail Clarke puts on an eye-popping display as she flashes her ample assets in JUST a bralet for night out
- ▶ Emmerdale's Danny Miller 'had fling with co-star Isabel Hodkins'

NEWS FOOD & DRINK THINGS TO DO TICKETS VIDEOS PUBS WEEKEND SHOP ELECTION

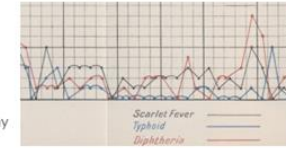
29 OCTOBER 2013 | HISTORY | BY: M@

London's Pulse: Browse The Capital's Historical Health Records



Wellcome Library is full of many wonderful things. Among its treasures are the Medical Officer of Health reports, which span the period 1848-1972. [These have now been digitised](#) and are freely available on its website.

So what's in them? For any central London area, you can see how many people got sick, what they caught, how many died and how many were born in any given year. To take one illustrative example, at a click, you can now find the [causes of death in Hackney in 1864](#). Among many ailments, 79 people died of measles, but only 2 of influenza. 239 succumbed to bronchitis and 128 to pneumonia. Six unfortunate children died for 'want of breast milk', and 12 people drowned. And so on. You might then compare these statistics to those of other boroughs, or in the same borough across time – with the caveat that the data were never fully standardised.



The reports go much further than life and death stats, however. The medical officers also offer insights into many other areas of public health and welfare. To take a few random examples, you can discover: the amounts of free milk distributed in a borough (and those fined for watering it down), new paving schemes, dwelling houses closed to make way for businesses, vaccination statistics, and much more.

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Wellcome Library online archives reveal 125 years of life and death in London

By Adela Ryle | 28 October 2013

Tags: local history | community (history) | hospital | wellbeing | All tags

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More than 5,000 documents providing insights into the lives and deaths of Londoners over a century and a quarter have been published online by the Wellcome Library for the first time.



Preview Gratters at The People's History Museum



Curator's Choice George IV and his cherished giraffe



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05/08/2015

BY GUEST CONTRIBUTOR | FROM THE COLLECTIONS, THE RESEARCHER'S VIEW

What can you learn from old bones? Rachel Ives explains what they tell us about the lives and deaths of the dead, and how osteologists use historical sources such as the Medical Officer of Health reports to confirm their findings and fill in the gaps.

In 2011, AOC Archaeology completed an archaeological excavation at St John's Primary School, Peel Grove, in Bethnal Green, London, ahead of the construction of a new nursery school. The site was a former burial ground privately run as a commercial business by pawnbroker John Kilday. The burial ground was intensively used – 20,000 individuals were buried over just 15 years from 1840 – 1855.

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Example of bending fibulae from the lower leg of a 19th century child from Bethnal Green with vitamin D deficiency rickets. Image credit: copyright AOC Archaeology Group.

the parish was [described as “..being densely peopled by the poorest class and having but little breathing space.....while hundreds swarm like bees, in close, un-sunned, low-lying courts....”].

[MOH Report, St Matthew, Bethnal Green, 1855](#)



"A television phenomenon"
RADIO TIMES

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Medical Officer of Health reports

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The reports were produced each year by the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) of a district and set out the work done by his public health and sanitary officers. They provided vital data on birth and death rates, infant mortality, incidence of infectious and other diseases, and a general statement on the health of the population. The reports also allowed the authors to express the diversity of their local communities and their own personal interests so sometimes contained unexpected and quirky...

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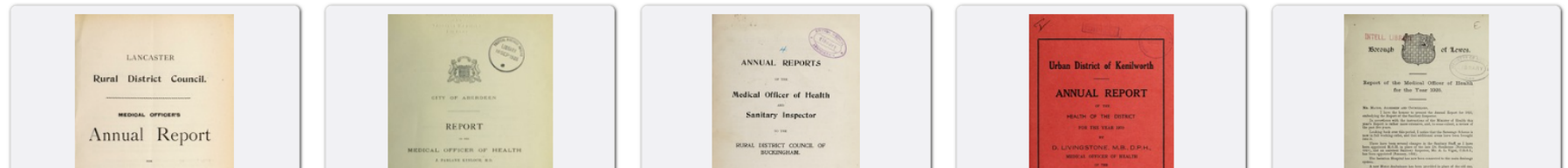
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Medical Officer of Health reports

The reports were produced each year by the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) of a district and set out the work done by his public health and sanitary officers. They provided vital data on birth and death rates, infant mortality, incidence of infectious and other diseases, and a general statement on the health of the population. The reports also allowed the authors to express the diversity of their local communities and their own personal interests so sometimes contained unexpected and quirky...

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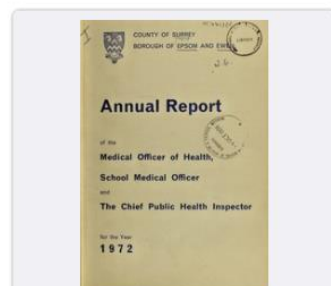


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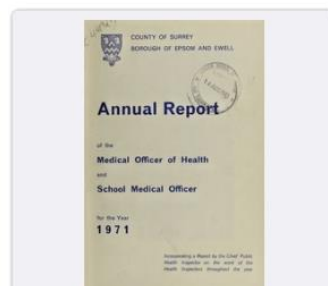
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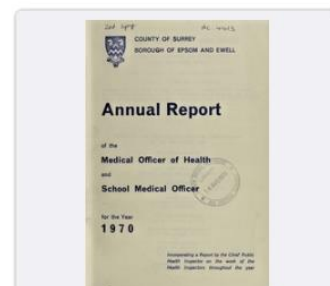
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published 1972



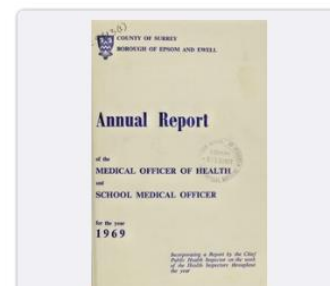
[Report 1971]

published 1971



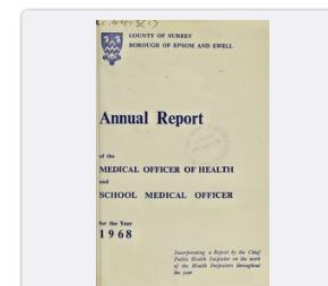
[Report 1970]

published 1970



[Report 1969]

published 1969

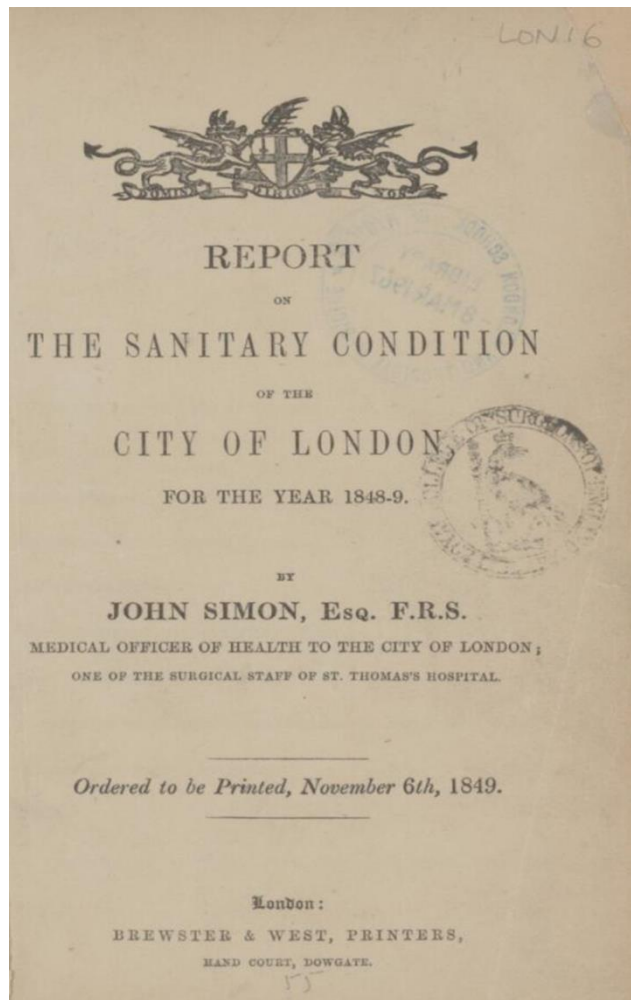


[Report 1968]

published 1968

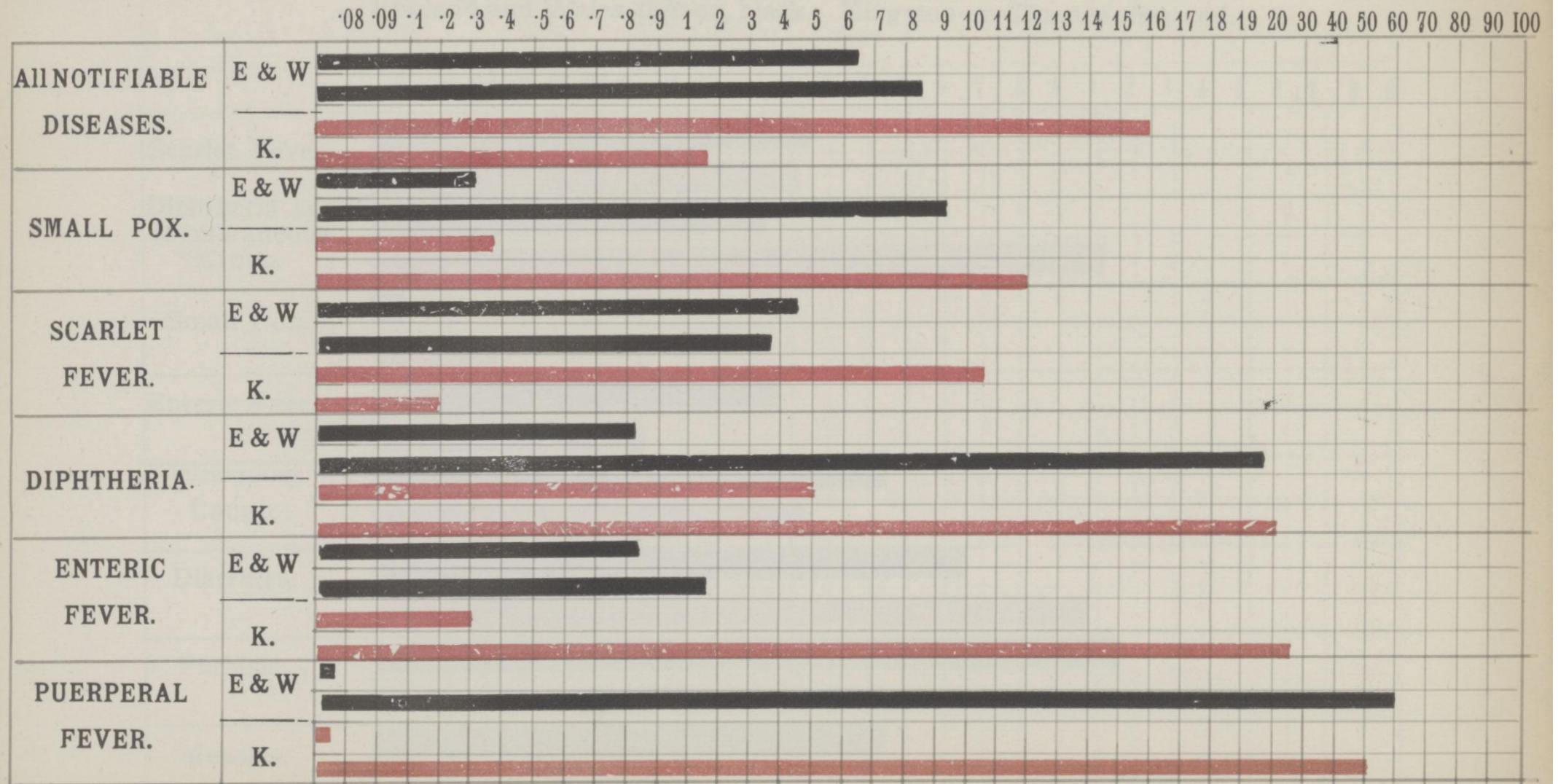


- Notions of public health developing in 1830s and 1840s
- *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain*
- Radical findings: but based around the miasmatic theory of disease
- Only way to stamp out urban poverty: eradicate miasmas at their source by cleaning up the city – improve water supply, build sewers and drains, regulate refuse disposal and control pollution
- Public health: challenge not for surgeons and physicians but for administrators and engineers.
- 1848 Public Health Act
- General Board of Health established to oversee sanitation reform



- Cleaning up urban environment through improving sanitation (and using statistical analysis)
- Medical Officers of Health (MOHs) to supervise reforms in each parish
- First MOH report – City of London, 1848
- Intervention highly contentious (local issues at stake)
- Under the Metropolis Local Management Act 1855, London was divided into civil parishes for local administrative purposes. Among the obligations of these new authorities was the appointment of MOHs

Table shewing the total Notified Diseases for England and Wales, 1892, compared with Kingston 1893.
 Also the mortality per cent. of cases notified for England and Wales 1892, compared with Kingston 1893.



First line in each section shows cases notified per 1000 of population
 Second line in each section shows deaths per cent. of cases notified.

EPSOM URBAN DISTRICT.

MEDICAL OFFICER'S
Annual Report

FOR THE YEAR 1905.

CONTENTS.

- I. POPULATION, BIRTHS, and DEATHS.
- II. INFECTIOUS DISEASES.
- III. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS which were taken during the year under the Sanitary Acts.
- IV. FACTORIES and WORKSHOPS.
- V. APPENDIX, containing the SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT and certain TABLES OF SICKNESS AND MORTALITY.

*Prepared in accordance with Sec. 14 of the Order of the Local Government Board, dated 23rd March, 1891,
regulating the duties of Medical Officers of Health.*

L. W. Andrews & Son, Printers, The Library, Epsom.

Earliest report for Epsom and Ewell, 1905

Statistics on Population, Births and Deaths

Details on outbreaks of infectious diseases

Actions taken under the Sanitary Acts

Report of the Sanitary Inspector

Inspections of Factories and Workshops

II.—Infectious Diseases.

The district was again comparatively free from Infectious Disease, no outbreak to call for comment having occurred in the course of the year. It is interesting to note the very slight influence, if any, of the two Race Meetings in respect of the introduction of infectious disease, although they bring into the district a large army of gipsies and similar nomads from all parts of the kingdom.

11. *Other Preventive Measures.*—After each case of Scarlet Fever and Diphtheria the infected rooms were sprayed and fumigated by the Inspector, the rooms were stripped and limewashed by the owners where necessary, disinfectants were supplied and their use explained to the occupiers, all articles likely to retain infection were removed and steamed in the disinfectant at the Hospital, a sanitary inspection of the premises was made, and in most cases tests were applied to the drains. Fifteen patients were removed to the Isolation Hospital. I sent notices of each case to the School Attendance Officer in order that he might exclude children in infected houses from attendance at the Elementary Schools, which were visited whenever it appeared likely that they would influence the spread of disease.



III.—Summary of other Proceedings which were taken under the Sanitary Acts, etc.

1. *Inspections and Nuisances.*—Mr. Martin, the Sanitary Inspector for the district, reported at each meeting of the Sanitary Committee upon the nuisances that he had discovered in the course of his inspections, and he continued to report the progress that was made in each case until the works necessary for the abatement of the nuisances had been completed. A number of cottages were repaired and cleansed, defective drains were reconstructed, water was laid on to closets, including one group of 25 cottages, where new flushing apparatus was provided for 12 closets; nuisances arising from the deposit of manure were abated; and a number of observations were made for the detection of smoke nuisances, which were abated in one instance by the provision of a new furnace at a factory: letters were also addressed to the two Railway Companies with regard to the emission of black smoke from their engines.

The work of re-draining the College was continued in each vacation, and is now near completion.

Copies of the circular issued by the Board of Agriculture, relating to the construction of pigsties, were distributed among the pig keepers in the district.



I have thought it well to adhere to the Registrar-General's figures as other areas will most probably do the same.

The chief causes of death were :—

Diseases of the heart and circulatory system	56
Cancer	21
Tuberculosis (all forms)	12
Kidney Disease	8
Bronchitis	7

Here, as in the other districts, diseases of the heart and circulatory system are responsible for many more deaths than any other disease. There is something in the conditions of present day life that puts on the heart and circulatory system a strain which they cannot stand. I think many people who suffer from abnormally high blood pressure owe their condition to the fact that they eat too much meat and take too little exercise. In recent years the motor car has been the worst enemy of reasonable exercise in the open air. The movement amongst young people of the present day in favour of rambling deserves every encouragement.

SHEDS USED AS DWELLINGS.

As Mr. W. Honey was found using a loft over stables in Worple Road as a dwelling, I drew attention to the matter. Mr. Honey subsequently vacated the stable premises and removed the furniture from the loft.

Following complaints of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Crosse sleeping in roughly covered motor vehicles and using a small dilapidated shed for meals, I interviewed Mr. Crosse, who stated that he does not always sleep on the premises, but does so occasionally to look after his materials, etc. I also communicated with the Estate Solicitors regarding the unsightliness and disfigurement of the Estate by the old vehicles and sheds in question, and was informed that the Covenant in Mr. Crosse's and all other Conveyances of the Estate restricted the use of caravans on wheels, sheds, or other chattel being adapted or used as a dwelling or sleeping apartment, and that it also gave the Vendor a right to remove and dispose of any unsightly erection or thing. The Council subsequently intimated to the Estate Solicitors that they would appreciate any action taken by them under the Covenant to remove the old sheds and vehicles from the Estate. At the end of the year nothing had been done.

OFFENSIVE TRADES.

No trade within the category of Offensive Trades is carried on within the district.

FISH SHOPS AND FRIED FISH SHOPS.

All fish shops, fried fish shops and other premises where food is prepared and sold have been inspected periodically, and found to be kept in a clean and satisfactory condition.

Extensive alterations were carried out at 120, High Street, and the premises converted into a fish and chip restaurant fitted with modern appliances.

A building in Depot Road was repaired, walls lime-washed, floor paving made good, and a frying apparatus installed satisfactorily.

At 31, High Street, a quantity of rubbish and fish boxes strewn about the yard were removed, and minor defects to sanitary fittings remedied at my request.

On the 13th May I examined 4lbs. of plaice and found it unfit for human food; the fish was at once surrendered and destroyed.

ICE CREAM VENDORS.

During the year a register has been compiled of all vendors and manufacturers of ice cream in this District. The names and addresses of seven manufacturers and vendors, and of four vendors, who receive supplies from Messrs. Lyons & Co., Walls & Son, Eldorado, and the United Caterers, have been recorded. Each of the premises have been inspected and found clean and satisfactory.

At Messrs. Walls and Son's Depot, South Street, a sink with water laid on has been provided, a wash for carts laid, and a modern ice store installed for the storage of ice cream.

SHOPS ACT, 1912, AND SHOPS (HOURS OF CLOSING) ACT, 1928.

The Council having formally appointed me Inspector under the Shops Acts, complaints of five traders not closing their shops for the serving of customers at the times specified in the Act were investigated, observations made, and reported to the Council; no serious breach of the Shops Acts having been observed. In addition, 18 visits were made in connection with complaints, and 12 inquiries regarding the sale of newly cooked provisions and sweetmeats, etc.; in each case abstracts of the Shops Acts were forwarded for the trader's guidance. An Order, dated 10th November, from the Under Secretary of State, suspending the Closing Hours from Saturday, 19th, to Thursday, 24th December, 1931, was also submitted to the Council.

DAIRIES, COWSHEDS AND MILKSHOPS.

During the year the names and addresses of three Retail Purveyors of Milk who gave up business were removed from the register, and the names and addresses of 14 new Retail Purveyors added thereto. The increase in number of Purveyors of Milk was chiefly due to traders commencing to sell milk in bottles, as received from wholesale firms without first being registered. Application forms to be registered were accordingly forwarded to each of the Purveyors, filled in, returned, and approved by the Council.

At the end of the year the register recorded the names and addresses of three Cowkeepers and Wholesale Dealers, 1 Cowkeeper and Retail Purveyor of Milk, and 31 Retail Purveyors of Milk in the District. Each of the premises have been systematically inspected and found in a clean and satisfactory condition, the cleansing and lime-washing being done in accordance with the regulations. At the end of the year there were 46 milch cows in the District, exclusive of those kept at the L.C.C. farms.

At one farm repairs to wash-house floor and cleansing of water tank were attended to at my request, as were also the cleansing of cowsheds at two other farms.

A building used for the storage of milk utensils, damaged by a fallen tree, was thoroughly repaired, floor paving made good, and the interior walls lime-washed.

At my request the floor paving of a wash-house and dairy, also roof of wash-house were efficiently repaired, and the interior of both buildings cleansed and lime-washed.

In one case I drew the firm's attention to one of the dairy rooms being used as a messroom; the firm at once arranged for the roundsmen to keep their clothes and have their meals at other premises.

In accordance with Article 6 (4) of the Milk and Dairies Order, 1926, a list of all Cowkeepers in the district was forwarded to the Surrey County Council. A list as per the Council's Register of all Wholesale and Retail Purveyors of Milk was also sent to the Secretary of the Office of Trade Boards, as requested.

EXAMINATION OF MILK SAMPLES.

Sixteen samples of milk (8 on 27th March, and 8 on 19th November) were purchased from local purveyors of milk and forwarded to the Clinical Research Association, London, for Bacteriological Examinations and one for preservatives. The Bacteriologist's Reports were subsequently forwarded to the Medical Officer of Health, who reported thereon to the Council.

The total cost, including milk bottles, case and carriage, was £4 15s. 3d.

BOROUGH OF EPSOM AND EWELL.

STAFF OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

Medical Officer of Health:

CYRUS IVE, M.B., B.S.(Lond.), M.R.C.S.(Eng.), L.R.C.P.(Lond.),
D.P.H.

Chief Sanitary Inspector:

W. H. C. HAGGER, A.R.San.I., M.S.I.A.,
Certified Meat Inspector.

Additional Sanitary Inspectors:

L. H. GRACE, A.R.San.I., M.S.I.A.,
Certified Meat Inspector.

P. MEDDOWS TAYLOR, A.R.San.I., M.S.I.A.,
Certified Meat Inspector.

E. A. ATKINSON, M.R.San.I., M.S.I.A.,
Certified Meat Inspector.
(Appointed September, 1937.)

Clerical Staff:

K. G. BEWICK, Cert.S.I.B., Clerical Assistant to Medical Officer
of Health.

H. J. T. WOOLFORD, A.R.San.I., C. H. AYLING, A.I.H., and
Miss D. D. WOOD, Clerical Assistants to Sanitary Inspector.

TABLE I.—COMPARATIVE BIRTH, DEATH AND INFANT MORTALITY RATES.

Period.	Average Annual Birth Rate per 1,000 living. (Annual Rates 1931—1937)		Average Annual Crude Death Rate per 1,000 (Annual Rates 1931—1937)		Average Annual Infant Mortality Rate† (Annual Rates 1931—1937)	
	England & Wales.	Borough of Epsom & Ewell.	England & Wales.	Borough of Epsom & Ewell.	England & Wales.	Borough of Epsom & Ewell.
1881—1890	32.4	26.2	19.1	14.5	142	107
1891—1900	29.9	22.9	18.2	13.7	153	121
1901—1910	27.2	19.2	15.4	8.7	128	93
1911—1920	21.8	15.0	14.4*	10.2	100	71
1921—1930	18.3	11.8	12.1	7.5	72	47
1931	15.8	10.3	12.3	6.4	66	53
1932	15.3	11.4	12.0	7.0	65	41
1933	14.4	10.5	12.3	7.3	64	65
1934	14.8	12.7	11.8	7.2 (6.2)	59	42
1935	14.7	12.4	11.7	7.0 (6.0)	57	26
1936	14.8	13.3	12.1	8.0 (6.9)	59	39
1937	14.9	13.5	12.4	6.9 (6.0)	59	35

† *i.e.*, Deaths of children under one year of age per 1,000 births.

* Including civilian mortality only from 1915—1920.

The death rate figures in parentheses have been adjusted by a “comparability factor” (see page 32).

CLINICS AND TREATMENT CENTRES.

The Surrey County Council Clinic is situated in Waterloo Road for use as a Health Centre for Maternity and Child Welfare work, for the medical examination of school children, and as a tuberculosis dispensary. A centre for Maternity and Child Welfare is also held, under the control of the County Council, at Ewell Court, Kingston Road, Ewell. A timetable of the clinics is set out below.

	<i>Waterloo Road Centre.</i>	<i>Ewell Court Centre.</i>
Welfare Clinic	Monday and Wednesday 2—4 p.m.	Monday and Thursday 2—4 p.m.
Ante-natal Clinic	Thursday 2—4 p.m. 2nd and 4th Tuesdays 10—12 a.m.	Friday 2—4 p.m.
Tuberculosis Dispensary	1st, 2nd, 3rd and 5th Tuesdays at 2 p.m. 4th Tuesday at 5.30	—
General Medical Clinic	Wednesday 9.30 a.m.— 12 noon	Thursday 9.45 a.m.—12 noon
Dental Clinic	1st and 3rd Tuesdays 9.30 a.m.—12 noon Wednesday 9.30 a.m.— 12 noon Thursday 9.30 a.m.— 12 noon Friday 1.45 —4 p.m.	Monday 1.45—4 p.m. Tuesday 1.45—4 p.m. Wednesday 9.30 a.m.— 12 noon, and 1.45—4 p.m. Thursday 1.45—4 p.m. Saturday 9.30 a.m.—12 noon
M. & C. W. Dental Clinic	Fridays 9.30 a.m.—12 noon	—
Eye Clinic	1st Thursday 9.30 a.m.— 12 noon	3rd Wednesday 9.45 a.m. —12 noon, and 1.45— 4 p.m.

HOSPITAL ACCOMMODATION.

The Epsom and Ewell Cottage Hospital is a voluntary hospital with a total of 40 beds, including six private beds, and provides for medical, surgical and abnormal midwifery cases. Normal midwifery cases are not admitted. The Hospital also maintains Out-Patient, Massage and X-Ray Departments.

The Epsom County Hospital is under the control of the Surrey County Council and has accommodation for more than 300 patients. It has been modernised within the past few years and every class of case is accepted for treatment, including normal midwifery cases.

All cases of infectious disease occurring in the district and requiring isolation and treatment in hospital are admitted to the Cuddington Isolation Hospital, situated on Banstead Downs. This hospital is administered by the Cuddington Joint Hospital Board, composed of representatives from the five constituent authorities. Pending the necessary extensions at this hospital, the Board have taken over the Council's former Isolation Hospital in Hook Road, to be used in case of emergency.

During Derby Week, eighty-five gipsy caravans with one hundred and fifteen horses were encamped on a field adjoining Downs Road, by permission of the owner.

On inspection, it was found that no sanitary accommodation had been provided and the only water supply available was a water trough used by cattle.

On request, two temporary conveniences (one for males and one for females) were erected, and a standpipe with tap on the main supply provided for drinking purposes.

Several subsequent inspections were made, when no nuisance was found on the field, but a complaint was received during the following week that litter, old iron, and other rubbish had been deposited on land adjoining.

Owing to the large number of caravans coming into the district, particularly during race week, every effort is made to prevent their encampment on vacant land within the Borough. Action is usually taken in conjunction with the Police and during the year thirty-four caravans were removed after notice.

War Damage to Food Shops. In addition to the foodstuffs mentioned above, a large quantity of food including grocery and provisions, vegetables, meat, etc., was inspected in food shops and stores damaged by enemy action. As soon as possible after every incident affecting shop premises, an inspection was made by one of the Sanitary Inspectors who arranged for the removal of any foodstuffs rendered unfit for human consumption. Where it was possible for the food to be rendered fit or used for other purposes, it was forwarded to the Ministry of Food Salvage Depot or dealt with locally by arrangement with the Food Executive Officer; otherwise it was removed to the Corporation's Refuse Destructor and destroyed.

Butchers' Shops and Stalls, etc. There are thirty-five butchers' shops and one market stall in the Borough. All have been periodically inspected. A refrigerator or other means of cold storage is provided at each shop, and twenty-nine of the shops have permanent glass windows to protect the meat from dust, etc., from the highway.

The following is a summary of the work carried out by the Corporation's Rat-catcher and particulars of the number of rats caught and destroyed by employees at the Sewage Farm, also on L.C.C. Estates in the Borough, where a Rat-catcher is employed:-

Number of complaints and reports received and investigated during the year.	..	407
Number of Inspections and visits.	..	998
Number of hunts with dogs and ferrets	..	351
Number of cases where poisoned baits used.	..	294

Number of rats known to have been caught and destroyed by:-

(a) the Corporation's Rat-catcher.	1,465
(b) by employees at Sewage Farm.	350
(c) on L.C.C. premises.	<u>748</u>
Total.	<u>2,563</u>

Legislation which will make important changes in the public health work has been enacted during the year, and some of the effects which the National Health Service Act will produce on the functions of this authority can now be estimated. Under Part II of the Act the Council will lose its remaining responsibility in hospital administration, in that the Cuddington Isolation Hospital, on whose Joint Board the Council is represented, will be transferred on the appointed day in 1947 to the charge of the Regional Hospital Board. Under Part III of the Act the duty to provide an Ambulance Service will now fall on the County Council as the local health authority, as will the responsibility for securing immunisation against diphtheria and vaccination against smallpox. Other services mentioned in Part III of the Act, such as those dealing with the care of mothers and young children, midwifery, health visiting, home nursing, and the provision of domestic help, are in this district already under the administration of the County Council. Other legislation includes the Ice-Cream (Heat Treatment) Regulations, which require the compulsory heat treatment of all ice-cream unless produced from what is known as a "complete cold mix powder." Shortage of equipment and practical difficulties in administrative control may prevent the regulations from being fully effective at once, but the ultimate result should be satisfactory.

“ SQUATTERS ”

During August and September the urgency of the housing problem was demonstrated by the action of people, referred to as “ Squatters,” who occupied vacant camps and empty houses in various parts of the country without permission or authority.

It was appreciated, and not without sympathy, that their action was prompted by reason of being homeless or living under serious overcrowded conditions. At the same time, it was obvious that any organised attempt against law and order would only lead to further difficulties and could not be supported. Legal action was therefore taken in many cases to enforce them to vacate the premises occupied.

A vacant Ministry of Works camp at Ewell was occupied without authority by five families. The camp was subsequently offered to the Council and accepted for rehousing purposes. Necessary repairs and adaptations were then carried out to provide emergency accommodation for the families already in occupation and other urgent cases on the Council's waiting list.

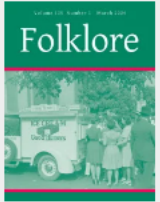
The outstanding matter in relation to infectious disease is the imminence of the production of a vaccine against infection by the poliomyelitis virus. By good fortune there was no serious outbreak of the disease in the Borough this year, but hitherto it has been impossible to take effective steps to prevent such an occurrence. The time is now near when it will be possible for a widespread artificial immunity to be given.

In the Chief Sanitary Inspector's report a great deal of information is to be found concerning housing conditions, supervision of food supplies and many other matters coming within the survey of a public health department. He and his staff are to be congratulated on the high standard of efficiency which they have maintained.

Public Health concerns each one of us, it is part of our daily lives and a responsibility to be shared by every member of the community. Control measures are all very well, but much can be done to preserve and safeguard the health of the public by example to others in matters of cleanliness and personal habits. The importance of health education is fully recognised and where is there a more suitable place for it to commence than in the home. The training of children in personal cleanliness, care in the preparation and handling of food, and general hygiene in the home can be a great influence on their way of living in the future.

Noise Abatement Act, 1960

Seven complaints were received, six being dealt with informally. The other case related to the sounding of chimes by an ice-cream vendor after 7 p.m. contrary to the provisions of the Act. He was fined £2. 0. 0. at the Epsom Magistrates' Court.



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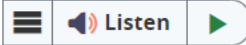
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Lecture

A Folklorist Looks at Ice Cream Vans


Owen Davies 


Pages 1-19 | Published online: 14 Mar 2024

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In this article

Abstract

Introduction

Abstract

Of all the commercial road vehicles that have toured the streets and tourist spots of Britain, Ireland, America, and Australia over nearly a century, none elicit more popular reminiscence and sentiment

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To the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors of the Borough of Epsom and Ewell

MR. MAYOR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

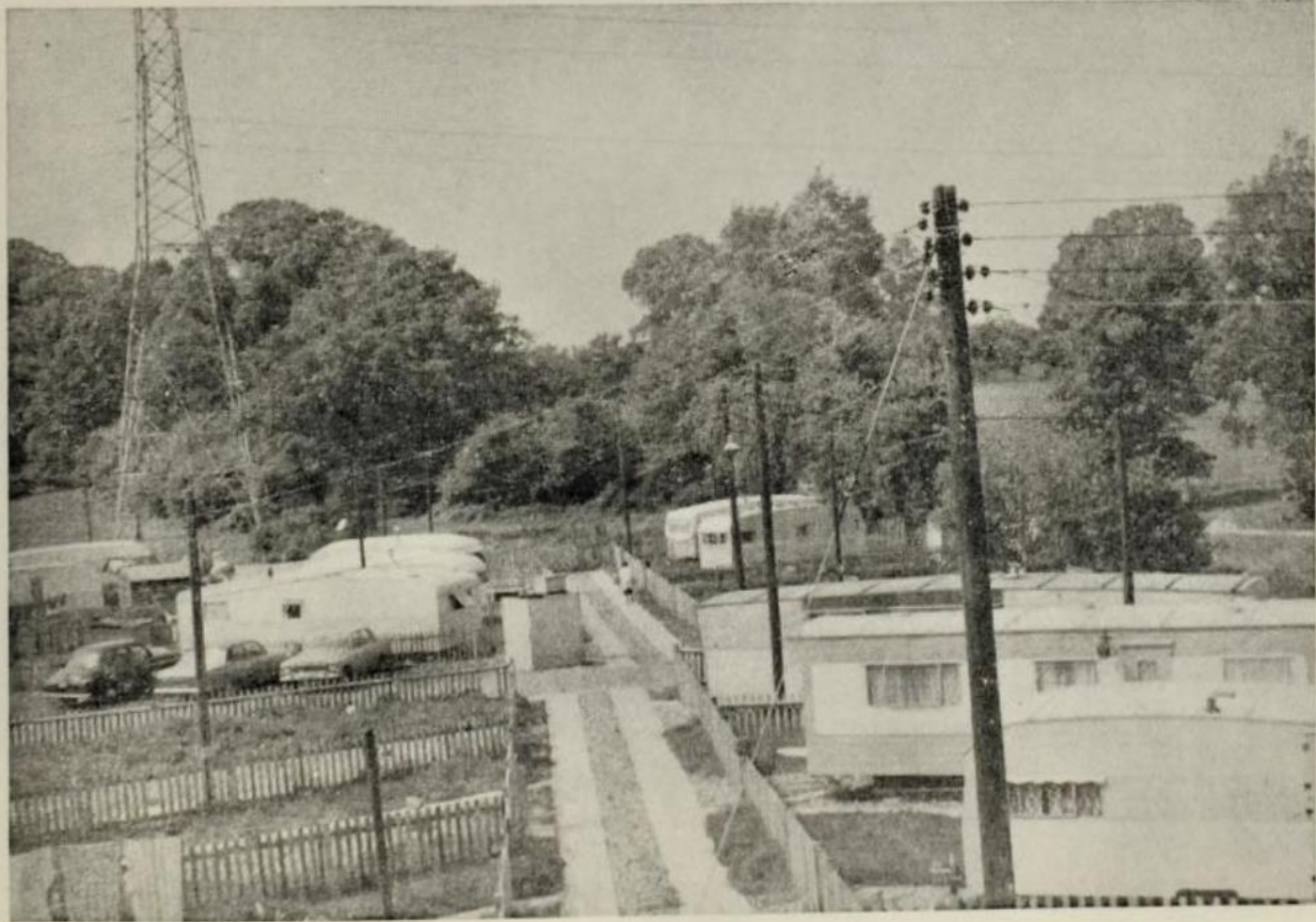
I have the honour to submit the Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for 1965. The request for this is made in Ministry of Health Circular 1/66 in which there is reference to Regulation 5(3) and 15(5) of the Public Health Officers Regulations 1959. The report is in a form which meets the requirements of the Ministry as summarised in the letter.

To date, the emphasis of the health services has been on the treatment of acute episodes of disease and of chronic disease with its recurrences. The future emphasis must be on maintaining and improving health by means of health education, by multiple screening, e.g. cervical smears, mass radiography, tests for anaemia, urine examination. These tests will reveal the earliest manifestations of disease at a time when it most readily yields to treatment.

LAND AT LOWER COX LANE



1967



1969





Statistics are often suspected to be a collection of dry bones, but I hope I can breathe a little life into them as they affect this Borough. The standardised birth and death rates are almost the same as for 1969, and remain superior to those for England and Wales as a whole. When the infant mortality rate of 14.0 is compared with that of 30.6 thirty years ago statistics must mean something. Diseases of the heart and blood vessels remain the biggest cause of death; lung cancer claimed 27 deaths under the age of 65, and 16 deaths were due to cancer of the breast and womb in the same age group. If one considers people under 55 years of age as being young or in the prime of life then it is tragic that there were 28 cases of all forms of cancer and 16 cases of coronary heart disease recorded for that group. There is no doubt that reduction in smoking would favourably affect the incidence of lung cancer and coronary disease. Cervical Cytology and other screening methods, such as routine examination of the breasts, would go some way in lowering mortality figures for cancer of the breast and womb. Unfortunately, the number attending the Epsom "Well Women" Clinic fell in 1970, but it is hoped that the future trend will be upwards.

The incidence of infectious disease was relatively low during the year, but isolated cases of dysentery and food poisoning act as a reminder that all is not so well in our so called civilized and hygienic world. Eighteen cases of tuberculosis were notified which compares favourably with the 89 cases notified 30 years ago. However, we must not become too complacent and must ensure that in the course of time tuberculosis, like the Dodo, will become extinct. It is encouraging that the acceptance rate remains high for vaccination against this disease. The figures for primary immunisation against Diphtheria, Whooping Cough, Tetanus and Poliomyelitis maintained a satisfactory level of 90%. Measles vaccination was also much sought after and the low incidence of the disease during the year could well have been the result. There was also an extremely good response to the offer of the new Rubella (German Measles) vaccine which was offered to 13 year old girls in the first instance.

The uncertainty about the ultimate fate of the local health authority services continued during the year, and medical, nursing, administrative and clerical staff involved feel no more secure despite the advent of the Consultative Document on the Reorganisation of the National Health Service. Our shot gun divorce from the social aspect of disease is regrettable as the spectrum between health and social problems is so diffuse and intangible that the trees can effectively screen the wood, unless common sense and experience keep a balance. There is no doubt in my mind that the first medical officers of health were men steeped in sociology without realizing it, and throughout the years their compassion and wisdom has been handed down to their successors. That the latter were not able to achieve Utopia was in my opinion due to tight central and local government purse strings resulting in insufficient buildings and staff. I hope that the devoted and loyal services of countless professional and lay persons in our disintegrating public health departments will not be lightly forgotten and that they will be protected as regards status and salary when reorganisation takes place.

TABLE I
COMPARATIVE BIRTH, DEATH AND MORTALITY RATES 1881-1971

	<i>Birth Rate per 1,000 Population</i>		<i>Death Rate per 1,000 Population*</i>		<i>Mortality Rates per 1,000 Live Births of Children under one year of age</i>	
	England and Wales	Epsom and Ewell	England and Wales	Epsom and Ewell	England and Wales	Epsom and Ewell
1881 - 1890	32.4	26.2	19.1	14.5	142.0	107.0
1891 - 1900	29.9	22.9	18.2	13.7	153.0	121.0
1901 - 1910	27.2	24.9	15.4	11.7	128.0	93.0
1911 - 1920	21.8	18.2	14.3	11.5	100.0	71.0
1921 - 1930	18.3	16.1	12.1	9.8	72.0	49.0
1931 - 1940	14.9	12.6	12.3	7.3	58.0	41.0
1941 - 1950	16.9	14.2	12.3	9.4	43.1	28.4
1951 - 1960	15.8	10.4	11.6	15.0	24.8	19.1
1961	17.4	11.4 (13.6)	12.0	14.0 (9.5)	21.6	23.8 (19 deaths)
1962	18.0	12.5 (14.7)	11.9	15.4 (10.2)	21.6	13.7 (12 deaths)
1963	18.2	12.6 (14.2)	12.2	15.8 (9.9)	20.9	27.0 (24 deaths)
1964	18.4	12.8 (14.5)	11.3	14.7 (9.3)	20.2	18.5 (17 deaths)
1965	18.1	13.0 (14.7)	11.5	15.0 (9.45)	19.0	15.0 (14 deaths)
1966	17.7	13.5 (15.2)	11.7	15.3 (9.48)	19.0	19.5 (19 deaths)
1967	17.2	11.7 (13.2)	11.2	15.3 (10.1)	18.3	10.7 (9 deaths)
1968	16.9	12.1 (13.8)	11.9	15.2 (9.3)	18.0	12.6 (11 deaths)
1969	16.3	12.0 (13.6)	11.8	15.4 (9.4)	18.0	14.0 (12 deaths)
1970	16.0	12.1 (13.7)	11.7	15.0 (9.6)	18.0	14.0 (12 deaths)
1971	16.0	11.6 (13.1)	11.6	14.1 (9.0)	18.0	11.0 (9 deaths)

* *Deaths of patients in mental hospitals included from 1953. From 1956 the standardised death rate allows for the high mortality in residential institutions, such as hospitals for mental illness. (Bracketed figures represent standardised rates.)*

**GET IN
ON THE
CLEAN AIR ACT**

**ABOLISH
SMOKY
BONFIRES**

**AND
HELP US
KEEP THE BOROUGH
A PLEASANT HEALTHY
PLACE TO LIVE IN**





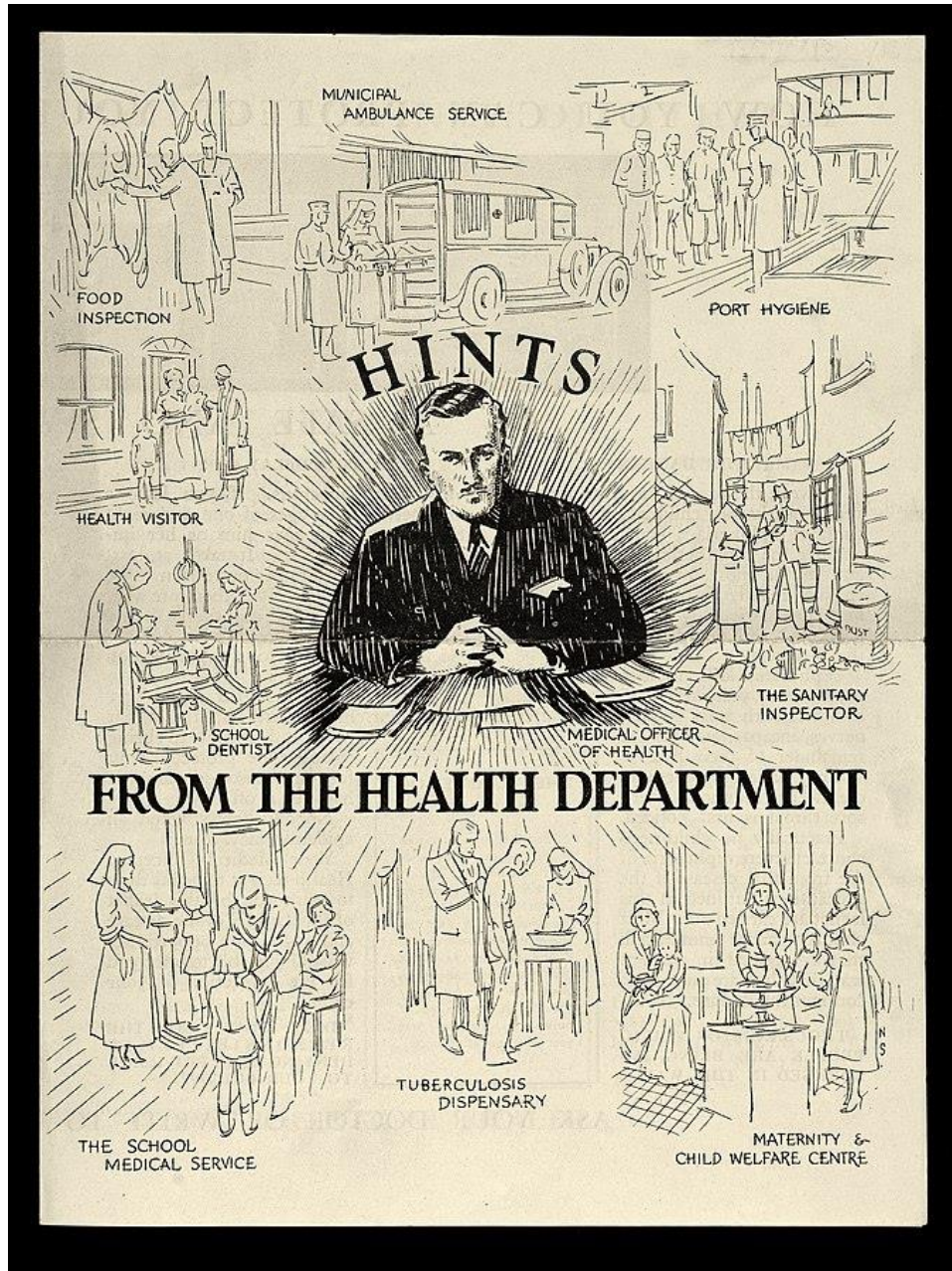
Morituri Te Salutant—The Demise of the Medical Officer of Health

This report is written with a great deal of sadness as after well over a hundred years the office of Medical Officer of Health will disappear into the murky archives of history. As the last appointed Medical Officer of Health to the Borough of Epsom and Ewell, I am particularly grieved that gradual erosion in company with precipitate change have militated towards my own extinction and that of other Medical Officers of Health. Like a hen-bird the Medical Officer of Health has been deprived of his brood one by one with such services as environmental health, hospitals, housing, nursing and social services flying from the nest. The only other egg marked "Community Physician" awaits hatching, and it is to be wondered what horrors or joys lurk under the shell. It may well be like the curate's egg good in parts, or like that of the cuckoo a misfit. On the other hand it may turn out to be the golden egg.



Sir Mark Walport, Former Govt Chief Scientific Advisor (2013-17), UK COVID Enquiry, 21st June 2023

“...if you look at the history of public health there has been a long-standing decline in our capacity to fight infectious disease going back 40 or 50 years or more... there has been a move away from public health. I think if you go back to the 19th century, every part of the country had a medical officer of health, and every year they would write an annual report on the health of their local communities, very largely focused on infection in those days, and part of the control of infection is to have an effective distributed system for testing, tracing and, where appropriate, isolating people with infectious diseases. We had lost that capability over a very prolonged period”



Thank You!