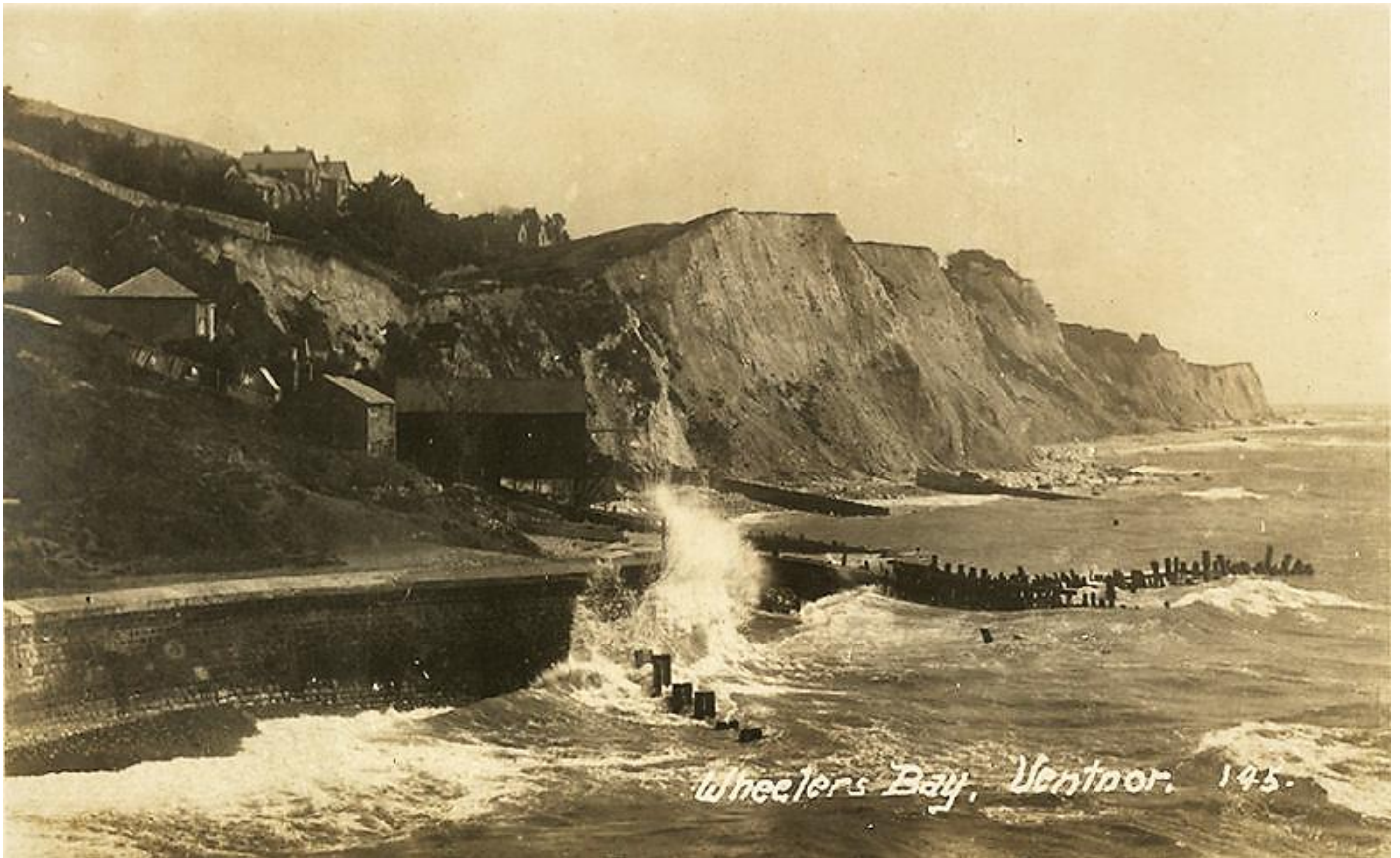




VENTNOR & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

## Wheeler's Bay to Monk's Bay coastline



This is an Edwardian post-card image of the coastline taken from the short promontory upon which Ventnor Gas Works was situated. The collection of buildings on the left is instantly recognisable as Wheeler's Bay, for all remain in place today. Beyond, though, one sees a sequence of steep coastal cliffs, with the odd breakwater along the shore beneath. This is a view that was altered fundamentally with the construction of the elaborate revetment that extended all the way to Horseshoe Bay and Monk's Bay in the later 1980s. It was part of a bold scheme to stabilise these cliffs by potentially reducing the pace of recession and slippage, which was, in turn, intended to try to protect a range of properties just inland from the cliff-top. A few can be seen at the top left of the picture.

The gas works site already had some protection from a sea wall, as the image shows, and this probably dated from the construction of the works which opened in 1851. Further west, towards Ventnor, the Eastern Esplanade had been constructed in the 1880s, so that it was possible to walk between Ventnor and Wheeler's Bay. But last winter, of course, storm damage to part of the eastern esplanade, coupled with the longer term effects of ground water, has revealed serious instability that is necessitating major engineering works and the suspension of public access. There has now been a temporary closure of almost the entire revetment leading to Bonchurch in order to test whether there are yet further weak points in this long line of sea defences. Most public access is suspended. If anyone wishes to walk this coastline, in other words, it will have to be on an ebbing tide, much as would have been the case at the time of this post-card image, over one hundred years ago.

*Ventnor & District Local History Society*: Michael Freeman, from files in Ventnor Heritage Centre, the image taken from [www.ventnor.shalfleet.net](http://www.ventnor.shalfleet.net)



Ventnor & District Local History Society is a registered charity, working to preserve and record the history of our area and make it available to the public in the Ventnor Heritage Centre.  
The Society and Heritage Centre are run and managed by volunteers.

[www.ventnorheritage.org.uk](http://www.ventnorheritage.org.uk) / telephone 855407

