

Papers of London (Watford) Spring Water Co Ltd, water supply company

This document describes a collection of records held by RBS Archives, including details of their background; publications (if any) relating to them; summary of the contents of the collection; and information (where known) about related records held in other archives.

collection reference CU/126/

background history

London (Watford) Spring Water Co Ltd (also known as Watford Water Co), first proposed in 1849, was set up in response to a report on the condition of London's water supply issued by the General Board of Health in 1850. The report recommended that water should not be obtained from any part of the Thames which was within reach of its return tidal flow, and possible sewage contamination. In 1851 Parliament appointed a Commission to inquire into the condition of both the water supplied by existing London water companies and the water to be provided by proposed future suppliers, including the newly-formed London (Watford) Spring Water Co Ltd.

The Watford scheme was to draw water not from the Thames, but from springs under the chalk hills between London and Watford. The initial supply was expected to be around eight million gallons a day, but the company's engineer estimated that, given adequate infrastructure, a supply of as much as 408 million gallons a day was possible. The commissioners reported in favour of using this underground source, and another like it south of the Thames, but the London (Watford) Spring Water Co Bill of 1852 was opposed by the existing water companies, many of which drew water from the Thames within the tideway. The Bill was never enacted, and the affairs of the company were wound up in 1853.

London (Watford) Spring Water Co Ltd was a customer of our constituent bank [Curries & Co.](#)

related publication

- HC Richards and WHC Payne, *London water supply, being a compendium of the history, law and transactions relating to the metropolitan water companies from earliest times to the present day* (2nd edn. London: PS King & Son, 1899)

our archive holdings

- agenda, minute and letterbooks 1851-3
- cash books, receipts and accounts 1851-3
- documents re subscribers' agreement and share applications 1851-3
- printed matter submitted to the House of Commons 1850-3
- company reports and correspondence 1851-3

archives held elsewhere

- [The National Archives](#): Companies Registration Office dissolved company file 1849-51 (Ref: BT41/403/2301).
- [London Metropolitan Archives](#): Book of reference and subscription schedule n.d. (ACC/2558/MM/A/03/Y29A.02(4)); papers re Watford scheme 1850-53 (ACC/2558/MW/C/31/522, ACC/2558/MM/A/03/Y26.06(03)); papers re London (Watford) Spring Water Co Bill 1852 (ACC/2558/EL/A/02/B03.16(04), ACC/2558/MM/A/03/Y27.03(3), ACC/2558/MM/A/03/Y29A.03(2)).