

I think we need to call the Doctor ... the real Doctor!

BEFORE DOCTOR SPROULL

In the early 1800s Frederick Trevan was the village doctor. Initially he lived in the property on Dolphin Street known today as Vesta Cottage and an old plaque above the door reads "A Trevan 1812". He subsequently moved into the family home on Dolphin Street, now called Trevan House.

In the early 1890s Doctor Richard Julyan George (son of Jonathan George who farmed at Trefreock) took over from Doctor Trevan. He was just 25 years old and lived in the house at the side of the Village Hall. Older village residents still refer to the footpath from New Road down to Trewetha Lane as "Doctor George's field" - where he kept his horse - but it is more often called Doctor's Meadow today.

At one time there was a Doctor Christmas who lived on The Terrace and his son was tragically killed by falling over Moon's Grave, the inlet opposite Tag's Pit at Port Gaverne. .

Doctor Fox bought The Rock on Trewetha Lane in 1934 but only practiced there for three years. He sold the house and the practice to Doctor Sproull in 1937. The sale agreement shows that there were also two branch surgeries.

DOCTOR SPROULL

Doctor Sproull was born in Glasgow in 1894 and qualified as a doctor at the Glasgow Western Infirmary. For a short time he was a ship's doctor before joining a practice in Oldham in Lancashire, where he met his future wife and they married. He left the practice when he became very ill with TB and, for some time, went to a clinic in Switzerland - in those days good fresh air was about the only cure for the disease. When he recovered he bought a practice in Dagenham in Essex before coming to Port Isaac. Here he set up his practice at his home, *The Rock*, and worked alone until 1948 - if he wanted a holiday he had to employ a locum.

"He was a good man and very popular with the locals. He did not really do anything else but work and, even on his day off, he would very often go to the hospital in Truro to see any of his patients who had to be in hospital at the time. There were no receptionists or secretaries and my mother answered the phone and took messages. I do not think there were any District Nurses at that time either." Dugald Sproull

During the 1940s and 1950s the St Andrew's Nursing Home on The Terrace, known locally as Sister Brown's, was where people who could afford it went to have their babies. For everyone else there was 'Aunt Rhoda' - as soon as the mother-to-be went into labour one of the younger children was despatched to fetch her! However, Doctor Sproull was always on hand if needed and would probably have delivered most of the babies in the nursing home.

Doctor Sproull worked alone until Doctor Barron joined him in 1948 - at the same time that the NHS was born. The Barrons built Boscarne, the house on the end of The Terrace, and lived there until Doctor Barron died. The two doctors shared the workload, having one day off each week and alternate Sundays and they each were on call three nights a week, alternating on Sunday nights.

By 1954 Doctor Sproull had surgeries at Polzeeath, St Teath, Delabole, St Tudy, St Maby, Tredrizzick and Blisland. Most were in rooms in private houses except for Polzeath where he purchased a bungalow to be used as a surgery. Another doctor was needed and Doctor Baird - another Scot - joined the team. He built Cairnsmore at Port Gaverne as the Baird family home. The three doctors would meet round *The Rock* kitchen table every morning making up their lists as to who was going to visit. Doctor Sproull retired in 1964.



taken from *THE REAL VOICES OF PORT ISAAC*