

Extracts from Glinert, Ed. *The London Compendium*. 2003. Reprint, New York: Penguin, 2004.

The John Snow, No. 39, south side

The 1870s pub, originally the Newcastle-upon-Tyne, was built on the site of the surgery run by John Snow, one of the first surgeons to use anaesthetics, who gave Queen Victoria chloroform for the birth of Prince Leopold in 1853 and made startling discoveries concerning the 1850s cholera epidemic (Soho, W1, p. 189)

John Snow and the 1854 cholera epidemic

When cholera, which had killed some 10,000 people in various parts of London in 1853, hit Soho the following year John Snow, a local surgeon, announced that the disease was spread through dirty water but had his findings rubbished, particularly by local water companies who claimed it was caused by a "miasma in the atmosphere." When 127 local people died of cholera early in September 1854 Snow began more research and after interviewing the families of those who had drunk from a well on Broad Street (Broadwick Street). He took samples of the water, discovered that it contained infectious particles, and went to the guardians of the local parish, urging them to remove the pump handle. After they did so spread of the disease stopped, but still the authorities were not convinced, and cited the death of a Hampstead woman and her niece in Islington, neither of whom had been in Soho, to boost their argument. Snow visited their relatives and discovered that the woman had previously lived in Broad Street and liked the taste of the water so much she had engaged her servant to journey to Soho to raise water from the well and take it back to her house in Hampstead (The West End, p. 190).