

# Thames sets Leakfrog on hunt for waste

**Mark Milner**

Britain's biggest water company, Thames Water, has come up with a small device it hopes will slash the amount lost to leaks.

The company is launching the Leakfrog, invented by some of its own employees, which can be fitted to domestic water meters overnight and which detects if water is being lost, suggesting customers' pipes have sprung a leak.

Last year Thames struck a deal with the industry regulator, Ofwat, under which it agreed to spend an additional £150m of its own money on replacing ageing Victorian mains across London to avoid a fine for missing its leakage target.

Thames said the mains replacement programme was generating significant leakage reduction but added that about a quarter of its leakage losses – 170m litres a day – came from customers' own pipes.

"Until now, this water loss has been extremely difficult to pinpoint and account for," Thames Water's director of water services, John Halsall, said yesterday.

"Leaks are not only an unnecessary waste of water, but left undetected can add hundreds of pounds to bills and cause damage to the property. Often customers are unaware if they have leaking pipes."

Thames Water said current leakage detection equipment was bulky, complicated to use and could be fitted to only about 15% of water meters whereas Leakfrog could be used on all meters at less than 10% of the cost.

Leakfrog is the brainchild of four Thames Water boffins and was developed for production in partnership with the Aim-listed company Qconnectis, which specialises in energy and water conservation technology.



**Thames Water installs a Leakfrog on a meter outside St Paul's cathedral**