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Contributors

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BOROUGH OF BLANDFORD FORUM

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE

YEAR.....1970

BOROUGH OF BLANDFORD FORUM
MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE.

CHAIRMAN.....	Alderman G.O. Fry
VICE CHAIRMAN.....	Councillor Miss A.A. Williams J.P
HER WORSHIP THE MAYOR.....	Alderman Mrs. G.F. Lane (ex-officio)

COUNCILLORS:-

Major D.J. Boughton
Dr. D.H. Davies
J. Hodges
Major A.N. Lane
E.J. Millbank
J.O.R. Tupper

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSING COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN.....	Alderman E.G. Riggs
VICE CHAIRMAN.....	Her Worship the Mayor Alderman Mrs. G.F. Lane

COUNCILLORS:-

A.W.G. Adams
Dr. D.H. Davies
S.E. Lawes
W.D.J.A. Thomas
P.G. Thorne
Miss A.A. Williams J.P

STAFF OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH
DEPARTMENT

G.B. Hopkins MB., CH.B., B.Pharm., D.P.H.

holding appointments of:-

Senior Assistant County Medical Officer)
School Medical Officer) 5/11th of time

Medical Officer of Health - Borough of Blandford Forum

Medical Officer of Health - Blandford Rural District

Medical Officer of Health - Wimborne Minster Urban District.

Medical Officer of Health - Wimborne and Cranborne Rural District

also

Honorary Medical Officer to the Dorset Water Board

contributing roughly:-

Borough of Blandford Forum.....	1/5th day per week
Blandford Rural District.....	$\frac{1}{2}$ day per week
Wimborne Minster Urban District.....	$\frac{1}{3}$ day per week
Wimborne and Cranborne Rural District.....	1. 3/5th day per week

PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR:-

H.L. Birkett M.R.S.H., M.P.H.I.A

Area Office,
Health Clinic,
Rowlands Hill,
Wimborne.
Dorset.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I present my Annual Report for 1970.

I have given an impression in recent years that the subject of the traditional notifiable diseases could be relegated to a small corner of my Annual Report and I have therefore to report two minor disappointments in this sphere. Measles continues to trickle on because of a failure to immunise sufficient children, partly due to misplaced prejudice on the part of parents who heard of a few rather sharp reactions to one brand of vaccine and who have not realised that this problem was soon remedied, and partly due to a temporary shortage of supplies occasioned by the remedying of the above problems. Nevertheless 100 doses were administered with a probable success rate of about 80% to be expected.

The whooping cough vaccine showed signs of losing some of its effectiveness in the field, and subsequent improvements have been made which should show dividends in future years. German Measles vaccine became available early in the year but in very restricted quantity. The policy adopted by the Ministry was to administer what was available to the thirteen year old girls, this age being a compromise between vaccinating as late as possible for maximum effect during the child bearing years, and the necessity to avoid vaccinating during pregnancy. A mere five doses were given in 1970 but many more have been given at the time of writing. This policy will be continued as more vaccine becomes available and in future years fewer babies with severe congenital abnormalities due to the German Measles virus will be born, especially if some parents were less supremely confident that their children had already had German Measles. It has been established that an alleged history of having had German Measles carries with it no guarantee of antibodies to this disease in the bloodstream so that confidence in a past history of infection leading to refusal of the vaccine may lead to disaster in a later pregnancy in a few unfortunate women. The basic reason for this confusion is that at least one other virus can closely simulate German Measles.

The above comments illustrate the practical difficulties, including the severe problems of communication, which remain even when a satisfactory medical solution to a pressing problem has been evolved.

Each year I receive a very large form SD 25 from the General Register Office recording the numbers of deaths in the district by sex and age group. It is very salutary to study this document, which I have set out in abbreviated form on page // by cause and sex only, in order to convey more succinctly the message. A very quick reference to these few columns reveals the alarming toll of certain diseases, the most striking by far being Ischaemic Heart Disease, or Coronary Thrombosis, claiming 10 males and 10 females.

Pinpointing the distribution by age for a larger population is further revealing and I give the combined figures for the Borough and Rural districts below:-

Cause of Death.	Sex.	35-44.	45-54.	55-64.	65-74.	75 and over
Ischaemic Heart Disease.	M	1	4	3	9	8
	F	0	0	1	6	14
Total all causes.....	M	2	10	9	34	43
	F	2	4	7	19	58
Percentage due to Ischaemic Heart Disease.	M	50	40	33	27	19
	F	0	0	14	32	24

The rot starts at 35 though this cause can and does occasionally operate as early as adolescence. The ladies lag behind strikingly and it is not until the 65 to 74 decade that they make much show of catching up and do not in fact catch up until after 75 years by which time there are so many more women than men that they necessarily begin to assume the ascendancy in numbers of deaths by cause.

The Council of the World Health Organisation recently stated:-

"I.H.D. or Coronary Artery Disease has reached enormous proportions, striking more and more at younger subjects. It will result in coming years in the greatest epidemic mankind has faced unless we are able to reverse the trend by concentrated research into its cause and prevention."

A vast amount of thought and research has already been devoted to this problem and sufficient is known about it to make a major impact upon the risk for those willing to modify their way of life. This is a sphere in which health education can have a major impact. Another problem of communication and motivation!.

Meanwhile, one aspect of the above problem well within the sphere of interest of the Council concerns the significance of the water supply. It has been amply demonstrated that there is a statistical association between mortality, particularly from cardiovascular disease (strokes and coronary disease) and the softness and hardness of drinking water, the harder the better for health. Suggestive evidence has recently been advanced that altering the degree of hardness for any reason is followed by the change in the incidence of cardiovascular disease which would be expected on the basis of the above observation.

It has for long been argued that the softening of water supplies is wasteful since much of it is used for purposes for which the degree of hardness is immaterial and that the advent of detergents has further diminished the practical advantages of soft water. Even in the bath where most of us stick to soap (even here the children often prefer bubble baths!), the affluent society could afford bath salts to soften the water.

This leaves the effect of hard water on domestic and industrial boilers as the only substantial remaining benefit of softening water, to be balanced against the cost of the process and the cost to health.

It is easier never to start something rather than to stop it once started, and on this basis it is now a retrograde step to think in terms of instituting softening processes on hard water supplies.

The following table gives relevant details of the various supplies distributed in East Dorset:-

<u>Total Hardness of Water Supplies in</u> <u>East Dorset in ppm</u>		
<u>Stanbridge</u>	Wimborne and Cranborne R.D.C.....	250
<u>Walford Bridge</u>	Wimborne Urban District.	
	before softening.....	290
	after softening.....	180
<u>Corfe Mullen</u>	Wimborne and Cranborne R.D.C.	
	before softening.....	250
	after softening.....	140
<u>Sturminster Marshall</u> ..	Wimborne and Cranborne R.D.C.....	260
<u>Black Lane</u>	Borough of Blandford Forum.....	260
<u>Milborne St. Andrew</u>	Blandford R.D.C	250

The order of benefit conferred by hard water in comparison with soft water is a reduction in the rate of cardiovascular mortality of about one fifth.

That veteran amongst complaints, the fouling of pavements by dogs, continues to feature from time to time in the local and national press, Byelaws are almost useless as a remedy for this disgusting state of affairs owing to a difficulty of obtaining witnesses, and indeed publicity is the only current remedy of any real use to a Local Authority; Britain is the most dog ridden nation in the world, cats are even more numerous though far more fastidious. There are 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ million dogs and 4 million cats in Great Britain and owning a dog or even two dogs is becoming "de rigueur".

There is a widespread belief that it is good for children to be taught responsibility for the humane care of dumb animals but some pet experts say that smaller pets such as white mice and guinea pigs are more suitable for children. Many children are actively frightened of dogs. Dogs are put forward as many old peoples' indispensable companions but this is only infrequently the case, many old people find their pets become increasingly burdensome, but once having become attached to them, cannot resolve the burden:-

"There is sorrow enough in the natural way
From men and women to fill our day:
But when we are certain of sorrow in store,
Why do we always arrange for more?
Brothers and Sisters I bid you beware
Of giving your heart to a dog to tear."

- The Power of the Dog - Kipling.

We are so accustomed to the fouling of public places by dogs that we fail to notice it just as we fail to hear the tick of a clock, but it would be salutary if all of us closely observed the pavements of our local town and really observed the degree of pollution. Nearly every shop front after a spell of dry weather reveals the dark stain of dried dogs' urine trickling across the pavement, and frequently worse. The blind, the old, the crippled, the young and the fit tread this excrement into cars and homes either visibly and offensively or at least microscopically and it is worth while considering whether this offence stops at the aesthetic. Dogs are fairly healthy creatures but they can convey disease.

There is currently advancing westwards across Europe at about 30 to 60 km a year an epizootic of rabies, a disease from the menace of which we have been free for very many years. The main vector amongst animals is the fox but the dog is the main vector of human disease, not only by actual bites but also by saliva from an infected animal, a less obvious risk. The disease has already entered Belgium and France and is expected on the Channel Coast by 1975. The channel has many times protected us from invasion but it is a moot point whether it will stop rabies, especially since there is known dog smuggling.

If it does not, then the bite of a dog will assume vastly more significance than it has previously during this century. There would have to be instituted a policy of vaccinating against rabies all dogs, and in practice this would be difficult to organise and many dogs would escape. This alone is a practical reason for arresting the dog population explosion. Other diseases transmitted by dogs are Hydatidosis, Toxocariasis, Salmonellosis, Leptospirosis, Tetanus, Listeriosis, Pasteurellosis and Ringworm.

Hydatidosis is a serious worm disease much more prevalent in sheep dogs and dogs having access to sheep country than in town dogs. The dog harbours the worm and transmits larvae to human beings via its excreta. There are probably several hundred cases at any one time in Gt. Britain of infection of human beings by the cystic stage in the life cycle, a condition the outlook for which is much the same as cancer.

Toxocariasis is rather similar and very recent evidence suggests that tiny cysts in humans stemming from this fairly common worm infestation in dogs and cats may be responsible for some hitherto inexplicable cases of epilepsy.

Salmonellosis is the condition of infection by one of the hundreds of salmonella food poisoning germs from which any animal can suffer, and any animal can transmit, including dogs, by faecal contamination of the environment.

Leptospirosis is a serious illness characterised by jaundice and kidney damage, commonly infecting dogs, the reservoir normally being rats. Dog bites usually necessitate preventive steps against the acquisition of tetanus.

Listeriosis is a meningeal infection transmissible from dogs and pasteurellosis is an infection which may similarly be conveyed from a dog by scratching, biting or licking. Ringworm is often transmitted by dogs either directly or via fabrics against which they commonly lie, such as the frills round a fireside chair.

It may very well be the case that death and injury to human beings from road accidents caused by dogs exceed in importance all the above infections, while injury in the home due to tripping over dogs, especially in old people, is worthy of mention.

There are other disadvantages. They convey dirt into homes, sometimes exhibit embarrassing behaviour, are frequently in the way, are a source of expense or extra nuisance at holiday times and have a considerable impact upon other people. Postmen could legitimately

enlarge upon this aspect. The problem of barking dogs is a frequent source of friction amongst neighbours. They often become smelly, are a major trial to owners and others from mating urges, do damage to the fabric of the home, especially when puppies. All things considered, it is rather remarkable that there are so many dogs but there are many pressures, not least the lovable little creatures romping in the windows of pet shops. A popular B.B.C. Childrens' programme ardently and permanently puts out powerful propaganda in favour of dog owning. One of the wholly admirable young actors on this programme recently announced that puppies should be taken out to a piece of waste ground at stated and fairly frequent intervals, glossing over the implications of this statement, what happens when there is not a handy piece of waste land, what about other people's children who play on that same piece of waste land, and who takes the animal out when the children are at school, and when they are on holiday and have lost interest?

Many dog owners are unwilling or unable to devote the time to "exercising" their animals where their excrement will cause least offence to others, and so combine this chore with their shopping, with the inevitable result that the pavement outside food shops may bear a marked contrast to the conditions required by the Food Hygiene Regulations within them.

The purpose of my diatribe is to appeal for support for a substantial increase in dog licences. A tax was first raised on dogs in 1796 varying with the type of dog, more for sporting dogs than others probably to deter poaching. After the French Wars the rates were fixed in 1812 at £1 for a greyhound, 14/- for any other sporting dog or one kept by a person keeping two or more, (what an excellent idea!) and 8/- for others. In 1840, 10% was added to these rates and in 1853 the rate was consolidated at 12/- per dog, with certain exemptions. In 1867, a generous Government slashed the duty to 5/- but in 1878, only 11 years later, a 50% increase to 7/6d was imposed, and there, for nearly 100 years, the figure remained.

Would it not therefore be reasonable to impose a tax to take account of inflation?. Seven and six in 1900 is now worth three pounds.

There could be suitable exemptions and the tax could be raised in increments so as to bear not too hardly on existing dog owners and give people warning of their future commitments, many would without doubt opt for guinea pigs, charming clean little creatures which do not cause road accidents!. The proceeds could form a local tax which would cover the employment of a dog warden to round up strays, check tax evasion, and administer the bye-laws on the fouling of pavements. Some such officials exist already.

There follows the report of the Public Health Inspector and the customary tabulated information.

OCTOBER, 1971

J. B. Hopkin
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

SUMMARY OF VITAL STATISTICS

Area of Borough.....	253 acres.
Population as estimated by Registrar General- mid year.....	3,670
Rateable value as at the 1st April, 1970.....	£170,399
Estimated product of ld rate at 1st April, 1970.....	£ 640
Estimated number of inhabited houses at 31st Dec. 1970.	1,500

AS SUPPLIED BY THE REGISTRAR GENERAL

<u>BIRTHS</u>	<u>MALES</u>	<u>FEMALES</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
<u>Live Births</u>	39	31	70
Legitimate	37	26	63
Illegitimate	2	5	7
<u>DEATHS</u>			
All ages	37	43	80

	<u>Blandford</u> <u>Borough</u>	<u>England &</u> <u>Wales.</u>	<u>Administrative</u> <u>County</u>
Standardised Birth rate.....	19.1	16.0	16.1
Standardised Death rate.....	21.8	11.7	10.7

COMPARABILITY FACTORS

Births.....	1.18
Deaths.....	.68

The standardised birth and death rates are calculated on the estimated population and since we know that there is a discrepancy between the actual and the estimated population, increasing progressively between the census years, both the above figures are slightly too high.

SECTION A

Prevalence of Infectious and Other Diseases

Measles 5
Scarlet fever 1

TUBERCULOSIS - PULMONARY

Males 5
Females 3

NON-PULMONARY

Males 0
Females 2

VACCINATION AND IMMUNISATION STATISTICS

<u>Poliomyelitis</u>	<u>Diphtheria</u>	<u>Tetanus</u>	<u>Whooping Cough</u>	<u>Smallpox</u>	<u>Measles</u>	<u>Rubella</u>
P. R.	P. R.	P. R.	P. R.	P. R.		
98 170	95 124	123 175	95 72	65 18	100	5

P = Primary
R = Reinforcing Dose

SECTION B

AMBULANCE FACILITIES

The Ambulance Service is provided by the Dorset County Council. Control is centralised in Dorchester and the service operates from Castleman House.

PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY

This is situated at Dorchester and provides a free service for the bacteriological examination of human specimens, food, milk and water.

SERVICES PROVIDED IN THE HEALTH CLINIC, SALISBURY STREET

Infant Welfare Clinics are held in the Health Centre once a month, together with numerous services provided, or assisted, by the County Council. These include the School Dental Service, Speech Therapy, Hearing Assessment and Tuition, Home Help Organiser, Family Planning, Cervical Cytology, Registrar of Births and Deaths and Chiropody for old people.

SECTION C

STATISTICAL TABLES - 1970

<u>CAUSES OF DEATH</u>	<u>MALE</u>	<u>FEMALE</u>
Malignant Neoplasm, Stomach	1	-
Malignant Neoplasm, Intestine	2	2
Malignant Neoplasm, Lung, Bronchus.....	2	-
Malignant Neoplasm, Breast.....		2
Other Malignant Neoplasms	1	3
Benign and Unspecified Neoplasms	-	1
Diabetes Mellitus	-	1
Other Diseases of Nervous System	1	-
Chronic Rheumatic Heart Disease	1	-
Hypertensive Disease	3	-
Ischaemic Heart Disease	10	10
Other Forms of Heart Disease.....	3	5
Cerebrovascular Disease.....	3	7
Other Diseases of Circulatory System	2	6
Pneumonia	3	1
Bronchitis and Emphysema	1	1
Peptic Ulcer	-	1
Other Diseases of Digestive System	-	1
Other Diseases, Genito-Urinary System	2	-
Birth Injury, Difficult Labour, etc.....	1	-
Symptoms and Ill Defined Conditions	1	-
Motor Vehicle Accidents	-	1
Suicide and Self-Inflicted Injuries	-	1
<u>TOTAL ALL CAUSES</u>	37	43

REPORT OF CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH
INSPECTOR

Action taken under Acts of Parliament

(a) Public Health Acts

Number of Informal Notices served.....	14
Number of Informal Notices complied with.....	10
Number of Statutory Notices served.....	3
Number of Statutory Notices complied with.....	2

(b) Housing Acts

Number of Statutory Notices served.....	Nil
Number of Statutory Notices complied with.....	Nil

(c) Number of unfit houses closed.....	4
Number of unfit houses demolished.....	Nil
Number of families rehoused.....	2
Number of persons rehoused.....	4

(d) Factories Acts and Regulations.

Number of Informal notices served.....	2
Number of Informal notices complied with.....	2
Number of Formal notices served	Nil
Number of Formal notices complied with.....	Nil

OVERCROWDING

(a) Number of dwellings overcrowded at 31/12/70.....	3
(b) Number of families therein.....	5
(c) Number of new cases.....	1
(d) Number of cases of overcrowding relieved.....	3
(e) Number of persons involved.....	8
(f) Number of renewed cases of overcrowding.....	1

PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTION OF
AREA

Summary of Inspection and re-visits made in the course of routine work during the year 1970 by your public health inspector:-

PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS

Houses.....	126
Other premises.....	52
Housing inspections.....	91
Infectious diseases.....	1
Markets.....	28
Factories.....	9

FOOD INSPECTIONS:

Meat inspection.....	6
Cafes.....	15
Ice cream premises.....	6
Grocers.....	24
Butchers.....	18
Bakeries.....	3
Fried Fish.....	4
General.....	26

FOOD HYGIENE REGULATIONS

The number of food premises subject to the above Regulations are as follows:-

	Fitted with Washbasins	Premises to which Sec.19 Applies.	Premises complying with Sec. 19
Bakers & confectioners	3	3	3
Butchers	6	6	6
Fishmongers	2	2	2
Cafes	7	7	7
Fried Fish	3	3	3
Grocers	14	14	14
Public Houses.	12	12	12
Sugar confectionery.	12	8	8

WATER SUPPLY

All dwelling houses, shops, offices and factories are connected to the mains water supply from the Dorset Water Board.

MEAT INSPECTION

The only slaughter house which was privately owned closed during the year 1962.

FOOD INSPECTION

The following foodstuffs were examined and found unfit for human consumption:-

Canned cooked meats.....	103 lbs
Canned fruit.....	82 lbs
Meat.....	21 lbs
Frozen food-stuff.....	362 lbs

NOISE ABATEMENT ACT.

No complaints were received by this Department under the above Act during the year.

REFUSE DISPOSAL

This Council together with the adjoining Rural District Council use a joint Refuse Tip where controlled tipping methods are carried out in accordance with the Ministry's recommendations.

Arrangements are also made for the disposal of bulky rubbish and derelict cars.

CLEAN AIR ACT.

No complaints received and no action necessary .

SEWAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL

All houses with the exception of two are connected with the main sewage system.

COMMON LODGING HOUSES.

There are no common lodging houses within the Borough.

PIGEONS

Following many years of complaints of the damage caused by the large congregation of pigeons on the Parish Church and other buildings in the centre of the town, it is gratifying to note the numbers are greatly reduced and relatively few complaints are now being received.

This is mainly due to the persistent efforts of Mr. Hole, the Pests Officer.

RODENT CONTROL

Total number of visits made by Rodent Officer.....	76
Number of premises surveyed on notification.....	45
Number of premises surveyed under Act.....	60
Number of premises found to be infested with rats.....	37
Number of premises found to be infested with mice.....	11
Number of premises found to be infested with rats and mice.....	2

A large number of complaints were received from the public of wasps nests and ant infestations. All of these were effectively dealt with by the Pests Officer.

FACTORIES ACT 1961

Part 1 of the Act.

1 - INSPECTIONS

PREMISES. 1	Number on Register. 2	Inspections. 3	Written Notices. 4	Occupiers Prosecuted. 5
(1) Factories in which Sections 1,2,3,4 & 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities.	-	-	-	-
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Sec.7 is enforced by the Local Authority.	34	2	-	-
TOTAL	34	2	-	-

2 - CASES IN WHICH DEFECTS WERE FOUND.

PARTICULARS. 1	Number of cases in which defects were found.		Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted.	
	Found. 2	Remedied. 3	Referred to H.M. Inspector 4	By H.M. Inspector. 5
Want of cleanliness (S1)	-	-	-	-
Unreasonable temperature (S3)	-	-	-	-
Inadequate ventilation (S4)	-	-	-	-
Ineffective drainage of floors (S6)	-	-	-	-
Sanitary conveniences (S7)	-	-	-	-
(a) Insufficient	-	-	-	-
(b) Unsuitable or defective.	1	1	-	-
(c) Not separate for sexes.	-	-	-	-
Other offences against the Act not including offences relating to out-work.	-	-	-	-
TOTAL.	1	1	-	-

PART VIII of the ACT

OUTWORK

(Sections 133 and 134)

Nature of Work.

No. on list.

Wearing apparel - Making etc.,
cleaning and
washing.

6. There were no cases of default in sending lists to the Council, no prosecutions for failure to supply lists, no instances of work in unwholesome premises, no notices served and no prosecutions.

Curtains and
furniture
hangings

2.

TOTAL

8
