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Services

Most of the statutory services for the Matlocks arrived, as elsewhere, in the 19th century, being improved in the 20th. Before the arrival of piped water, coal – later piped natural gas – and piped sewage, the locals had to rely on wells and springs, candles and paraffin lamps, soil closets and sheer luck. The conveyance of letters whilst reliable was expensive and policing was a haphazard affair. Today, we cannot imagine what it was like to have to cope without modern services, all piped or cabled to our homes, offices and factories.

Water

This basic and most important commodity used for medicinal purposes is covered in Chapters 4 and 5.

For an area that seemingly appears to be overflowing with water, the piping of it to premises in the Matlocks seems to have been difficult. One reason of course is that the area grew more rapidly than anyone would have dreamed. The problem was finally solved with the introduction of the ambitious Derwent Valley scheme. Prior to 1862 water for the area was derived from a variety of sources including the warm springs.

The first we hear of a piped water supply is when the Matlock Water Company was founded in 1862, and an Act of Parliament authorised the raising of capital, comprising £4,000 with a borrowing of £1,000, to undertake the works. This was piped from the Wold Spring and was fed into a reservoir on Hackney Lane, 12 yds square (120 m). This supply was gauged at 113,385 gallons daily (515,450 litres/day) in March and 90,000 gallons daily (409,140 litres/day) in winter, which was normally sufficient but with the advent of the hydrophatic institutions and the influx of visitors it proved to be inadequate. (Bryan p.598169)

A further Act of Parliament was sought to allow the tapping of four springs, which yielded 10,000 gallons a day (45,460 litres/day) at a cost of £4,300. The new reservoir was delayed until 1883 – completed three years later – costing £2,658 and having a capacity of 500,000 gallons (2,273,000 litres). (Bryan p.59-60&187)

In 1893 an auxiliary supply was laid on from Brown’s Spring near to the High Peak Junction on the main road. This lies behind an iron door on the roadside of the A6 and yielded 150,000 gallons a day (68,190 litres/day). As this lay on land owned by Mr F C Arkwright, his wife had the honour of turning the tap on and drinking the first glassful of water, which she pronounced to be excellent – followed by a supper at the Devonshire Arms Hotel. The engineer for this scheme was a Mr W H Radford of Nottingham and was carried out by Mr William Jaffrey as the surveyor to the Local Board.

However, still more water was required and in 1893 a dowser named John Mullins of John Mullins & Sons, Waterworks Engineers of Bath, was contracted to search for a supply. He was taken to the high ground north of the Chesterfield road a mile or so from the Duke of Wellington Inn. Using a twig, he located a place and headings were driven at an altitude of 1,000 feet (305m).

In March of 1893, a further bill from Parliament was required to allow the Water Company to raise more capital of £5,000 by issuing £10 shares. This exhausted their capital raising powers and the company entered into negotiations with the Matlock Urban District Council who agreed to pay £18,550