



River Thames at Castle Eaton

Thames Pollution 1934 - Dead Fish Mystery

According to local complaints, a stretch of the Thames in its upper reaches near Kempsford, Gloucestershire, has turned a rusty colour periodically for the past 30 years and thousands of fish have been found dead. A few days ago it changed colour, and for about three miles there were large numbers of dead fish floating.

A Thames Conservancy inspector visited the area and samples of the water and some of the dead fish have been sent to London for analysis. The Rev C M R Luckman, rector of Castle Eaton and a keen angler, is convinced that the river has been polluted by a virulent form of poison. He said the river there was mostly stocked with coarse fish, but in the spring there was some very good trout fishing. He was afraid it would take years to recover unless the river was restocked. They had had a similar visitation about every five years ever since he had been there, and that was over 30 years. The last time it happened was in 1929, and the official view then was that the death of the fish was due to low water and a high temperature. The river now was not low and the temperature certainly was not high.

Mr Luckman said he had examined the part of the river affected and had come to the conclusion that the pollution has passed into the Thames from one of its tributaries and had probably originated several miles away.

At the Thames Conservancy it was stated that a report regarding heavy mortality of fish had been received from their inspector at Lechlade and the matter was being investigated.

Gloucestershire Echo Thursday 8 November 1934