



The Sulphur Well, in the basement of the Pump Room, is at the original ground level as the roads around the building have been raised several feet over the years. Beside the well are two salt-glazed storage cisterns, corroded inside by the sulphur; the pump which drew water from another sulphur spring on the site; and a model of Betty

Lupton. A pump outside the building gives a free supply. In the Pump Room the story of Harrogate and its surrounding unfolds from prehistoric times, through the development of the spa, up to the present day.

THE STRAY: In 1770 an Act of Parliament provided for the enclosure of the Forest of Knaresborough in which Harrogate stands. The priceless value to the town of the medicinal springs was realised and provision was made whereby 200 acres should remain forever un-enclosed so that the springs would be protected and public access be available at all times. This is the origin of the Stray, the only common land now remaining in the Forest. Until 1893 it was a stinted pasture, in that year Harrogate Corporation purchased the grazing rights, and subsequent care and cultivation have resulted in the sweeps of well-kept lawn we enjoy today.



Betty Lupton



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Wells and Springs



www.enjoyharrogate.com

Wells and Springs

Harrogate stands on an anticline, a fold of lower carboniferous rock running NE-SW, and the consequent faulting in the rock has regulated the distribution of the springs which have made the town famous.

88 springs rise within a radius of two miles of the town centre; 35 of these are within one acre in the Valley Gardens area; 16 could be used medicinally. Those with the highest mineral content - for instance, the sulphur spring in the Royal Pump - rise nearest to the axis of the anticline and show only small seasonal variations in temperature, suggesting origin at great depth. Outlying springs, such as Harlow Carr (alkaline Sulphur) and John's Well (almost pure chalybeate) show distinct seasonal variations in temperature, suggesting shallower origin.



THE TEWIT SPRING was the first to be recognised as medicinal, c.1570, by a member of the Slingsby family, who arranged for it to be fenced and protected.

THE SULPHUR SPRING according to Dr Deane in his "Spadacrene Anglica", 1626 - the first medical treatise on the Harrogate waters - "cheereth and reviveth the spirits, strengtheneth the stomache, causeth good and quick appetite and furthereth digestion".

JOHN'S WELL, HIGH HARROGATE was recognised as medical in 1631 by Dr Stanhope, who recorded five other springs in use at that time. In the late 17th and early 18th centuries John's Well was very popular, and hotels, boarding houses and shops gradually formed a flourishing village, High Harrogate.

The sulphur springs in Low Harrogate, however, gained popularity owing to their efficacy in curing rheumatism, gout, digestive ailments and skin diseases. In the early days the water simply ran into the surrounding rough ground and the area was very marshy; people had to bring their own cans and ladles and

scoop the water from wherever they could reach it; the springs were known locally as "The stinking well". Celia Fiennes, visiting "Harrogate" in 1697, wrote that she could not force her horse to go near the sulphur well on account of "the smell being so strong and offensive.....". But she drank a quart on two successive days. Smaller doses - up to 2 pints - became the norm in the 18th century. Bathing in heated sulphur water continued "in a tub 8 feet long, the water warmed as hot as it is well bearable, in which you continue from 10 to 30 minutes" or as long as the attendant "is pleased to Prophecy your Constitution will bear". This was followed by sweating in a blanket bed, though by the 1790's hygiene was sufficiently advanced for common sweating beds, used successively by dozens of people, to be abandoned. Social life prospered with balls three times a week, visits to the theatre in High Harrogate, and excursions to Knaresborough and other places of interest. Such frivolity led to Dr Short's description of the spa as "no longer the Hospital of invalids, but too often the Rendezvous of wantonness, and not seldom of mad Frolicks". The increase of visitors led to the growth of Low Harrogate. Four stone well-heads were erected some time before 1772 and the area was drained and paved in 1804, when three of the well-heads were taken down, the present one being left in position and covered with a circular stone canopy supported on slender pillars.



When the Pump Room was built in 1842 this canopy was re-erected over the Tewit Well on the South Stray. The Pump Room annexe was built in 1913 when the number of visitors and patients became too great to be accommodated in the Pump Room itself. On fine mornings, tables and chairs were placed outside on the pavement and road and in the entrance to the Valley Gardens. All roads leading to the area were closed by chains suspended from side to side between 7am and 9am. A small orchestra played in the bandstand in Crescent Gardens. The First World War put a stop for a time to this elegance and leisure but the practice was resumed, only to be finally discontinued in the early days of the Second War. Advances in the medical knowledge and the use of synthetic medicines have now led to the virtual disappearance of the Spa treatment. Harrogate ceased to be a spa in the true sense of the word in March 1969, when the Royal Baths closed for all treatments except Turkish Baths. The building became known as the Royal Baths Assembly Rooms, with Halls for meetings and lectures, a restaurant and cafe.