

# How Leeds was like during the Victorian times



Life in Leeds was ghastly; many sources tell me this from pictures, to rhymes, reports and drawings Leeds was a well polluted and unhygienic place, Leeds also did not have any proper sewage system causing diseases to spread killing innocent civilians. First pictures of Leeds Steel works which was taken in 1864 show me that factories created poisonous gases that normal everyday public inhaled. My first source also shows that from a distant view the air itself was murky and unclear. Source 1:

As I mentioned before there are many sketches by anonymous artists who express their art from what they can see around their environment. This gives me more evidence that Leeds was very dirty and polluted. Source 2: Rhymes and songs were created by the people (most probably the children) who inhabited Leeds at the time one of the most famous rhymes were: "The Aire below is doubly dyed and damned; The air above with lurid smoke is crammed ; The one flows streaming foul as Charon's Styx, Its poisonous vapour in the other mix".

What it is really translating is the water below (the river Aire) is coloured in an unnatural state and it is supposedly damned, the air above is crammed with toxic smoke, its poisonous vapours reaching us. Therefore it was commonly known that the Leeds was contaminated and filled with pollution. In 1842 Edwin Chadwick, a politician who was trying to make improvements and reforms to the conditions of towns and cities conducted an investigation into ' Sanitary conditions of the labouring population.

Edwin used local investigators to provide evidence of urban public health conditions. A doctor, Robert Baker, provided information about the hygiene and how it was affecting Leeds. " Of the 586 streets of Leeds, 68

only are paved by the town, ie, by the local authorities; the remainder are either paved by the owners or are partly paved, or are totally unpaved, with the surfaces broken in every direction, and ashes and filth of every description accumulated upon many of them... of the 68 streets... 9 are not sewered at all, and ten only partly so; nay it is only within the three or four years past that a sewer has been completed" . This statement tells me that there were 586 streets in Leeds and only 68 were filled with pavements. Filth and Ash filled every direction; in those 68 pampered streets 19 of them did not have a sewage system at all! Only 10 streets had them; however the sewage system has only been completed 3 or 4 years ago. This source is reliable because as a local doctor Robert Baker had experienced the severe horrific cholera outbreak of 1832.

By 1838 as a town councillor, had contributed to a statistical survey of the town and went on to become a factory inspector by 1858. Cholera and other diseases broke out because of the poor sewer system when civilians had to 'relieve themselves' half of their waste was absorbed by the ground and was then entered the stream which people drank from! While the other half just flowed through the streets waiting to infect civilians with putrid bacteria and filth .

Public people also used to wash and bath in the river Aire causing its natural water colour to die out and for it to be swarmed with dirt and bacteria. For my conclusion I still stand by my decision that Leeds during the Victorian times was a filthy, disgusting place. Its water was not safe to drink and was revolting, although the simple workmen who build hundreds of factories

hoping that it would not hurt the ozone layer still poisoned the air that the poor Victorian people breathed and lived in.