

Communicating groundwater science

Drought 2012

June 2013

Richard Aylard
External Affairs and Sustainability Director



Where we started

February 2012

Awareness of an impending drought was low – we had to start from the beginning to manage expectations and educate customers.

Customer awareness

- 44% felt drought was very or quite **unlikely** in 3 months
- 48% felt drought was very or quite **likely** in 3 months

- 26% thought there had been **a lot less rain** in past year
- 39% said there had been **a bit less rain**

- **10% thought there had been more rain...**

Ways to tell the story

August 2011

Front page

The Daily Telegraph

Women waste 50bn litres of water shaving legs in shower

Thames Water said yesterday: “It may seem like it’s always raining, but we’ve had below average rainfall across our region for nine of the past 12 months.”

Daily Mail

Oceans of water wasted by women shaving their legs



Educating customers

River campaign, August 2011



APPEAL: Driver Steve Meyer alongside the van delivering its message to NorthMeach

THE SUNDAY TIMES

Turn off the tap before rivers start to run dry

Henry Fortson

In the last week alone, drought has struck London in some areas. The drought is expected to last for several weeks, but some parts of the city are expected to be spared.

The drought is the result of the capital's water supply being cut off. The drought is the result of the capital's water supply being cut off.

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Previous reservoir the Kennet feeds part of Berkshire

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Climate talks heat up

The climate talks in Copenhagen, Denmark, have ended in failure. The talks were supposed to reach an agreement on a new climate treaty.

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Phase 1: March – April 2012



Top tip:
Please turn off the tap when you brush your teeth and save 6 litres of water a minute!

To find out more about how the drought will affect you, visit: www.thameswater.co.uk/drought

ADDITIONAL

Plant your drought garden

Less watering doesn't have to mean less gardening

Thames Water is launching a new campaign to help you save water in your garden. We want to see you doing more than just turning off the tap when you brush your teeth. We want to see you doing more than just turning off the tap when you brush your teeth. We want to see you doing more than just turning off the tap when you brush your teeth.

Check what's in your garden: We want to see you doing more than just turning off the tap when you brush your teeth. We want to see you doing more than just turning off the tap when you brush your teeth.

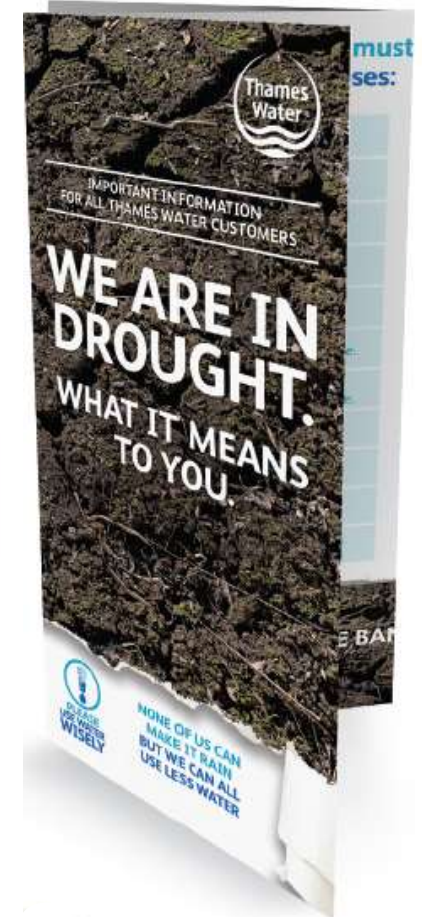
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Almost all Thames Water customers surveyed (96%) were aware of the drought



And then the rain came... but the drought wasn't over



And now the flood



Grey day: Londoners get the wrong message on this bus near Westminster Abbey yesterday PICTURE: JACQUELINE HENNING

Washout as 2 months of rain falls in just 24 hours

FLASH Floods and howling winds closed roads, tore down trees and left travellers stranded as Britain was battered by a wintry washout yesterday.

Two months' worth of rainfall fell in just 24 hours while 60mph gales lashed parts of the country.

Giant waves pounded over sea walls in Torbay, Devon, while rivers in the south-west burst their banks and thousands had to evacuate their homes.

Holidaymakers were mauled as high winds hit cross-Channel ferries from Portsmouth and Poole and hovercrafts to the Isle of Wight. First Great Western trains were suspended after flooding in Cornwall.

And the Met office warned last night: "There is no real end in sight to this unsettled period of weather and longer forecasts suggest it will continue for much of May."

The abysmal weather is in stark contrast to this time last year, when

by **JENNI MARSH**

Britain enjoyed the hottest and driest April on record.

This month, which saw England and Wales receive 72mm of rain even before the extreme washout, is now on target to be the wettest since November 2009.

Yesterday, the Environment Agency issued eight flood warnings and 22 alerts. Six cars were crushed after scaffolding was ripped from a hotel in Southsea, Hampshire, while an 18-year-old driver cheated death after colliding with a lorry on a rain-lashed A34 road in Berkshire.

Another 5cm (2in) of rain is expected today along with thunder and hail in some places. The weekend will be marked by more rain and high winds, with snow forecast for Scotland.

WHAT DROUGHT? P6-7 >>>

Our challenge was to make customers understand



A primary school boy crosses a flooded footpath in Wilton, near Chislehurst, Essex today



Phase 2: April – May 2012



Why we need many more months of rain

The rain in April will only make up for the shortfall in March, never mind the last two years, following below-average rainfall for 20 of the past 26 months.

It took two years to get into a drought – it will take many more months of rain to get out of it.

We're giving away **FREE** water-saving devices for your home, including showerheads and timers.

Order yours at www.thameswater.co.uk/drought
*Offer available to Thames Water customers only, while stocks last.



The message was getting through

London
**Evening
Standard**

Yes, we still need hosepipe ban

Thames Water's ad campaign amid the deluge

Jonathan Pryor
Consumer Business Editor

THAMES WATER launched a campaign today to counter sceptical Londoners that the drought is far from over despite a month of deluges.

Tube adverts show essential rain falling into a parched roadbed and urge people to keep using "water wisely."

They aim to address growing scepticism about the need for a hosepipe ban when the capital suffered one of the wettest Aprils on record, with almost an inch of rain falling last night.

They read: "One wet month's worth of rain. We need steady rain to make up the shortfall of the driest two years since records began. Careful rain is vital, please use water wisely."

Richard Aylard, Thames Water's director of sustainability, said: "We can understand why some people are puzzled to see a ban with 'We are in drought'



Metlands centre: Roads in Piccadilly today, and the adverts being placed on the Tube system

term for water supply... It is likely that the current temporary ban (hosepipe ban) will need to remain in place for the rest of the year."

Londoners were warned to expect a

Environment Agency spokesman said that visitors on the Thames upstream of Teddington because "strong flows make it difficult and dangerous".

Flood alerts have been issued along much of the Thames flowing towards London, as far as Slough and Maidenhead, near Hampton Court.

METRO

Sorry, but it's still not wet enough

WE NEED SO MUCH MORE
EXPERT'S RAINFALL WARNING DESPITE DELUGE

Customer understanding

May 2012

Despite record rainfall the majority of customers (89%) surveyed recognised there was still a water shortage.

- 74% claimed they had a **good understanding** of why there was still a serious water shortage
- 85% said **rain would not stop them from saving water**
- 51% claimed to **recall the message** 'After two years of exceptionally low rainfall we are in drought'

Phase 3: May – June 2012



ADVERTORIAL

Thames Water customers saving 100 million litres of water every day



Phase 4: July – August 2012

'It's a marathon not a sprint'



The advertisement features a large, stylized Union Jack flag graphic on the right side, with the flag's colors (red, white, and blue) and a red flagpole. The background is a light, textured grey. The text is positioned on the left side of the banner.

 **It's a marathon,
not a sprint...**

Even when there is a lot of rain, we shouldn't take our water for granted. Please always use water wisely.

www.thameswater.co.uk/waterwisely

 PLEASE
USE WATER
WISELY

Helping customers understand

July 2012



BBC Sign in News Sport Weather iPlayer TV Ra

NEWS ENGLAND

Home World UK England N. Ireland Scotland Wales Business Politics Health Education Sci/En

26 July 2012 Last updated at 11:57

Record rainfall restores rivers in Thames region

Record spring rainfall has revived drought-depleted rivers in the Thames Water area but groundwater levels are still below normal, the firm warned.

Tributaries feeding the River Thames are now flowing at seven times the volume they were four months ago following the wettest spring on record.



Heavy rainfall this spring and summer increased levels in the River Kennet to near double its average

Thames Water said the turnaround had safeguarded water supplies for its nine million customers this summer.

It said the restored river levels had also "saved fish and other wildlife".

In early April, after the driest two years ever recorded across the Thames Valley and London areas, the Coln in Gloucestershire, Kennet in Wiltshire, Pang in Berkshire, Wye in Buckinghamshire, Lee in Hertfordshire, Wey in Surrey and Darent in Kent averaged 33% of their normal flows.

Related Stories

- Sewage work upgrades for river
- Boating season delayed by weather
- Chalk streams run dry in drought

“...while the current account - our rivers and reservoirs - is looking very healthy, our savings account - the natural storage basins deep below ground - remains in the red in four out of the seven river areas.

"For our invisible underground supplies to return to normal we will still need steady rainfall this winter.”

Campaign feedback



- 72% felt 'very well' or 'fairly well' informed about the circumstances leading to drought
- 48% of those who had seen the campaign claimed they are using less water as a result of the campaign
- 82% felt 'very well' or 'fairly well' informed about how to save water



Key success factors

- ✓ Enhanced water-efficiency campaign started in August 2011
- ✓ Quick to react to changing circumstances
- ✓ Used every channel available to us
- ✓ Fully tested materials with customers
- ✓ Simple messages and 'sound bites'
- ✓ Secured high-profile media space from the start
- ✓ Engaged employees so the company spoke as 'one voice'
- ✓ Cross-company working

The challenge ahead...

Daily Express:

Q: How is your water resource situation looking?

A: “The past year has been England's rainiest on record, leaving our natural underground water storage basins brim full and set to sustain river flows throughout the year - a very different picture from last April. While water use restrictions this year are highly unlikely, we would ask everyone to continue using water wisely, because we are never more than 18 months of very dry weather away from a drought.”

5 April 2013



Front page

Outrage at new drought alert: Water firms are forcing cut back despite wettest year

A WARNING to millions of customers to watch how much water they use this summer provoked scorn last night after the worst floods for decades.

Lessons learnt

- Use simple every-day language and ‘sound bites’
- Find different ways to tell the story to excite media
- Always test messages with customers
 - Customers repeated our messages back to us during focus groups, telling us how bad the situation was and that we were still in drought!
- Adapt to reflect the views of customers
 - We know it’s been raining, but...
 - We publically recognised the irony
- Everyone needs to say the same thing – one voice