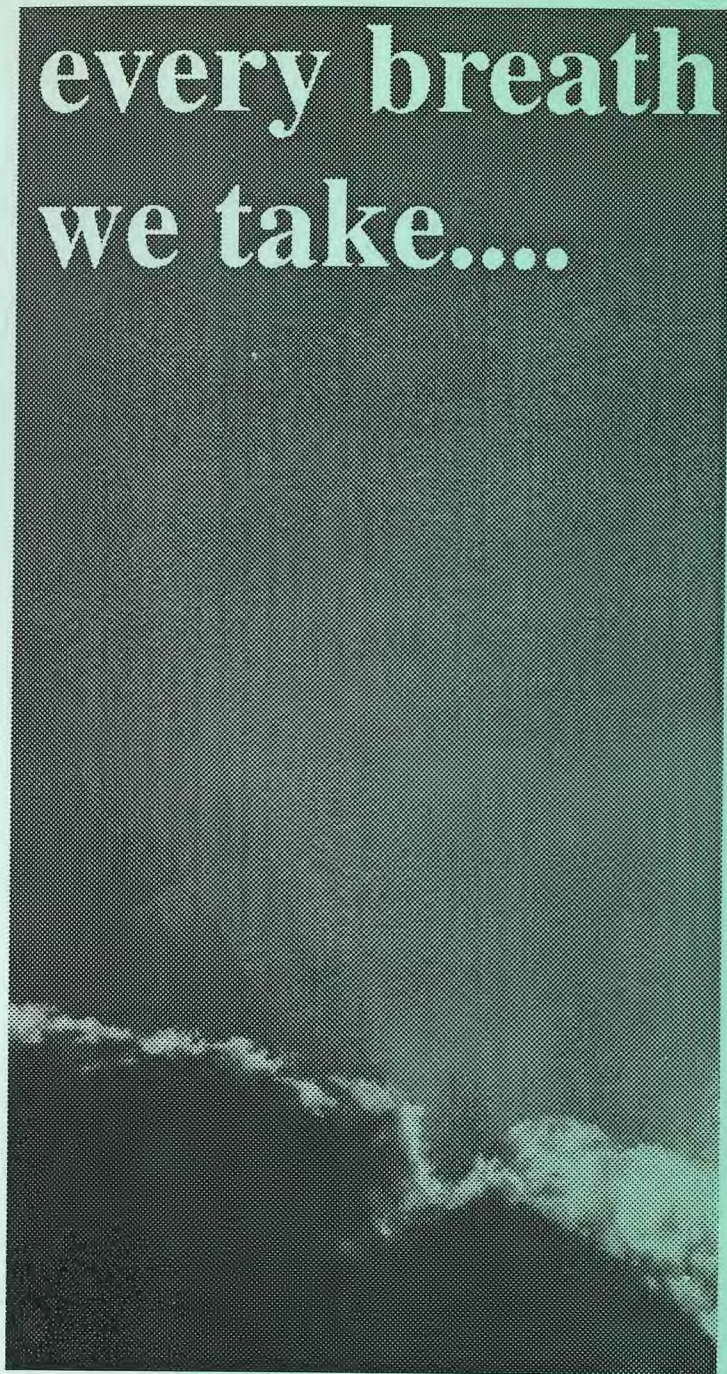


every breath
we take....



Air Pollution in Southwark 1950-1992

pollution trends



Southwark
Council



*environmental
protection
group*



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The nature of this report is such that it relies upon the work of many officers, past and present, in particular those responsible for the collection of data. Although the report has just one author, the content therefore represents the work of many and accordingly I freely acknowledge the contributions made by my colleagues.

Graham P. Love BSc MSc
Environmental Health Officer

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PREFACE

I am pleased to introduce the first Pollution Trends Report for the London Borough of Southwark. This Council has a long standing priorities programme which includes specific actions and targets for improving our environment and making the Borough cleaner, greener and safer. These are aimed at making **Southwark a better place to live**. The improvement of our environment in general and the control of pollution in particular are central to a number of initiatives implemented to meet this aim.

In 1994, during National Environment Week, we launched our Environmental Information Pack which confirmed our commitment to the environment. Ahead we have the challenge of implementing Local Agenda 21, the result of the Rio summit of June 1992, to promote sustainable development and broader environmental concern.

We shall continue to promote public transport, energy conservation and recycling all of which will improve air quality in our Borough. To this end we are integrating action for the environment with other economic, educational, planning and leisure initiatives to regenerate the Borough. This will take time and requires collaboration and partnerships with the community.

Information about our environment is essential to this process. This report is therefore a key first step in the provision of information which will influence future action.

Councillor Jeremy Fraser
Leader of the Council

POLLUTION TRENDS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Concern about air quality is not a recent phenomenon. Significant changes to the composition of the atmosphere are relatively recent although major pollution episodes were experienced, in particular in London, since before the Industrial Revolution. This concern about our air quality has increased throughout this century as the quantity of emissions and number of pollutants rose. "London Ivy", the euphemism for the smogs of the first half of the century, provided both the evidence of the direct health effects of urban pollution and the imperative to tackle the causes of such episodes by legislation.

At the time of the London smog, sulphur dioxide and smoke were regarded as the most important pollutants and legislation was introduced, by way of the Clean Air Acts, to improve air quality related to emissions of these two pollutants. The outcome of this action and its enforcement by local authorities is clearly indicated by the results included in this report.

During the 1970's and 1980's attention focused on increasing lead concentrations due to dramatic increases in the use of cars. Again a great deal of success can be seen in reducing this pollutant as highlighted in the body of the report.

An increasing volume of legislation, largely emanating from European Directives, has appeared during the last two decades reflecting both the increasing importance given to the environment and the changing nature of atmospheric pollution. Our work continues.

Fred Manson, Director
Regeneration and Environment Department

foreword

