



The Royal Hotel Buffet



Some older residents may recall the Royal Hotel Buffet that once stood at the junction of Belgrave and Zig Zag Roads. Back in the 1960s, it was a regular watering hole for many locals, including the Cricket and Football Clubs. It was also a favoured place for retirement parties. By the 1990s, however, changing habits had resulted in its closure and, in December 1996, the building became the subject of a Demolition Order. Residents were dismayed at the prospect of the loss of another part of 'old Ventnor'. This was a few years before the central area of the town was designated a conservation area. Town Councillor 'Buster' Bartlett had previously sought to get the building listed, but this failed because too much of the building was not in its original form. The primary frontage visible in the photo, with its distinctive balustrade parapet, was an addition to an earlier structure that is just visible in the stone bay windows on the far right.

The photo is, of course, quite early in date, around 1912. It shows Christopher Cooper, the manager, on the left, together with various family members. It seems likely that they lived on the premises, for the building had extensive private accommodation, including three bedrooms, two sitting rooms, kitchen, scullery and outhouses. The Hotel Buffet itself had, on the ground floor, a large saloon, separate private and public bars, a cellar, and then, on the first floor, a large billiard room.

The building was indeed demolished, the owners (The Royal Hotel) pointing out that it was deemed unsafe and the costs of repair prohibitive.

Ventnor & District Local History Society: Michael Freeman, from files in Ventnor Heritage Centre



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The Society and Heritage Centre are run and managed by volunteers.

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