

An unsanitary village

"There are dozens of cottages [in Port Isaac] which have no sanitary accommodation whatever - I mean this to be taken literally, with all that it implies!"

Cornish Guardian, 1912

Until the coming of the sewage works in the early 1970s things were not that much different. I well remember Mark Provis telling me that when he was a kid he had to learn to swim breast stroke in order to clear a path! I have heard that the old public toilets outside the Post Office (*long ago removed*) used to drain straight out onto the beach below.

I believe there may still be properties here today not connected to the main sewer. I recall when I was on the Parish Council in the late 1990s that we received an irate letter from a visitor whose children entered a cave on Port Isaac beach just below Northcliffe. They heard rushing water and a few seconds later got soaked. We could not pass that letter on to SWW quick enough. After the meeting Robin Penna explained to me that the toilet on the lowest floor of Northcliffe (*below Roscarrock Hill road level*) could only be connected to the main sewer by joining it much lower down the hill. This would mean laying a pipe across neighbouring land. At the time the two neighbours were at daggers drawn so the 'traditional' sanitation system continued.

About 2002 I was taking my old dog round the Main on a bitter January morning, when I noticed 'pink' ice frozen down the cliff below a pipe emanating from the direction of 'West Winds'. I went back and took some photos, then spoke to Tim Andrews who owned it then. He told me that he had been on to SWW for several years and they were hoping to connect him up shortly. I think they did a few years later, and Northcliffe may now be connected.

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