

## VILLAGE ECHOES

### WATER

Water has been uppermost in most of our thoughts lately. Spare a thought for the residents of Kilndown some 90 odd years ago. There was no mains water to the village, something we take for granted these days.

In November of 1926, at a meeting of Cranbrook Rural District Council .....



*Mr. Bailey, the Sanitary Inspector, furnished a report of a scheme of water supply for the parish of Kilndown. It was also thought that the Water Company should again be approached in this matter, and after a short discussion it was decided that the matter should stand over until the next meeting.*

August 1929

Mr John Bailey – Sanitary Inspector

*The Kilndown Women's Institute wrote to Cranbrook District Council drawing attention to the shortage of water at Kilndown and the Council Clerk was instructed to ask the Cranbrook District Water Company and the Mid Kent Water Company for terms to carry the water supply to Kilndown.*

October 1929

*The Sanitary Inspector Mr. J. Bailey reported seven cases of diphtheria Kilndown. A report was read from the Medical Officer of Health regarding the outbreak in the village, which it was stated had doubt been brought into the district by hop-pickers. The report also alluded to the shortage of water in Kilndown and recommended the Council to provide an adequate supply as soon as possible.*

#### **THE GREAT DROUGHT, OCTOBER 1929**

***History was made in Kilndown on Thursday September 26 when water was being sold in the village. In the upper part of the village all normal supplies failed, and the inhabitants were being obliged to carry water from half to three quarters of a mile. The District Council therefore arranged for water to be brought from Hawkhurst and a charge of 1d per bucket was made to meet the Water Company's charge.***

***That such a state of affairs was brought about is not difficult to understand after such an unprecedented drought. Up to September 26 there has been no fall of rain in Kilndown for 40 days. The total rainfall for the first nine months of the year was 8.22 inches, 14 inches less than the normal. There is a rumour that the village will soon be put on the mains.***

***Taken from Kilndown Parish Magazine 1929***

## KILNDOWN WATER SHORTAGE.



Owing to the recent drought there is a severe shortage of water at Kilndown. Our picture shows some of the residents purchasing their water, which is brought by lorry, for the price of 1d. per bucket of 2½ gallons.

KENT and SUSSEX COURIER

October 1929.

*In regard to the Kilndown water supply, the Sanitary Inspector reported on the steps taken to supply water met the shortage and it was decided to apply to the Cranbrook District Water Company and the South Kent Water Company for estimates to lay a supply to Kilndown, including Priors Heath.*

December 1929

*The Cranbrook District Water Company wrote ( to Cranbrook District Council) estimating the cost to extend their mains to Kilndown for supplying that parish was £2,500, for which they would require a 10 per cent, guarantee on the capital outlay for 10 years less water rentals. It was decided to ask the Company to carry out the extension and to employ local labour where possible.*

**JUNE 1931**

***Most people will remember the long trudge to Spratt's Well and Roger's Rough for drinking water in 1929. Rumour has several times falsely reported that water pipes had arrived at Goudhurst Station, but now they are here for all to see, in fact some have already disappeared underground. Kilndown's water is now assured.***

***Taken from Kilndown Parish Magazine 1931***

Apart from Spratt's and Rogers Rough, already noted, there are/were other wells in the Kilndown area including, near Scotney Lodge, Chingley Manor, Church Cottages, West Cottage, Lady Oak Lane, Rosemary Lane, Stonecrouch, Vine Cottage, Shernfold Oast, and on the Bedgebury Estate to name but a few.

Anecdotal evidence tells us that mains water was not connected to a couple of cottages on the A21 until the early **1970's**. Water was fed in pipes from Combwell Priory, overland, across fields and draped over electricity cables to reach its destination! Any extra water needed was pumped from a 95ft well in the garden of Cherry Lea, which incidentally has a seam of coal 3" deep running through it. This was discovered in 1930 by the, aforementioned Mr Bailey, who was gifted with the powers of a water diviner.

Many thanks for this article by Lynda Shepherd, one of our members. We welcome articles on Goudhurst or Kilndown local history from all readers.