

Water - is it quite such a boring subject of discussion?

THE HORSHAM Society held its annual meeting at the end of March and, as always, we invited along a guest speaker.

This year, we decided to have as our topic the subject of water and Meyrick Gough from Southern Water provided a fascinating insight into the world of water including some interesting video clips of what happens deep underground within the aquifer zone.

Unfortunately, to many people, a talk on water might seem to be one of the most boring subjects imaginable.

What could possibly be of interest in such a basic commodity?



by
David Moore
chairman of the
Horsham Society

Not too long after this talk, the importance of a continuous supply of water was driven home to me, when I felt the need for a cup of tea.

I went to fill the kettle, switched on the tap and nothing happened.

You may recall that this was the day when the mains' water pipe, which supplies Horsham, was damaged

by construction work near Wickhurst Lane.

Fortunately, the interruption to the water supply was very short lived but it was a salutary lesson not to take things for granted.

We have grown accustomed to a regular supply of fresh water to meet all our needs and the only time most of us give it any thought is when something like this happens.

Another is when we experience a prolonged dry spell and a hosepipe ban.

One has to wonder whether the weather pattern that we are currently experiencing may lead to

further restrictions on our use of water in the summer months.

The reality is that there is only a finite amount of water available to us in this part of the country and we face continued migration of people into the area, as evidenced by the ongoing house building programme.

Family patterns of water use have altered dramatically since the days of weekly baths.

We expect to be able to fill our washing machines, dishwashers and in some cases our swimming pools.

The competition for water for our personal use increases all the time and

this is one of the factors driving the mandatory imposition of water meters on the community.

We rely on the rivers, aquifers and the reservoirs, which in turn all rely on rainfall and there are no plans to introduce new sources of water into our region.

There is already some transfer of water into our region from adjacent areas.

However, there are no national plans for a water grid in the foreseeable future and desalination of seawater is viewed as being too expensive at present.

So, can we afford to take our water supply for

granted?

The answer must be a resounding no and it is important that we all gain a better understanding of where our water comes from and what limitations are imposed on us by the availability of supply.

The Horsham Society is concerned about the past, present and future of the town. It seeks to promote good planning and design for the built environment and open spaces. Membership of the Horsham Society is open to anyone, who shares these concerns. For more information, visit our website www.horshamsociety.org or telephone 01403 263870.