

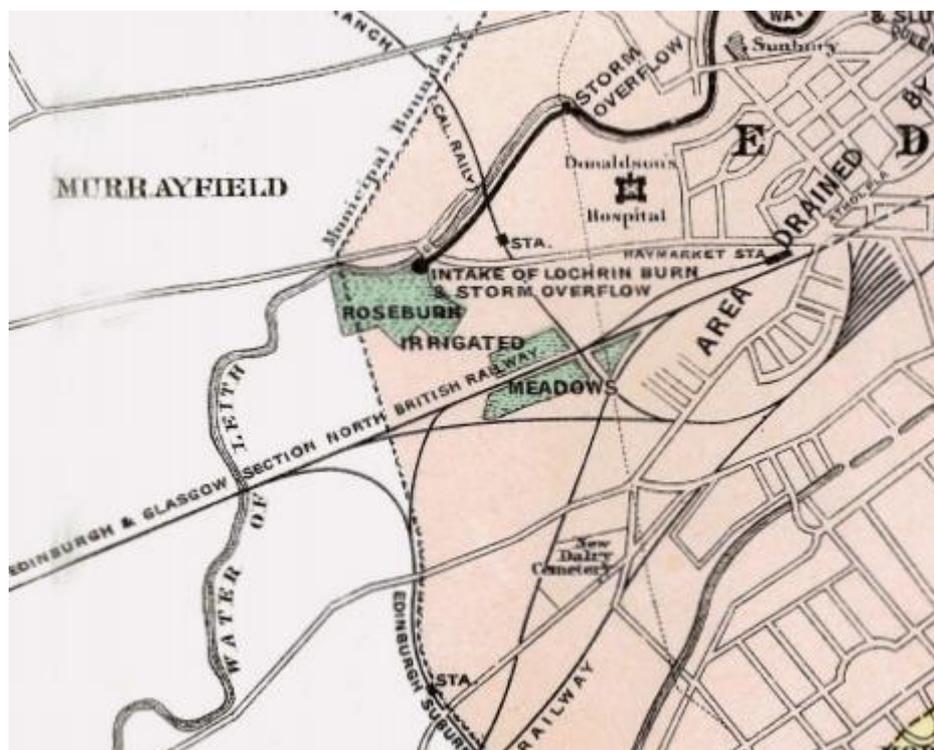
Irrigated Meadows and Sewage

Irrigated meadows were a form of sewage farm. Sewage drained onto an area, and was managed and distributed by a series of ditches. There grass was grown and sold to dairy farmers and cow keepers, who, before refrigeration, supplied cities with milk from small local herds. There might be four or five crops a year. These farms could be a good investment for after the meadows were laid out, maintenance and management were small, and poor lands were improved in fertility.

The sewage was not purified by this method and the effluent could flow straight into a river. These meadows also tended to lower the value of land for building purposes in the immediate vicinity because of the smell.

250 acres in the Roseburn area were laid out in this manner. Sewage flowed down from Lochrin, and in 1791 [Russell of Roseburn](#) brought an [action](#) against the Haig distillery in Lochrin for its distilling processes which had the effect of flushing an overabundance of sewage down to his meadows. His action was upheld.

By the 1890s the Roseburn meadows had been reduced to 33 acres. The Lochrin outfall sewer passed in an open stream, the sewage drawn off and distributed over the ground. The area produced between four and five crops each season, the rental being between £20 and £30 per acre.



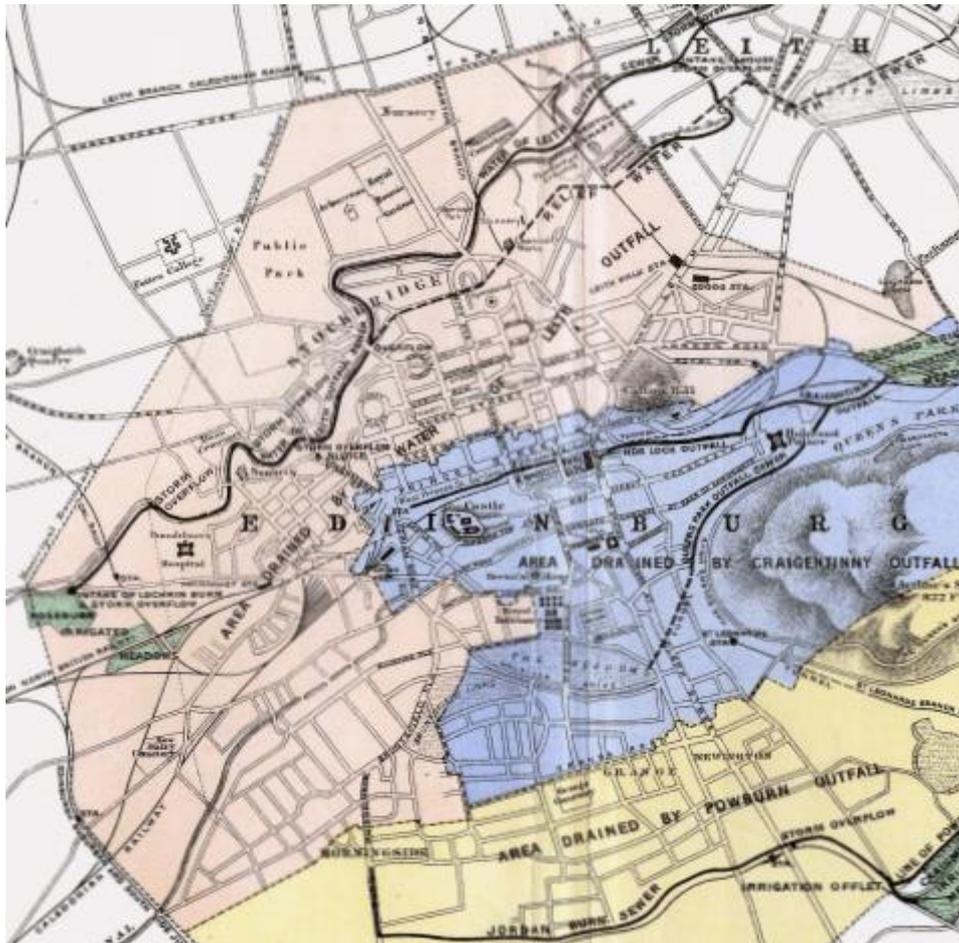
Detail of map showing irrigated meadows in Roseburn

Drainage

The Water of Leith was the main drainage area for the northern district of Edinburgh.

Until the year 1863 the whole area drained into the river, which consequently became so polluted that frequent complaints were made of its unsanitary condition. It was improved when sewage was piped to carry to the middle of the stream to improve the flow, instead of gathering by banks and in pools. An intercepting sewer was begun in 1864 and finished in 1867, which ultimately meant a

closed sewer discharging into the Forth at Leith. The Lochrin sewer was covered. By the 1890s a larger sewer was constructed to take the sewage down the path of the Water of Leith.



Drainage map of Edinburgh. The pink area is the catchment area for the Water of Leith

Sources:-

“The Main Drainage and Sewage-Disposal of Edinburgh” By William Fairley Assoc. M. Inst. C.E. (1895)