

**For more information or to reserve a place, please contact:**

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**This event is organised by**



*Drought and Demand*: a sociological analysis of demand in systems of water practice and provision and the role of drought as a catalyst for change, based at the Centre for Sustainable Water Management, Lancaster University. The project is funded by ESRC, UKWIR, Defra, OFWAT, the Environment Agency, Anglian Water, Essex and Suffolk Water, Folkestone and Dover Water, Three Valleys Water and South East Water.



*Liquid Politics*: an historical research project based at Birkbeck College, University of London, charting the formation of the politically mobilised water consumer in Britain in the modern period. It is part of the ESRC-AHRC funded Cultures of Consumption Research Programme.

**ATKINS** Atkins Limited has been commissioned by UKWIR to address a number of questions relating to the management of the current drought in South East England. The work focuses on modelling the impact of drought restrictions on demand and the potential for improving the management of future droughts.



UKWIR is the UK water industry's research body and is responsible for coordinating the current Drought and Demand research being undertaken by Lancaster University and Atkins.

# **DROUGHT: past, present and future**

Friday, 10 November 2006

10.00am - 4.30pm

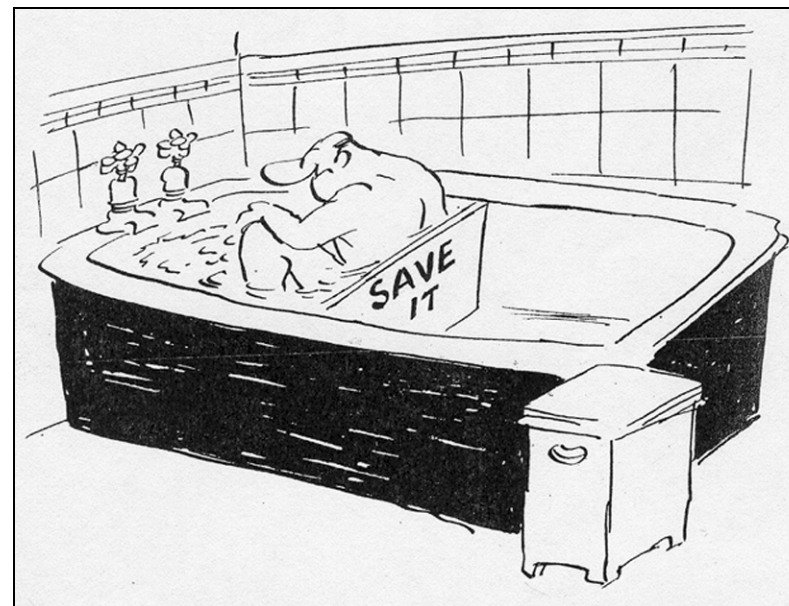
at UKWIR

1 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1

Organised by

Drought and Demand (Lancaster University and Atkins Ltd, UK)

Liquid Politics (Birkbeck College, University of London)



*Punch*, 28 April 1976: cartoon by Larry

# **DROUGHT: past, present and future**

Friday, 10 November 2006

10.00am - 4.30pm

Drought across the South East of England has thrown relations between water providers and consumers into sharp relief. The current drought reveals water consumers' mistrust of privatised and profit-making water companies and heightens perceptions of network mismanagement. The political and social realities of drought serve to undermine efforts of companies, regulators and consumer groups to develop more cooperative relations between water providers and consumers. Meanwhile water resource managers are charged with ensuring they meet demand while protecting water resources.

Periods of water stress and drought have historically exposed fault lines in the relationship between suppliers and consumers. This workshop situates the current 2006 drought within the context of the historical experience of drought and explores lessons for the future of water resource management.

The aim of the workshop is to uncover experiences of droughts – past and present – and what they can tell us about the behaviour, expectations and adaptability of water consumers and providers. The role of regulators in defining the way that consumers and water companies manage demand and respond to drought will also be explored. The workshop brings together those working in the water and consumer advocacy sectors and academics in the field of consumption and water management. Short presentations and group discussions will enhance our understanding of the interdependent relationship between systems of water provision, consumers' experiences of drought and the dynamics of demand.

*The workshop will explore the following questions:*

- How do droughts generate new understandings of what is considered a 'normal' and 'necessary' supply of water?
  - How do droughts affect public perceptions of social and political entitlements to water?
  - What is the role of regulators, water managers and the media in influencing public expectations of drought and in defining appropriate responses?
  - What is the impact of current drought restrictions on demand and how can this be measured?
  - How far do current responses to drought reflect the changing expectations and priorities of consumers, managers and regulators?
  - What improvements or clarifications could be made to existing regulation and legislation to improve the management of future droughts?
  - What lessons do droughts (past and present) offer for the future management of systems of water provision?
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