

### 137. AIR POLLUTION IN SOUTHWARK, 1307

*Air pollution became a problem in the bigger cities, particularly in industrial suburbs such as Southwark, which lay on the south bank of the Thames across from the city of London. Sea-coal is mineral coal dug from the earth, as opposed to charcoal, which is made from wood. Both sources of fuel emit strong odors and smoke when burned.*

Source: from *Calendar of the Close Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office. Edward I. vol. V. 1302-1307* (London: H.M.S.O., 1908), p. 537.

[To the sheriff] of Surrey. Order to cause proclamation to be made in the town of Southwark that all who wish to use kilns in that town or its confines, shall make their kilns of brushwood or charcoal in the usual way, and shall not use from now on in any way sea-coal, under pain of heavy forfeiture, and the sheriff shall cause this order to be observed inviolably. The king has learned from the complaint of prelates and magnates of his realm, who frequently come to London for the benefit of the commonwealth by his order, and from the complaint of his citizens and all his people dwelling there and in Southwark that the workmen in that city and town now burn [fires] and construct them of sea-coal instead of brushwood or charcoal, from the use of which sea-coal an intolerable smell diffuses itself throughout the neighboring places and the air is greatly infected, to the annoyance of the magnates, citizens and others there dwelling and to the injury of their bodily health.

The like [is issued] to the mayor and sheriffs of London.

*Questions: Whom did the proclamation target as responsible for the air pollution? Who appeared to have initiated the complaints?*

### 138. REGULATIONS FOR LONDON'S STREETS, 1297

*Large cities such as London passed numerous ordinances to regulate the use and appearance of city streets. The abuses targeted by such proclamations give us a good idea of the everyday activities occurring in the streets of medieval towns.*

Source: trans. H.T. Riley, *Memorials of London and London Life in the XIIIth, XIVth and XVth Centuries* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1868), pp. 34-35, revised.

On ... [14 September] in the 25th year of the reign of King Edward, the following proclamation was ordered by Sir John Bretun, warden, and the aldermen, for maintaining the peacé of our lord the king.

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On behalf of the king and his son and their council, the warden and the aldermen ordain that no person should dare to be found walking through the streets after curfew rung at St. Martin's le Grand, and that every one, under the penalty that is usually awarded, should come when he is summoned to the watch, as well at the city gates as in the streets, armed and arrayed as he ought to be.

And that every one shall keep clean the front of his tenement, so that the streets are delivered from all incumbrances before Friday next at Vespers [in the evening], and where incumbrances are found after this time, let the owner be amerced [fined]  $\frac{1}{2}$  mark.

And that the stands placed in the streets for the sale of wares should be removed immediately, before Vespers.

And that on Sunday every alderman in his own ward should take such stands as can be found in the streets, and do what he wants with them. And if after that time any stand is found in the streets, the warden should do what he wants with them.

And that no taverner or brewster should keep the door open after curfew rung as mentioned above, and that whoever is convicted of this should be amerced  $\frac{1}{2}$  mark, which should be spent on repairing the walls and the gates of the city.

And that fullers' implements shall be immediately removed [from the streets] before Vespers.

And that pentices [a sloping roof or ledge that projects outwards over the edge of the building wall] which are too low shall be immediately pulled down, so that persons may ride on chargers [large war horses] beneath them.

And also that pig-sties that are in the streets should be speedily removed, and that no swine should be found in the streets, on pain of forfeiting them, in aid of making the walls and gates.

*Questions: What problems is the proclamation trying to address? What do the regulations tell us about what citizens encountered as they walked the streets of London?*

### 139. GARBAGE REMOVAL IN ENGLISH TOWNS, 1385

*This national statute attempts to solve the age-old problem of how to dispose of town garbage.*

Source: trans. G.G. Coulton, *Social Life in Britain from the Conquest to the Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1918), pp. 330–31, revised.

So much dung and filth of garbage, as well as entrails of slaughtered beasts, and other corruptions are cast and put into ditches, rivers and other waters and also in many other places within and around cities, boroughs, and towns of the realm and

their suburbs, that the air there is greatly corrupt and infected, and many maladies and other intolerable diseases do daily happen to the inhabitants as well as to those dwelling, visiting and traveling to the cities ... to the great annoyance, damage and peril of the inhabitants, dwellers, visitors, and travelers. It is thus agreed and assented that proclamation be made in the city of London as well as in other cities, boroughs, and towns through the realm of England, where it shall be needed, within as well as without franchises, that all who cast and lay all such annoyances, dung, garbage, entrails, and other ordure in ditches, rivers, waters, and other places, should make sure they are completely removed, avoided, and carried away between this and the next feast of St. Michael [29 September] after this Parliament, upon pain of losing and forfeiting £20 to the lord king.

*Questions: Where did the garbage come from, where did people dump it, and how did the authorities propose to remove it?*

#### 140. THE WATER SUPPLY OF DUBLIN

*Access to clean water for drinking and cleaning was a high priority in medieval towns, which depended on wells and fresh-water streams and springs for drinking water. As towns became larger and more spread out, however, a patchwork of pipes and underground conduits connecting individual houses and whole neighborhoods to the main sources of water became more common. These extracts for Dublin show how these underground water systems were built up over time, as well as the combination of private and public funding used to construct them.*

Source: trans. J.T. Gilbert, *Calendar of Ancient Records of Dublin in the Possession of the Municipal Corporation of that City* (Dublin: Joseph Dollard, Wellington-Quay; London: Bernard Quaritch, 1889), pp. 109, 114, 119, revised.

*Transfer of a grant of access to the water supply, 1288*

The mayor and commonalty granted recently to Sir Richard of Exeter, knight, a small supply of the city water through a pipe of the diameter of a goose-quill. His son and heir, Richard, transferred that grant to Henry le Mareschal, their well-beloved fellow-citizen. The mayor and commonalty confirm this transfer to Henry, on his petition, and especially on account of its usefulness to the neighborhood. The water is to be taken from the city pipe towards the corner which extends to Kilholmok Street, and to be brought at Henry's own cost to his house near the church of the Holy Trinity. It is agreed that one portion of that water may be taken from the pitcher of Henry for the use of the neighbors and others, reserving to him the pipe of the above-named diameter. For the grant of the water

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to him and his heirs, he and they are to present annually to the mayor a chaplet of roses on the festival of St. John the Baptist [24 June].

### *Grant of overflow water in exchange for maintaining a part of the water conduit, 1329*

The mayor and commonalty grant to William le Mareschal, their fellow-citizen, a plot of ground, and appurtenances, between the wall of the abbey of St. Thomas the Martyr and the curtilages [large yards] of divers citizens in the street of St. Thomas. The ground extends in length from the Abbey gate so far as the city cistern of the water-course, towards the west, and from there to the place where the water-course crosses, and, in breadth, between the ground of Robert Rowe, from the north, and the grounds of the canons of the same abbey, from the south, and, in length, so far as the small cross which stands in the raised way towards Kylmaynan, together with the fosse [ditch] towards the north near the gate at the Barrs. Permission is given to Le Mareschal to conduct and discharge at his will the overflow water through the fosse. He is to hold the ground by service of well and efficiently conducting and sustaining at his cost and labor the common city water-course from the last place at which water is brought towards the city so far as the city cistern, which is near the above-named abbey. The mayor and commonalty reserve the right of distraint [confiscation] and re-occupation, in event of temporary or continuous non-performance of the stipulated service.

### *Grant to access a cistern, 1329*

The mayor, bailiffs and commonalty grant to Nicholas Fastolf and Cecilia, his wife, a reasonable supply of water from the cistern of Master Walter de Istelep, in the parish of St. Nicholas, so far as the tenement of Fastolf, in the same parish, through the middle of Rochelistrete. The pipe, in the narrowest part of its head, is to be of the width of a goose-quill. The annual rent is 1 penny. Nicholas and Cecilia are permitted to have water from the cistern in all their tenements in the parish through the pipe, with liberty to open the street for laying it there, and to repair and improve the conduit as often as necessary, provided that it be speedily done, and that they repair the street and sufficiently pave it at their own cost.

*Questions: What were the main physical components of the Dublin water system? What type of responsibility for building, maintenance, and access did private citizens have as opposed to the town corporation or other institutions?*