



An ornate village pump

The Parish Pump Passes

At one time parish pumps were a great feature of urban landscapes. They not only supplied the drinking water but were centres for communal chatter and gossip, public meetings, and other events of which the pump became the focal point. Mrs. Smith, keeping on with her pumping, would tell Mrs. Brown, awaiting her turn, exactly what she said to Mrs. Jones when Mrs. Jones said something to her (Mrs. Smith's) detriment. Alas and lack-a-day, the majority of the Parish Pumps have gone the way of all pumps, but in many centres they may still be seen by those who have eyes to see - standing derelict, their gaunt arms chained in durance vile. They gave us a well-used phrase, "The Parish Pump Politician," which means a Councillor who is pernickety about petty things, and (to use another phrase) "makes a song about nothing."

The Melksham Town Pump is now on the condemned list. Alas, poor Yorick!

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