

A report on the drainage of Hammersmith / By Mr. Lovick and Mr. Donaldson, Assistant Surveyors. March, 1849.

Contributors

Lovick, Thomas (Surveyor)
Donaldson, George (Surveyor)
London (England). Metropolitan Commission of Sewers.

Publication/Creation

[London] : Printed at the Court House ... By T. Ballard, [1849]

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/u3bnw9jy>

License and attribution

This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, without asking permission.



Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

Metropolitan Sewers.

A Report on the Drainage of Hammersmith.

In pursuance of the order of the Works' Committee of 5th March instant, "That Mr. Lovick and Mr. Donaldson report specially "on the drainage of Hammersmith with as little delay as possible."

WE entered upon the examination of the drainage of this district, directing our attention in the first place to those localities in which the condition of the drainage has long been a subject of complaint, and which has formed the subject of special representation to the Commissioners.

Commencing our inspection in the locality most prominent in this respect, Brook Green, we found that on the western side there was an open ditch, wide, stagnant, and with a large accumulation of foul deposit, receiving the drainage of most of the houses in its vicinity, and of a foul and pestilential ditch at the rear of several cottages in Slater's Buildings, running, in a covered sewer, across the main road, thence *open* taking a very circuitous course through market-gardens to its outfall in the Thames, near Burlington Gardens, polluting with its exhalations the atmosphere throughout its entire course.

Various blocks of houses at Brook Green drain into this ditch *by open ditches*. In these the foul deposit is on a level with the floors of the houses, the main ditch not affording a sufficient outfall for the discharge of the foul and fœtid matter which has largely accumulated and emits highly offensive emanations.

Proceeding more into the heart of Hammersmith, and nearer the southern boundary, as a further illustration of the nature of its drainage, is a foul open ditch having its origin from a covered drain in the main road near the Nag's Head public house; thence running westward past the Angel Inn, in a covered drain, thence turning from the main street, resuming its open and offensive condition, through the yards at the rear of the houses on the south-side of Little George Street, receiving in its course the privies on its banks attached to some eighteen or twenty houses.

The ditch *throughout* is in an excessively filthy condition; but in this portion there is a much larger accumulation of filth, and a proportionate increase of the noxious efflu-
vium.

The tidal water flows up this ditch, driving before it the foul accumulations; these are left by the receding tide in the upper part nearest the houses, and in the covered drain in the main road, exposing fresh surfaces of filth to active decomposition.

The inhabitants state that at these periods the smells are of the most sickening description, rendering their houses unfit to live in.

During the periods of the tidal flow the poor people residing on the banks of the ditch take the water from it for washing and other domestic uses; the supply of water for household purposes being of that scanty and insufficient nature as to compel their resort to this practice.

Taking the drainage nearer the western boundary, we find near Shepherd's Bush, on the north of the Uxbridge Road, a large number of cottages of various classes situate some in the rear, some in the front of a filthy open ditch, into which they discharge their drainage. There does not appear to be the slightest *run* of water through it. This ditch, intended originally for the drainage of the land, has from its diversion to the purposes of house-drainage become filled with accumulations of so noxious and pestilential a character as to have been long considered by the local authorities a great public nuisance. It appears that the right to this ditch has been a source of contention between the parochial authorities and the landowners.

At another portion of this ditch some time since deepened and enlarged, near several buildings, the foul deposit has accumulated to a depth of *three* feet; it has not the slightest quantity of water on its surface, and is fully exposed to atmospheric influences; the whole mass is in a state of active decomposition emitting highly offensive emanations.

At Shepherd's Bush, at the back of several small cottages in which cholera and typhus are now prevailing, is a continuation, equally offensive, of this ditch doubtless from its deleterious emissions increasing the malignity of these diseases, if not the source of their generation.

A little to the westward of these cottages, in the rear of the Adelaide, a roadside public-house, we found some men removing the foul deposit, apparently the accumulation of years, from an open ditch. There was an immense quantity cast upon the surface and remaining in the ditch. Our attention was drawn to this spot whilst examining the cottages, the seat of cholera and typhus, by the intense and sickening character of the emanations.

These are a type of the *present* arrangements for the drainage of this large and populous district; many others of a similar character might be particularised, if necessary, for the elucidation of the condition of particular localities, but we fear to trespass too much upon the time of the Commissioners with what must necessarily be in the nature of a repetition of our previous statement.

In addition to the evils resulting from the decomposing accumulations in these ditches, great loss and injury has been caused in their vicinity by the flooding of the lands, their choked condition forming an impediment to the free discharge of the surface waters,

The neighbourhood to the north, by Shepherd's Bush and Brook Green, is excessively wet and swampy from the large number of stagnant ponds, and low and marshy grounds and osier beds, originally formed by excavations for brick earth.

Rheumatic affections, agues, and fevers, the result no doubt of the miasma from these places, prevail in the locality.

Several brooks draining the high lands on the north run through this district; as they approach the more populated portions, they become polluted with the drainage from the houses.

For a considerable distance from their outfalls, northward of the Thames, in the most densely inhabited portions, they are subject to the influence of the tidal waters. At high tides, the roads and grounds in their vicinity are flooded; and, concurrently with heavy falls of rain, much damage is occasioned and the neighbourhood largely exposed to baneful miasmatic influences.

An entire re-arrangement of the drainage of this district is essential; but in the absence of any general survey, the consideration of permanent works must stand in abeyance. Measures of temporary relief, in the cleansing of the ditches, may however to a great extent be adopted, and these the condition of the district imperatively demands. We beg to submit such recommendations for the temporary relief of this district, as we conceive can, under present circumstances, be carried into effect, as follows:—

First.—That as it appears that no part of the Hamlet of Hammersmith has hitherto been assessed to the Sewers' Rate; and as remedial drainage measures are of vital importance for the preservation of the public health: we recommend that the Hamlet of Hammersmith, and the Parish of Fulham, and all areas lying between these Parishes and the boundary of the Counter's Creek District, including the areas drained by the several water courses passing within and through them, be immediately declared a sewerage district to be entitled "The Hammersmith District," and that it be rated to the Sewers.

Secondly.—We further recommend that for the execution of such works as may upon the declaration of this district be ordered, a sum of £3,000 be raised upon the credit of the rates.

(Signed)

THOMAS LOVICK,
G. DONALDSON.

12th March, 1849.

Metropolitan Sewers.

A REPORT

ON THE

DRAINAGE

OF

HAMMERSMITH

By MR. LOVICK AND MR. DONALD
ASSISTANT SURVEYORS.

March, 1849.