BLOFIELD AND FLEGG RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT.

of the

MEDICAL OFFICERS' OF HEALTH FOR THE YEAR

1944.

Public Health Department,
Council Offices,
ACLE.

August, 1945.

To the Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Rural District Council of Blofield and Flegg.

We beg to present our Annual Report in accordance with the requirements of Circular 2067 as issued by the Ministry of Health.

The geographical position of the District in normal times places it as a corridor between two large towns through which a great movement of population takes place, more especially during the summer months when people are attracted to the Coastal Area, the Rivers and Broads.

During the present emergency certain restrictions have reduced this movement to a minimum, although use has been made of the District as a "Cushion" Area for the reception of a large number of persons needing accommodation.

The District remains chiefly agricultural in character.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

Area (Acres)	74,774
Population (Census 1931)	24,566
Population (Estimated 1944)	28,160
Number of Inhabited Houses (1944)	7,736
Number of Families or separate occupiers..	8,500
Rateable Value	116,796
Produce of 1d Rate	£465.14s.11d.

EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS.

BIRTHS :	(Legitimate) - Total:	537	Males -	261	Females -	276
	Illegitimate) - Total:	40	Males -	17	Females -	23
	Total	577		278		299

BIRTH RATE : - 20.49

STILLBIRTHS:

(Legitimate)	Total	9	Males -	5	Females -	4
Illegitimate) -	Total	1	Male -	1	Female -	
		10	Males -	6	Females -	4

DEATHS : Total 351 Males - 160 Females - 191

DEATH RATE : 12.46

Number of women dying in, or in consequence of Child-Birth:-

From Sepsis - 1 From other Sources - 0

Deaths of Infants under 1 year of age per 1,000 Births:-

(Legitimate)	Total : 18	Males - 9	Females - 9
(Illegitimate)	Total : 2	Males - 1	Females - 1
	Total 20	Males -10	Females 10

Deaths from Measles (all ages) Males - 0 Females - 0

Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages) Males - 0 Females - 0

Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2 years) Males - 0 Females - 1

The Births in 1944 were 278 Males and 299 Females, a total of 577 against 282 males and 259 Females - a total of 541 for the year 1943, making an increase of 36 Births.

The Birth-Rate in 1944 was 20.49 as against an average of 19.21 in the year 1943. The Birth Rate for England and Wales for 1944 is 17.6

The deaths during the year were greater in number and the death-rate of 12.46 compares with 10.9 for the year 1943, a slight increase.

There were 20 deaths from Tuberculosis, no deaths from Diphtheria 100 deaths from Heart Disease and 48 deaths from Cancer.

The Infantile Mortality Rate still remains comparatively low, it stands at 20 deaths of children under 1 year a reduction of 28 deaths on the previous year.

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF.

Medical Officers of Health (part time)

W.BOYDEN, M.A.,M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.

J.D.McKELVIE, M.D.

Senior Sanitary Inspector

LOUIS F.BECKWITH, C.R.S.I.,M.S.I.A.
A.F.A.S. (Eng)

Sanitary Inspectors

ARTHUR ARMES, C.S.I.B., M.S.I.A.

Serving in H.M.Forces. H.C.T.BOLTON C.S.I.B., M.S.I.A.

Temporary A.G.LAKE C.S.I.B.,M.S.I.A.(Sept.1944

Departmental Clerk

Miss R.A.M.STONE.

Assistant Clerk

Miss M. DAVEY.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

WATER SUPPLIES. Five Parishes in the Eastern part are supplied from Mains, a good proportion of Owners in these Parishes have availed themselves of this service, but there are still a number of private wells chiefly shallow, providing drinking water supplies to cottages.

The Parish of Thorpe in the Western part with a population of over 7,000 has piped supplies entirely, part of the Parish of Plumstead has also a piped supply, the only other Parish which is partially provided by a piped supply is Brundall.

The large number of shallow wells throughout the District are always a cause of concern, owing to the danger of pollution, especially as there is no drainage system in operation in the majority of the Parishes.

There has been no complaints of shortage during the year.

The need of piped supplies is apparent, to prevent the possibility of contaminated water being consumed by many occupiers of working class dwellings.

Wholesome water bearing strata is situated at some considerable depth and in many cases is not an economical proposition to obtain, particularly where the supply would only serve a small number of cottages.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE. The need for adequate drainage in a number of the larger Parishes is urgent, only two Parishes are partially provided with drainage facilities, the greater part of the population disposes of waste liquids on gardens, many with limited areas for disposal.

There are some Parishes where properties are provided with Cesspool drainage, over 2,000 exist in one Parish, many hundreds of houses were built in the immediate pre-war years, in practically all cases, provisions were made for disposal of waste water and sewage into cesspools.

The Council's Cesspool Emptying Plant has been used extensively in clearing cesspools throughout the year, many serious nuisances from overflowing cesspools have been prevented by the use of this Plant, this service has been of the greatest value in safeguarding the health of the population.

Until proper drainage facilities are provided the construction of cesspools will continue, and an extension of the present cleansing service will become necessary, in fact the plant is unable to meet the present day demands at certain times of the year.

The drainage needs in the Broads area are most urgent, the Council are anxious to proceed with schemes that will eliminate all possibilities of pollution, it is hoped that some progress will be made as soon as it is possible.

SCAVENGING. The greatest difficulty has been experienced in maintaining public cleansing services owing to lack of labour.

Two Parishes have a refuse collection scheme, five have refuse and night soil collection schemes, and two have schemes for night soil collection only.

The extensions of public cleansing schemes to cover the greater part of the District is one that should receive the consideration of the Council, the present methods of disposal of refuse and night-soil in a number of Parishes are in many cases a source of danger to Public Health, particularly where deposits take place near shallow drinking water wells.

GENERAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.

The general standard of the health of the District has been maintained in spite of the movement of population throughout the year; the Council's Public Health Officers have contributed in no small manner to this by their prompt action and vigilance.

The Staff of the Public Health Department has been working at full pressure, and we feel we must again record our appreciation to Mr. Beckwith, the Senior Sanitary Inspector, and those under his control, for duties ably performed in these difficult times.

The overcrowding of many dwellings has given cause for concern, every effort has been made to provide alternative accommodation for those families living under such conditions. The reception of a large number of evacuees created a great deal of work but accommodation was provided in spite of the acute housing shortage.

The continued prevalence of Scabies has received the attention of the Council's Officers throughout the year. These conditions are difficult to control without proper notification, treatment is supplied to each case and disinfection of bedding and clothing carried out in necessitous cases.

Spasmodic outbreaks of Scarlet Fever of a mild type occurred in various parts of the District, which extended throughout the greater part of the year. Many of the cases were placed in the County Isolation Hospital and disinfection of premises carried out.

MILK AND DAIRIES. Great progress has been made in the raising of the standard of Milk Producers' methods and premises throughout the area.

A great many visits have been paid to Dairy Farms and advice given on the best means of producing a clean and wholesome milk.

Sampling for both cleanliness and the presence of Tubercle Bacilli was carried out at all producer's premises, and action taken where analyses proved faults in production or the presence of Tuberculosis.

The service has been a means of improving milk supplies and of detecting the presence of cattle suffering from Tuberculosis a most valuable contribution to safeguarding the health of the public.

HOUSING. Although efforts have been made to have defects remedied to a number of working class dwellings, the general condition of such dwellings continue to deteriorate, shortage of labour and materials have created many difficulties.

The great problem of bringing a large proportion of dwellings up to a satisfactory standard is one that calls for serious consideration. Many cottages need major repairs, many more are of such a low standard as to be incapable of being rendered fit for habitation at a reasonable expense.

A number of areas were scheduled for Clearance previous to the outbreak of War, these and other areas should be dealt with as early as possible, although there must be some delay, pending the provision of new housing accommodation.

The need for many more working class dwellings is one that must be met to provide the necessary accommodation for families inadequately housed and also for many service men's families who are at present living with parents.

A Survey and inspection to cover the whole District will place a great deal of work on the Public Health Department but it is one that must be undertaken if an accurate statement is to be made of housing conditions.

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION: The Council's Scheme for treating of children up to the age of 15 years has made further progress during the year under review; at the end of the year 34.8 per cent of children under 5 years of age and 99.83 per cent of children between 5 and 15 years of age had been immunised.

Of the few cases of Diphtheria notified none had been immunised.

Efforts are being continued to obtain a higher percentage of children under 5 years immunised.

Education, Medical and Nursing Services have been most helpful in stressing the need for protecting children against Diphtheria.

MEAT AND OTHER FOODS: Supervision of Food Depots and Shops have continued throughout the year. Examination of meat and other foods has entailed many visits to premises, a quantity of meat, tins of foodstuffs, in addition to a variety of other foodstuffs were examined, resulting in the condemnation of those affected with disease, or otherwise unwholesome.

The necessary co-operation with the Ministry of Food Salvage Officer in the disposal of condemned foodstuffs has been carried out.

The duties connected with the protection of the public food supply are of the greatest importance, and it is satisfactory to both the Council and their public health Officers that the protection of the health of the population of the District has been maintained by the efforts of those Officers engaged in this valuable public service.

GENERAL

During the year every assistance has been given to the Military Authorities in connection with drainage, scavenging, and water supplies, in fact a spirit of co-operation between the Civil and Military Authorities has been in evidence throughout the whole District.

The requisitioning of properties by the Military Authorities has called for re-housing certain families, accommodation, although very limited, has been found for displaced families.

We are, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servants,

W. ROYDEN

J. D. McKELVIE.

Medical Officers of Health.