

Extracts from a
Report to the General Board of Health on a Preliminary Inquiry into
the Sewerage, Drainage, and Supply of Water, and the Sanitary
Condition of the Inhabitants of the Town of Worthing

By Edward Cresy, Superintending Inspector, 1850

The Parade, Beach, and Sands ...have been most injuriously affected by the long and continued practice of discharging all the sewerage of the town along the nearly level sands, which characterize the shore for a distance of 13 or 14 miles, or from Shoreham to Littlehampton. ...The visitors who promenade upon them complain of the disagreeable odour ... and the prevailing winds being from the south and south-west, these odours are conveyed into the houses on the shore, [and] up all the drains.

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...Roads are occasionally repaired by the occupiers of land and houses which make use of them; but several which pass through the most densely-peopled part of the town are so neglected that at times they are quite impassable.

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The cottages which have been run up for the poor are in general constructed of the worst materials. Bricks of a soft and porous nature, and badly-burnt lime with which the mortar is formed; often the footings of the walls rest on the surface of the soil, and where trenches have been dug for their reception no preparation whatever made to drain off the water which invariably finds its way into them.

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Sickness has increased to a very considerable extent; for that in 1832 there were only 560 cases attended and entered by the parish surgeon ... and in 1849, upwards of 1,000.

... It is also to be remarked, that wherever the physical and moral condition of the inhabitants appeared to be the lowest, - where the houses were most crowded together, - where there was little or no current for the air to pass freely, - where dirt prevailed and drainage was altogether neglected, the mortality always exceeded that of more cleanly districts, and that the number of births were increased.

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The better class of houses which have water-closets are constantly needing an artificer of some sort or the other, to keep the pipes and drains in working order; and do all they can, it is perfectly impracticable, under the present system of drainage, to maintain within the house a pure and wholesome atmosphere.

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