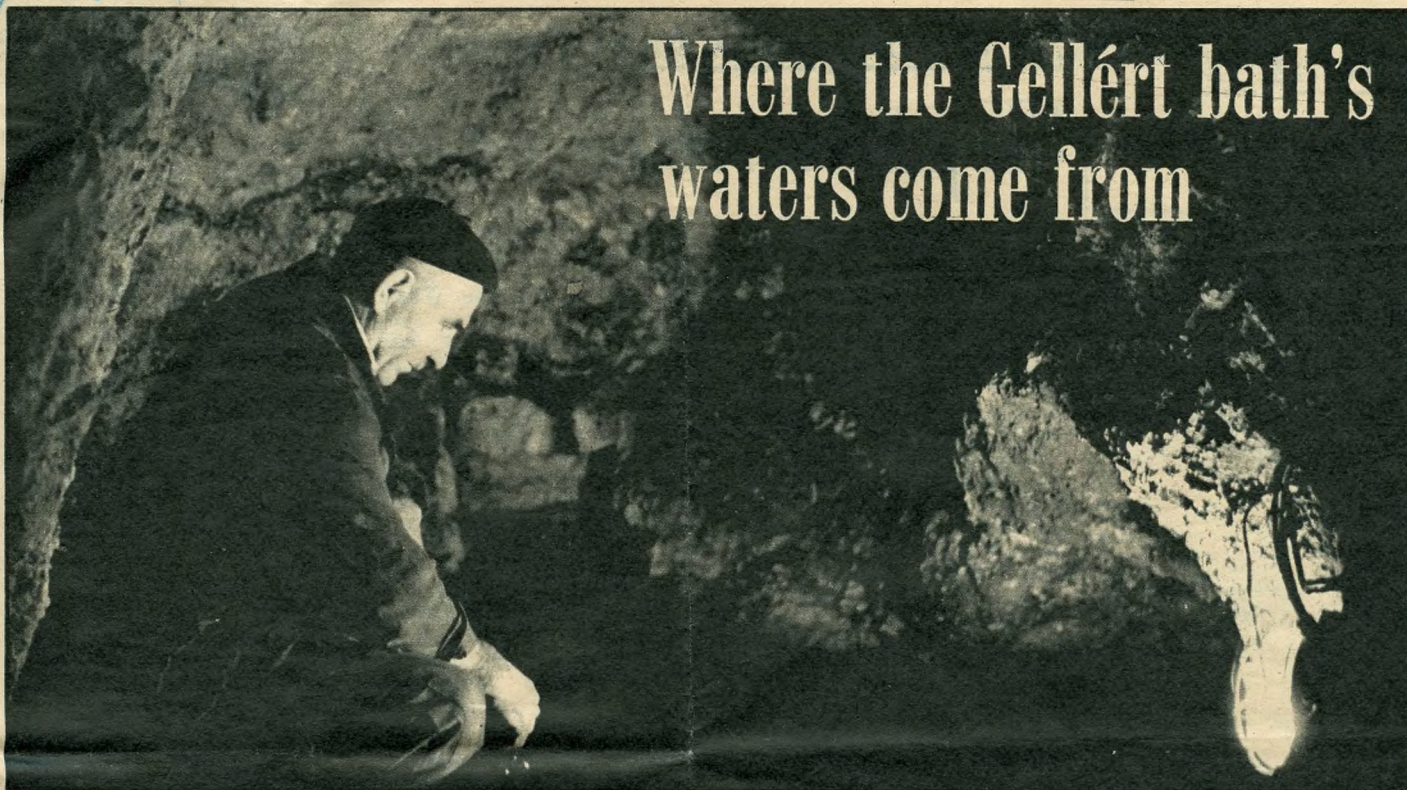


DAILY NEWS

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Where the Gellért bath's waters come from

(DN) — Visitors to Budapest, although they may have heard about the fact that Budapest has hundreds of natural hot-water sources—with many of them known and used for their curative powers in succession by Celts, Romans, Turks, and Hungarians,—are hardly likely to see the underground sources of the water they enjoy in bathing establishments, or swimming pools.

A case in point is the underground sources inside Gellért Hill, at whose feet the prestigious Gellért Hotel—a veritable spa complex—and the Rudas baths have delighted, or cured, thousands upon thousands of Hungarian and foreign visitors alike. In the area extending from the Gellért Hill to the Elizabeth Bridge, there are no less than 150 sources, all yielding hot

water with medicinal qualities. Underground reservoirs collect the waters of most of these, to be ultimately pumped into pools, basins or bath-tubs. Gellért baths, built in 1918, are fed by 19 springs gushing forth 40 to 46 C° hot water, and another 3 yielding 22 C° water.

Descending into depths carved out of living rock under the bathing establishment is like an excursion into the bowels of the earth. A "collecting tunnel" extends along a kilometre and a half between the Gellért and the Rudas baths, capturing the waters of the springs-whose yield earlier depended on existing Danube water levels. Before the tunnel was built, the waters invariably escaped at low-water level time, with Danube waters failing to act as a pressure effect.

The tunnel, built by water engineering firms, occasionally widens out into vaulted chambers for use by a staff of experts, working with instruments probing the water's qualities and registering findings on paper tape.

There are also three natural caverns in the Gellért Hill, two above and one below the artificial tunnel. The one below the tunnel's level is to be ultimately utilised for a purpose which is yet to be specified.

PHOTO MTI — L. KÁCSOR

An underground medicinal spring which feeds the Rudas bath