

Mod Cons in Henbury

Excerpt from “Henbury – History of a Village” published 2003

Throughout the district, water was drawn from wells and springs until quite late in the 20th century. Tom Gould of Park House Farm recalled that when he was a lad, he, Phillip Coleman and Arthur Goodall used to indulge in various pranks. A stout character called Mrs. Phillips who lived on Dark Lane used to draw water from a well by Broome Cottage. The three lads were hidden behind a hedge and she doused them with her pail of water. Quite what provoked this attack is not clear. Years later when Mrs. Phillips died, Tom helped to bear her coffin up Dark Lane to the Church, “A mighty burden”. Making amends, perhaps?

Until mains water was laid on at Park House Farm just before World War II, they drew water from a spring via a 40 foot high wind pump, at the rate of 300 gallons an hour. Jean Gould reported that the quality and taste of the spring water was superior to mains water, and “it made a good cup of tea”.



Parkhouse farm in the 1950's (courtesy Mr & Mrs T Gould)

People living on the western side of the Parish, including Lodge Farm, used to draw their water from a pump at Lingards Farm. Mains water only reached this part of the village in the 1960s.

Springbank cottage (previously known as Wood Farm) pumped its water from Fanshawe Brook in the valley below to a tank on the ridge above, which also fed Moss Farm and Moss Cottage. Mains water was eventually laid on after the Henbury Estate intervened on their behalf.



*Fanshawe Brook before
the culvert was built in
1938 (original kindly
loaned by Jess Ford)*

Electricity did not reach many of the farms until the middle of the last century and oil lamps were in use well within living memory. Mains electricity reached Park House Farm in 1954. Mrs Ethel Heathcote, who occupied Lodge Farm from 1940 until 1970 reported that for most of their tenure there was no electricity: “there were no mod cons”.