

LOCALLY SOURCED: Businessman plans to bottle and sell water

All's well that ends well after discovery in garden

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WATER surprise to find the country's biggest domestic well in your back garden!

For Roland Daniells, finding the 100-metre hole, dating back to the 18th century, offered the chance for a new locally sourced product.

The 42-year-old is already selling bottled water from his well, which is drawn direct from the North Downs Aquifer, but plans to sell more have been put on hold as the drought has depleted his source.

"The water comes up at seven degrees, it is like having a water cooler 100 metres down," Mr Daniells told the Mirror.

"When we found it my reaction was 'yippee - I've got something special here', I thought we could run the garden off it.

"But we have only done it once, the water table is at an all-time low, which isn't a good time to start bottling water."

Mr Daniells and his family moved to Eastlands Farm, Woodmansterne, in 2007, unaware that the well, which the Kent Underground Research Group says is the biggest in the UK, was hidden beneath his herb garden.

But a visit from a friend and her father, who had grown up on the land where the house is built, led to a startling revelation.

Mr Daniells said: "They walked through the gate and her father said 'where's my well gone?'"



WELL MAN: Roland Daniells well provides drinking water
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DOWN UNDER: Left, the well in Roland Daniells back garden and, below, the view from down inside the well

"We found a dirty great man-hole cover with a bar and padlocks.

"When we uncovered it there was nothing but blackness, it

takes 11 seconds for a stone to hit the bottom. It is a phenomenal piece of engineering."

Mr Daniells, who works as a business consultant, was surprised to find the water drawn from the well was rich in minerals, and since uncovering the "treasure trove" he has established Eastlands Farm Water to sell their 1723 brand, named after the year the well was built.

According to the British Bottled Water Association, the well is the only one within the M25, a fact Mr Daniells hopes to take advantage of once the water table is replenished.

"We could be London's local water," he told the Mirror.

"But we're relying on the well recharging."

Uncovering 18th century status symbol

MR Daniells uncovered a plaque in the wall of the well with the inscription 1723 R.E.

Though baffled at first, he eventually found out the initials were those of the farm's former owner Robert Eastland, something of a local celebrity in the area in the 1700s.

He told the Mirror: "When I found the initials and date, I felt like Robert Eastland had handed the baton to me.

"The well was a status symbol. A bigger and deeper well showed you had resources.

"Eastland wanted the biggest, best well he could get."

The well was dug by hand, 300 feet through the chalk, and is lined with chalkstone to a depth of 20 metres.

Latest in line of local produce

THE water provides a new addition to the area's locally produced food and drink.

Mr Daniells is determined to keep the product local, but with water levels at their lowest on record they are selling off their current stock before they draw any more.

He said: "We will work within the natural ebb and flow of the well. This way, we are not having an impact on the water table or stressing the aquifer for financial gain."

The water is drawn out using a pump installed by South Coast Water and is only being sold to people within a 25-mile radius.

Tracey Carroll, of Local Food Surrey, told the Mirror: "I think it is very important to have this local produce.

"It enables local businesses to offer something different to their customers."



THIRSTY WORK: Roland Daniells with his bottled water
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IN BRIEF

Overwhelmed by big turnout

HORLEY: More than 150 people turned out to pay tribute to a mother who lost her seven-year battle with cancer.

Alison Pike, 50, died on April 28, but her family said they were stunned to find out she had been an inspiration to other members of the community who were suffering with the disease.

The family said they were "overwhelmed" by the crowd which attended the funeral at Surrey and Sussex Crematorium in Balcombe Road, and the wake at Horley Football Club in Court Lodge Road.

Mrs Pike's husband Chilton, 49, said: "We would like to thank everybody who came along to give Alison such a wonderful send off."

Two attacked

HORLEY: A late night assault on two men left one hospitalised.

The pair were attacked by two men as they crossed the car park in Consort Way East, at around 11pm on Saturday.

One victim, a man in his 40s received serious head and facial injuries and attended East Surrey Hospital the next day for treatment.

Another man, in his 40s, was punched in the ribs but did not require treatment.

The suspects are white, in their 30s with one wearing a brown and white horizontally striped T-shirt.

Call Surrey Police on 101, quoting reference RB/12/4020, with information.

Man found

HORLEY: A man has died after being found unconscious at a house in Massetts Road.

Police and ambulance crews were called out at about 4.40am on Friday.

The man in his 20s, believed to be from Canada, was pronounced dead at around 4.45am.

His death is not being treated as suspicious.

Shed thefts

WARLINGHAM: Police have urged residents to lock up their properties after an increase in thefts from sheds and garages.

Bikes and garden equipment have been the favoured items of thieves in the last few months.

