

Baker Street *Elementary*

PRESENTS
"THE LIFE AND TIMES IN VICTORIAN LONDON"



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THE LIFE AND TIMES IN VICTORIAN LONDON
131 - FLUSHING OUT THE TRUTH - SEPTEMBER, 2023



**WELCOME TO TOPIC NUMBER # 131... TODAY WE
WILL BE LOOKING AT THE DEVELOPMENT OF
PLUMBING DURING THE VICTORIAN PERIOD.**



**IN 'A SCANDAL IN BOHEMIA,' YOU GIVE ME A
PLUMBER'S SMOKE ROCKET TO TOSS INTO IRENE
ADLER'S HOME AS A MEANS OF FLUSHING OUT
THE SECRET HIDING PLACE OF AN
INCRIMINATING PHOTO.**



WHILE THE WORD 'ROCKET' DENOTES A VERY DIFFERENT MEANING TODAY (SOMETHING POINTED TO THE HEAVENS), IT HAS A MUCH OLDER CONNOTATION.



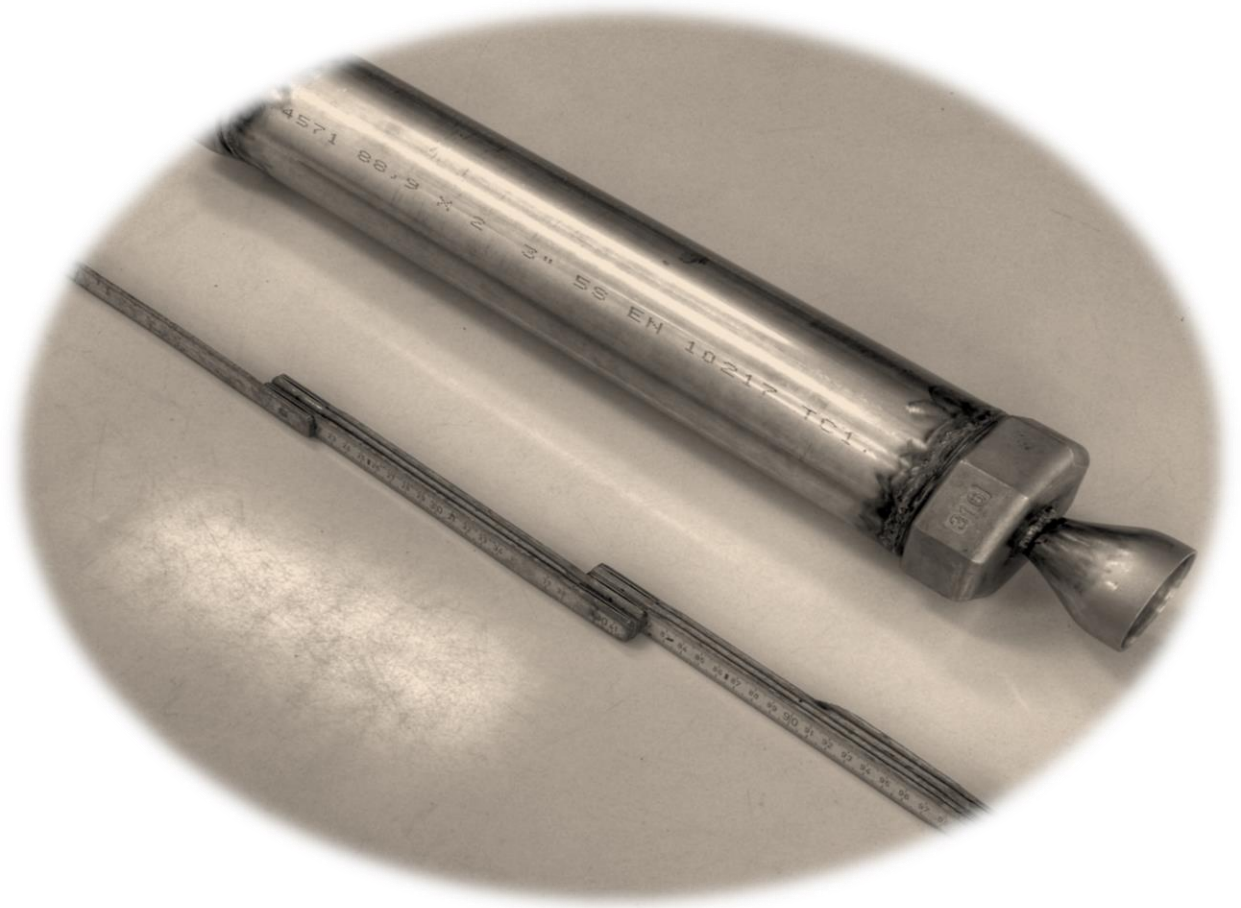
THE ITALIAN WORD *ROCCA* REFERRED TO THE DEVICE THAT HELD THE WOOL IN LOOMS. THE DIMINUTIVE OF THE WORD (*ROCCHETTE*) REFERRED TO CYLINDRICAL DEVICES AND ENTERED THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN THE 1600s.



THE GADGET YOU PROVIDED ME WOULD HAVE BEEN
TUBE-SHAPED AND PLACED BY A PLUMBER INTO A
PIPE SYSTEM TO IDENTIFY LEAKS... SEPARATING
CLEAN WATER FROM WASTEWATER IN A BUILDING'S
INTERIOR PLUMBING SERVED A VERY IMPORTANT
MEANS OF AVOIDING CROSS-CONTAMINATION.



**WHILE THIS MAY SEEM A RATHER PRIMITIVE
APPROACH TO IDENTIFY PROBLEMS, THESE ITEMS
ARE STILL AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE TODAY AT
HARDWARE STORES.**



INDOOR PLUMBING WAS STILL A RATHER NEW ADDITION TO MANY PARTS OF LONDON IN THE 1800s, AND MITIGATING LEAKS ADDRESSED THE NEED TO PRESERVE WATER AND ENSURE THE PUBLIC'S HEALTH.





WHILE UPGRADES TO THE SYSTEM HAVE BEEN MADE, THE ORIGINAL VICTORIAN INFRASTRUCTURE REMAINS AT THE HEART OF MANY HOMES AND BUSINESSES.



**IN 1613, THE WEALTHIEST HOMES IN LONDON
RECEIVED FRESH WATER FROM THE RIVER LEA
THROUGH A NETWORK OF WOODEN PIPES...
HOLLOWED-OUT ELM TREE TRUNKS... THAT WERE
CONNECTED TO PRIVATE CISTERNS BY LEAD PIPES.**



THOSE NOT ATTACHED TO THIS SERVICE WOULD
PAY FOR THEIR CISTERNS TO BE FILLED WITH
WATER DELIVERED BY WATERMEN OR A PUMP FROM
A PRIVATE WELL.



**THE LESS FORTUNATE USED PUBLIC PUMPS AND
CARRIED THE WATER BACK TO THEIR HOMES IN
BUCKETS... MOST DWELLINGS, HOWEVER, HAD PIPED
WATER BY 1885.**



UNFORTUNATELY, THOSE WHO DID NOT RECEIVE WATER FROM SOURCES LIKE THE RIVER LEA OFTEN RECEIVED THEIR WATER FROM THE SAME PLACES AS WHERE THE WASTEWATER WAS DUMPED.



DUE TO AN INADEQUATE SEWER SYSTEM, WASTEWATER MIGHT BE PIPED FROM A BUILDING TO A CESSPOOL OR LOCAL BODY OF WATER (SUCH AS THE THAMES RIVER)... OTHER PRACTICES INCLUDED THROWING IT ONTO A MIDDEN HEAP NEAR THE BACK DOOR OR SIMPLY THROWN INTO THE STREET.



IN 1854, JOHN SNOW, A PHYSICIAN CONSIDERED TO BE THE FATHER OF PUBLIC HEALTH, TRACED A CHOLERA OUTBREAK TO A PUBLIC PUMP ON BROAD STREET AND ITS CONTAMINATED WATER SUPPLY.

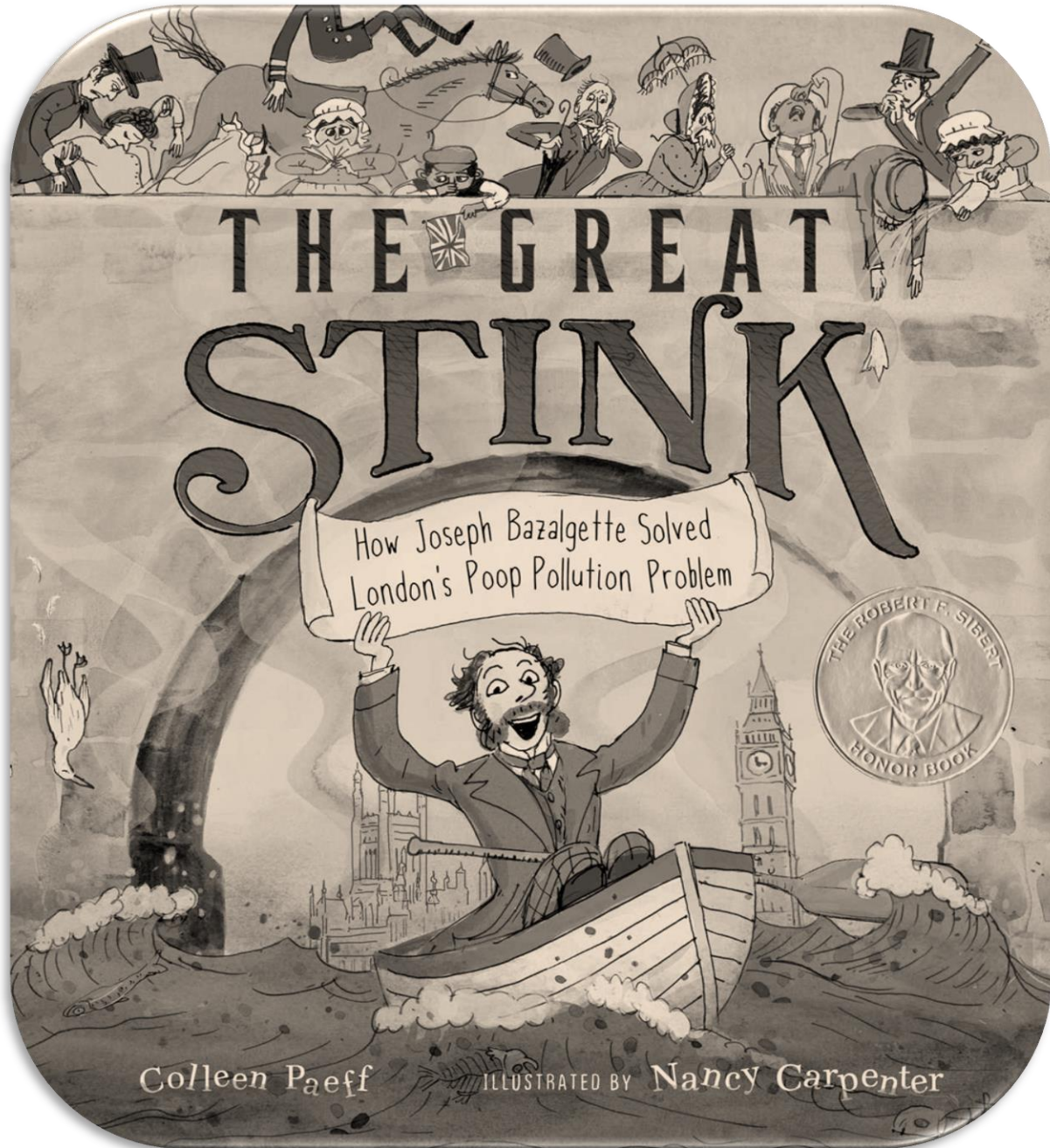


ONCE THE HANDLE WAS REMOVED FROM THE
PUMP, THE NUMBER OF NEW ILLNESSES
DROPPED TO ZERO.



THE DEVELOPMENT OF LONDON'S SEWER SYSTEM OCCURRED IN RESPONSE TO THIS AND OTHER EPIDEMICS IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY.

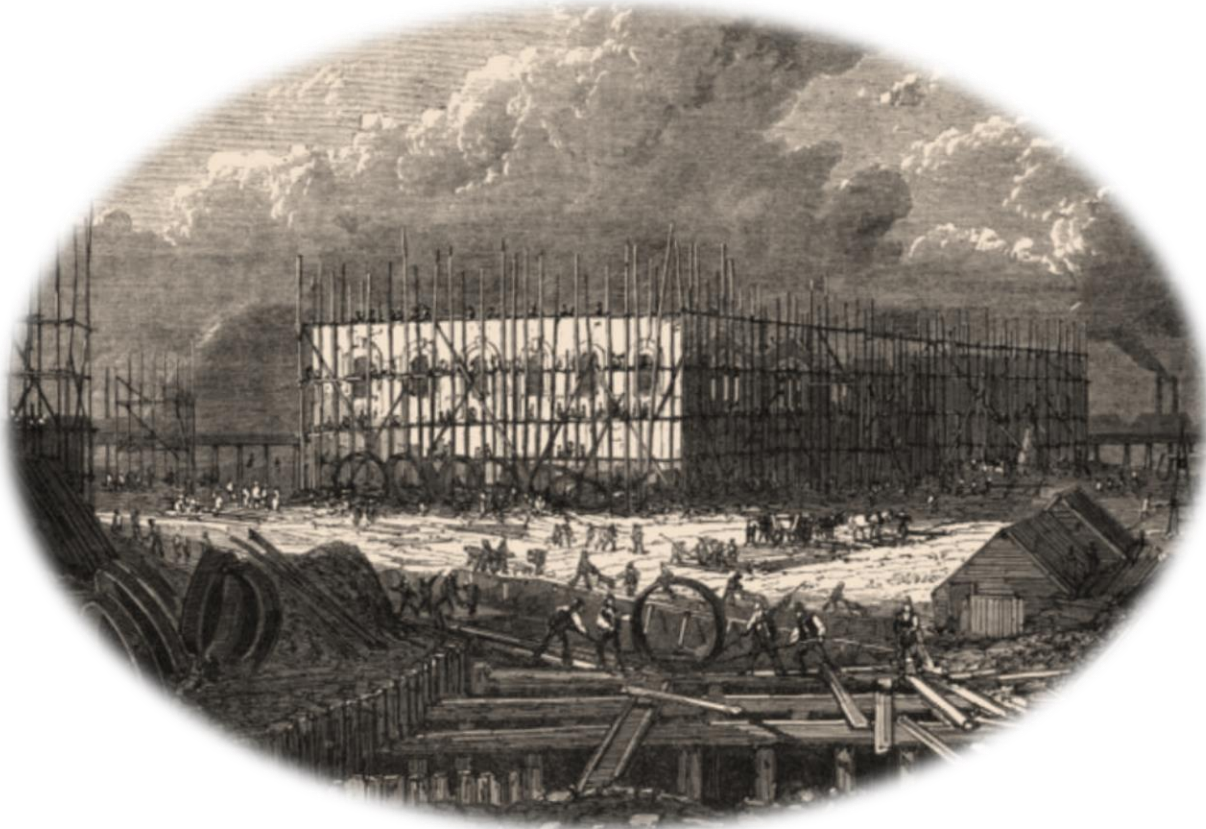




THE LEADING THEORY OF THE TIME SUGGESTED MIASMA (FOUL, DISEASED AIR) CAUSED THE OUTBREAKS, INCLUDING 'THE GREAT STINK' OF 1858 THAT DISRUPTED PARLIAMENT.



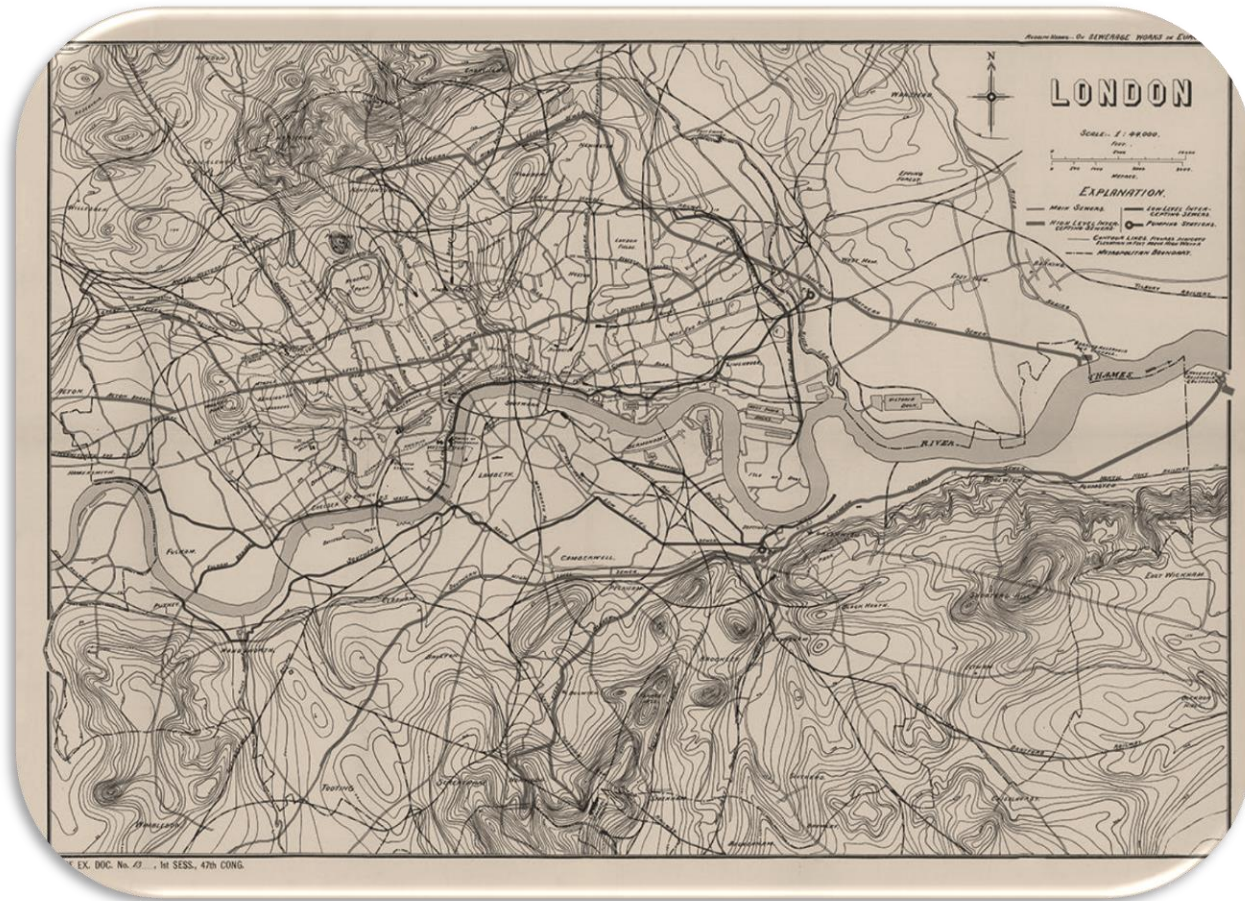
FOLLOWING THIS EVENT, PARLIAMENT FUNDED A PROJECT THROUGH THE METROPOLITAN BOARD OF WORKS TO CREATE A SEWER SYSTEM..



THE NEXT TWELVE YEARS SAW MORE THAN 80 MILES OF BRICK-LINED SEWER TUNNELS, PUMPING STATIONS, AND EMBANKMENT CHANGES ALONG THE THAMES TO PIPE THE WASTEWATER FARTHER FROM THE CITY.



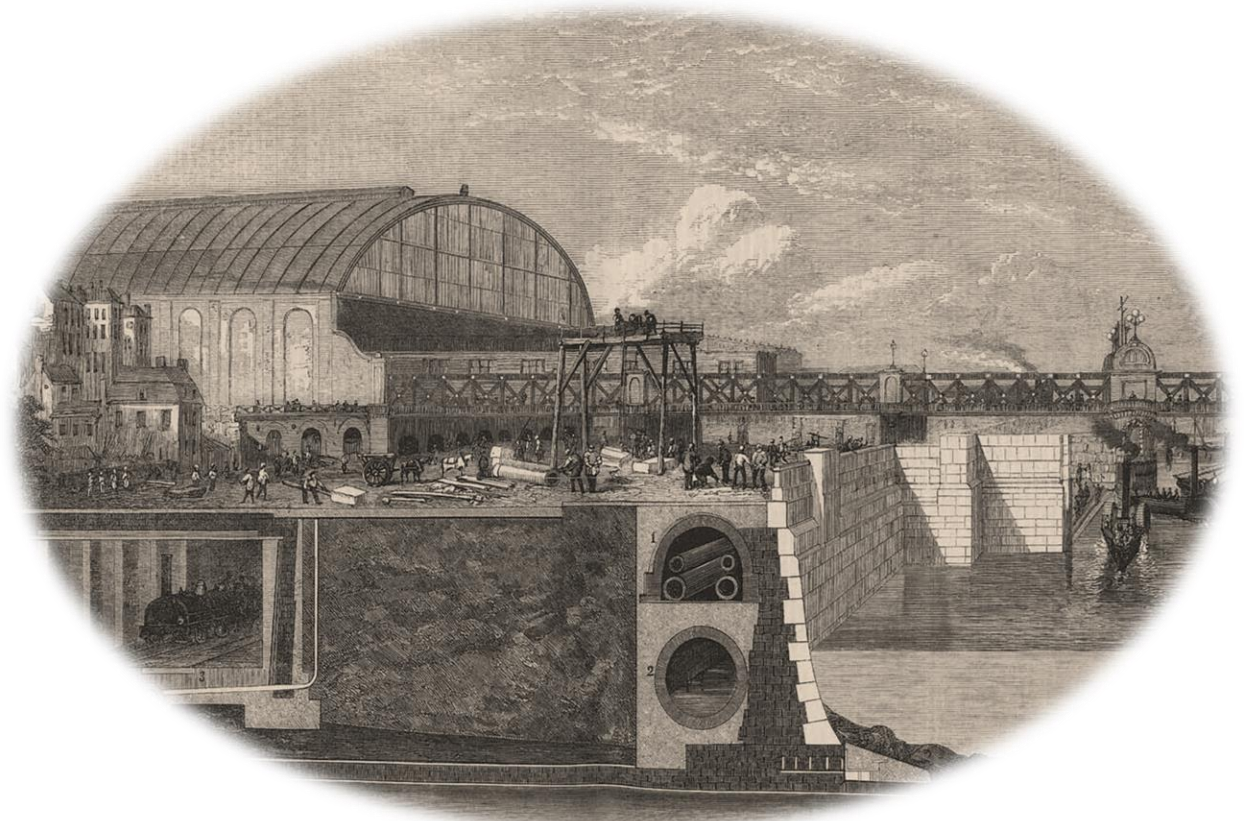
AN 1882 MAP OF THE LONDON SEWER SYSTEM SHOWS BAKER STREET WAS CONNECTED BY THAT TIME, AND MIGHT HAVE SPORTED A DEVICE SIMILAR TO THAT IN THE SHERLOCK HOLMES MUSEUM.



THIS ACT INCLUDED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DWELLINGS TO HAVE 'FIXED SANITARY ARRANGEMENTS,' MAKING IT A MODEL FOR SUCH EFFORTS ELSEWHERE.



**IT ALSO PLACED RESPONSIBILITY ON THE GOVERNMENT,
DOWN TO THE LOCAL LEVEL, FOR HAVING A ROLE IN ITS
POPULATION'S HEALTH BY REQUIRING THE DEVELOPMENT
OF LOCAL BOARDS OF HEALTH TO OVERSEE THEIR
POPULATION'S IMPROVEMENT.**





AS BUILDINGS BECAME FITTED WITH BOTH CLEAN WATER AS WELL AS WASTEWATER DISPOSAL, DEVICES SUCH AS THE PLUMBER'S SMOKE ROCKET HELPED TO ENSURE A SAFE WATER SUPPLY FOR RESIDENTS BY ELIMINATING CROSS-CONTAMINATION.





I, HOWEVER DEMONSTRATED THE GADGET
HAD USES FOR SMOKING OUT OTHER
SECRETS AS WELL.



SO, WE HAVE COMPLETED TOPIC # 131 IN OUR SERIES...

*IN TOPIC # 132, WE WILL BE LOOKING AT THE KU KUX KLAN, AS WAS
DEALT WITH IN ONE OF OUR STORIES.*



ORIGINAL SOURCE MATERIAL FOR FOR THIS TOPIC:

- [HTTPS://BLOG.COLLINSDICTIONARY.COM/LANGUAGE-LOVERS/WE-TAKE-A-LOOK-AT-THE-ETYMOLOGY-BEHIND-THE-WORD-ROCKET-AND-ITS-ITALIAN-ORIGINS/](https://blog.collinsdictionary.com/language-lovers/we-take-a-look-at-the-etymology-behind-the-word-rocket-and-its-italian-origins/)
- [HTTP://S164303.BLOGSPOT.COM/2014/05/PLUMBERS-SMOKE-ROCKET.HTML](http://s164303.blogspot.com/2014/05/plumbers-smoke-rocket.html)
- [HTTPS://WWW.MUSEUMOFTHEHOME.ORG.UK/EXPLORE/STORIES-OF-HOME/A-BRIEF-HISTORY-OF-RUNNING-WATER/](https://www.museumofthehome.org.uk/explore/stories-of-home/a-brief-history-of-running-water/)
- SALLY MITCHELL, DAILY LIFE IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND, WEATPORT, CT: THE GREENWOOD PRESS, 1996
- SALLY MITCHELL (ED.), VICTORIAN ENGLAND: AN ENCYCLOPEDIA, NEW YORK: GARLAND PUBLISHING, 1988
- [HTTPS://WWW.NCBI.NLM.NIH.GOV/PMC/ARTICLES/PMC7150208/](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7150208/)
- [HTTPS://EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG/WIKI/LONDON_SEWER_SYSTEM](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_sewer_system)
- [HTTPS://WWW.NCBI.NLM.NIH.GOV/PMC/ARTICLES/PMC1113799/](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1113799/)



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"THE LIFE AND TIMES IN VICTORIAN LONDON"

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