

THE INITIAL PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED
BY THE EARLY RESIDENTS OF KEMPSHOTT
WITH REGARD TO THE SUPPLY OF WATER TO THEIR PROPERTIES

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Background

During the 1860s and 1870s most towns and cities acquired constant supplies of pressurised, filtrated water either through municipally run concerns or through private companies. By 1850 many middle class homes had already been equipped with a water closet, and many towns by the 1870's were investing in sewerage systems. However few houses were connected to a piped water supply, so for most spring water or well water was the only alternative. Houses were built where there were springs and the sinking of a well was often the first operation before the house foundations were laid and the kitchen or scullery would be positioned close to it. Clean spring water was relatively safe to drink but in hard water areas such as Basingstoke and Kempshott it was not suited to the washing of laundry as it caused soap to curdle so rain water was much in use collected from rooftops in large tanks. An average roof yielded between 21,000 and 35,000 gallons of water per year.ⁱ

Under the Provision of Water Act of 1878 and Public Health Act of 1875 towns were compelled to supply water to existing houses within a cost limit laid down in the Act, but in rural areas where there was no main available they were not bound to provide water at all. It was not until 1915 that the law was finally changed. River boards were established to look after the quality and local authorities were to supply underground water from the towns out to the neighbouring villages. House owners were to be compelled to install a supply where piped water was provided and where new houses were built, they should not be occupied until a proper water supply be provided.

Basingstoke Town Council had various sources of supply. There was a 60 ft. deep well with adits in Upper Chalk at West Ham which provided 428,000 gallons per day and more could be obtained.

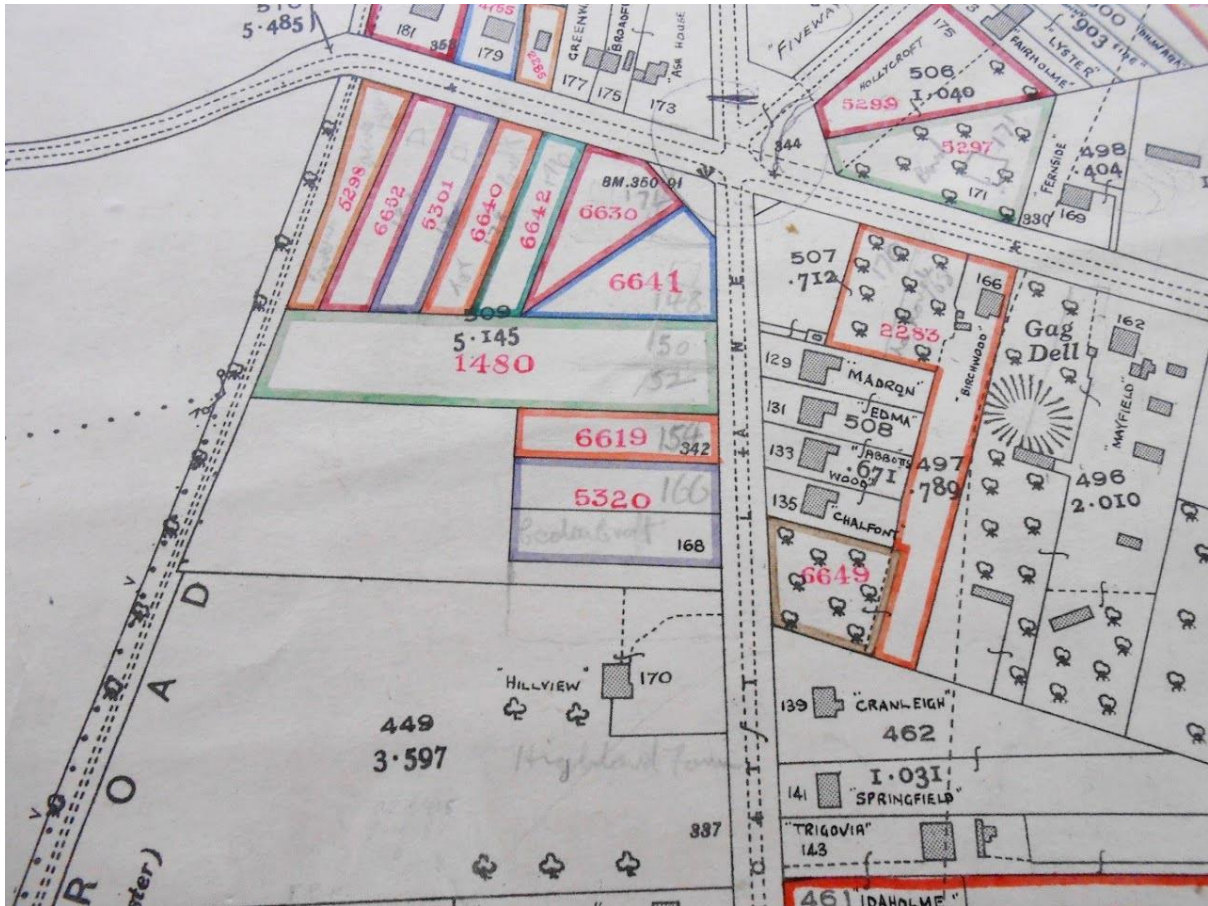
Cliddesden had a high level reservoir which held 420,000 gallons, South View with its low level reservoir could hold 165,000 gallons and the pressure everywhere was sufficient for the needs of the town's inhabitants.

By 1904 the Council started laying pipes in Cliddesden Road, (that part which is now the Harrow Way) through the town and past Jay's Farm and the Golden Lion pub, the water being supplied from a pumping station on Basingstoke Common. The pipes were laid 3 ft. under the surface of the ground.ⁱⁱ

Water comes to Kempshott

Kempshott however, was without the civic boundaries of Basingstoke town so when the first houses were built in the 1890's wells were used and shared – for instance there was one in the

Western half of Pack Lane near Gag Dell (information from long term resident Cicely Dewe) and one for the southern early developments of Kempshott Lane (*idem* Owen Blisset). There was also one near the caravan site used by those whilst their houses were being built.



1930 Map showing the position of Gag Dell off Pack Lane and Plot 143 where the caravan park was situated behind “Tregovia”

The plans for the first house in Pack Lane near Beech Corner, No. 126 show a 6,000 gallon water tank. Was this filled by a tanker? No rainwater catchment is indicated on the plans, though this is not to say that households didn't use this method of gaining water.



1930 Map showing Beech Corner

By 1911 water was being supplied by pipe to these early houses in Kempshott by Basingstoke Council but whereas the town enjoyed pressure through 3” supply pipes, the houses here only had a 1” main and this only to the foot of Kempshott Hill from Down Grange Farm. Because many of the properties being built by Homesteads Ltd. at this time with only water storage tanks, where smallholdings needing a plentiful supply of water to maintain nursery plants, orchards and chickens there was not enough to support the land as well as the household needs of the residents.

So on 4th September 1911 the residents of the area wrote and signed a petition and sent it to the Council:ⁱⁱⁱ

“We the undersigned ratepayers in the Borough of Basingstoke beg to ask that the water supply which at present is laid on in Homesteads Road be extended to the rest of the houses in the Kempshott Village Estate. Some of us have been quite out of water this summer, both for drinking and household purposes. Others have been short of water and Homesteads Ltd. have supplied by water-cart. We would like to point out that each house only has one tank to hold rain-water (which is used for all purposes), so that it is impossible to clean out said tank at any time.

Yours etc.

J.A. Overton, Brooklands, Kempshott.
George Overton, Kempshott
Charles H. Bell, Kempshott
Philip Drew, Kempshott
Job Starr, Kempshott Village

Frederick C. Mills, Holmwood, Kempshott Village
Ernest Dunnings, Shirley, Kempshott Village
John Prince, Cottonfirle, Kempshott Village
C.Johnson, Kempshott
B. Ferry, Beulah Lodge, Kempshott”



1930 Map showing properties in Homesteads Road including [The Old] Down Farm and Leslie Lodge

On 11.12.1911 an indenture/Draft Licence for 3” cast iron pipes to be laid at least 3 ft. underground for the purposes of conveying water was drawn up by the council but not implemented in Kempshott.

Instead on 10.5.1912 Basingstoke Council wrote to S.G. Hanson explaining that they were completely in compliance with the Water Clauses Act of 1847 Sections 44 and 69 and were not empowered to supply larger service pipes and invited Homesteads Ltd. to link up to the mains ending at the foot of Kempshott Hill at their own cost. [Sydenham George Saumarez Wallscourt Hanson was owner and occupier of the house known as The Old Down or Down Farm in Homesteads Road, and William Hollins, Emily Jane Southy, Arthur Vandervell and Alice Beevers owned and occupied houses fronting or near to Homesteads Road.]

The Council in August 1913 wrote to the Local Government Board and stated that the residents of Kempshott Village were using their water for other than domestic purposes and that they were under no obligation to supply a better service. The cost to the whole estate

(£370 to Down Farm) would have been £660 in 1911 but now the cost of the materials had risen considerably and they suggested that storage tanks be provided by the occupiers themselves.

An inspector was sent from the Local Government Board, R.G. Hetherington who visited Basingstoke on Wednesday, 10.12.1913 regarding the supply of water to Kempshott and Solicitors Lamb Brooks Bullock were asked to have the complainers attend the meeting with the council members.

As a result of his visit a report and cost assessment was made in December 1913 which stated that Kempshott was 3 miles to the centre of town and quite rural and only in summer did they get intermittent water supplies.

An assessment of the cost was made to extend the supply to Down Farm:

Assessment from Down Grange to the bottom of Kempshott Hill £180.

From there to Down Farm £190.

Total £370.

The annual water rate was £3.10s. And a new rate of approx. £4.13s. would have to be made to cover costs.

On 10.2.1914 The Local Government Board at Whitehall wrote to the Town Clerk of Basingstoke confirming that they agreed to the Town Council's decision to substitute a 3" water main for the present 1" main from Down Grange Lodge to the cottages near the bottom of Kempshott Hill and remove the present supply by tank near Down Grange cottages. The Council agreed to pay for it, provided Mr. Hanson make a payment of £70 for the cost of laying the pipes between Down Grange Cottages and Down Farm. Mr. Hanson decided to take a 15 year loan at 3 3/4% interest for which he was to take a mortgage or charge on his Down Farm. This was reported in the Reading Mercury of 24.5.1914.

Kempshott Rates and water rates

Other conditions also made the Kempshott residents unhappy. On 9.3.1914 John Prince of Cotonfirl wrote to the Town Clerk of the Borough of Basingstoke complaining about the Council letting the Kempshott roads get into such a state that they had to pay £400 to repair them. He said they were a disgrace when he came to the neighbourhood 5 years previously. He also complained that instead of Homesteads Road being made up [surfaced?] out of the rates, it should have been paid for by those whose lands abutted the road, as it was not a public highway prior to the land being carved up into smallholdings. He stated that the £50 a year rates paid by the residents of Kempshott Village more than paid for the upkeep of the roads. They paid the same rates as in town but didn't have pavements, lights, sewerage or refuse removed.

He also complained about the Council not laying large enough water pipes in the first place which showed the short-sighted policy of previous councillors and the now £200 spent was only benefiting 6 of the 30 or more residents.

On 7.7.1914 a letter from Lamb, Brooks, Sherwood and Bullock, Solicitors was written to J.A. Kingdon, Town Clerk. Their client S.G. Hanson found out that an application for a house

in Homesteads Road included water supply through 1" pipes. They begged for this not to be allowed as it was inadequate.

This was backed up on 18.7.1914 by a letter from Mr. A. Vandervell, Leslie Lodge, Kempshott Village to the Town Clerk asking to have as large a water supply as was now allowed to Old Down Farm, for his poultry runs and domestic purposes. He also wanted to know what extra income the Council would require to extend the present 3" main from the bottom of Kempshott Hill and how it would increase the rates.

By 1923 only 7 people out of the 34 then residents were paying extra water rates in Kempshott:

S.G.Hanson paid £2.2s.8d. for Old Down Farm

Mrs. Vandervell of Leslie Lodge paid 18s. for her poultry

Thomas Southey paid £1.0s.4d. for Merrileas nursery

Richard Faulkner in Homesteads Road paid 17s. for his bungalow and garden and 17s. for his 6.3.0 acres of agricultural land and poultry

Devere Grant in Homesteads Road paid 13s.8d.

James and Roger Hall of Rossdale, Homesteads Road paid 17s.

Henry Portsmouth of Down Grange Farm paid £1.13s.4d.

Eventually an improvement

The first time we find the Council giving in and providing a better water supply was in an agreement dated 9.12.1926 where the Council cited that they had been asked by the owners of the Crossways estate at Worting for the existing water main to be extended to them in anticipation of the requirements of the District (they began building bungalows in Kempshott Village in 1927 and continued until 1938). They then agreed to lay service mains along Kempshott Lane with branches along Pack Lane and Buckskin Lane subject to the owners of adjacent lands contributing towards the cost of the project. In consideration of the contribution they would supply a 3" main along Pack Lane and Kempshott Lane and connect it to the existing main along the Worting Road. The cost for the owner would be 2s.0d. for every foot of land with a frontage to either road.

Recollections of some of our residents:

Bryan Seal's father, Arthur, in 1925 bought land next to Fuzzy Drove in Kempshott Lane and had a bungalow built on it. The plot was without water supply, so he had a contractor from Reading come and make a bore hole and install a pump to pump the water from 170 ft. depth. A water supply was eventually put in in 1931 (supplied from Worting Bridge) via a 3" main, however when Arthur set up his market gardening business the council would only allow him a ½" main to supply his nursery, so as this was insufficient, he had the old pump retuned and used the water from the bore hole which was cold, clear and pure. The drawing off of this water from the underground aquifer also caused the flooding of Buckskin Lane to reduce.

Joan Trodd informed: Darlington Road Reservoir served the town but houses higher up in Kempshott could not get much from the gravity fed water, so another reservoir was built up on Farleigh Hill to supply the top of Kempshott.

Gradually families started applying for permission to build bathrooms and water closets thus improving sanitation: in 1922 Fairhaven in Kempshott Lane had a bathroom and WC installed, in 1925 T.G. Morris had his earth closet converted to a water closet. In 1924 Down Grange had new drainage, and as late as 1931 The Retreat in Pack Lane had a bathroom added to the bungalow. These are all cited in the Basingstoke Council Building Applications deposited at the Hampshire Record Office.^{iv}

[1] The Services of Victorian & Edwardian Houses 1850-1914 – David J. Eveleigh, 2006 University of the West of England, Bristol.

[1] Hampshire Record Office Ref.58M74/BO2 1904 Parliamentary deposited plans for Bas Borough water supply scheme

[1] Hampshire Record Office ref. 148M71/1/5/61/26 – all correspondence cited contained in this file.

[1] Building Applications Basingstoke Council – Hampshire Record Office Ref. 58M74/BP Nos. 892, 1058, 1759

1930 Maps from The National Archives, Kew