



The two hotels pictured here stood on either side of Bath Road as it starts to rise towards La Falaise. One building is still in place; the other has now gone, a victim of the land movement that threatens so much of Ventnor from time to time.



Undercliff House Hotel, above, was once Undercliff House, the 'bathhouse' for the Royal Hotel (hence the name of Bath Road, which leads down to it from the hotel). By 1954, the date of this picture, it was a popular hotel, shown in this photo from a family album. It is now of course the Spyglass Inn.

The building shown on the right was the Balmoral Hotel which stood across the road from Undercliff House Hotel. This photograph was taken in 1910, and shows it covered with creepers and with what are probably the hotel staff posing for the photographer (the ladies on the balcony, the men standing on the pavement in front). The Balmoral (later known as the Monte Carlo) was next door to the Montrose Guest House (the villa with a balcony, just visible to the right of the hotel), but both buildings are now gone, victims to land movement that occurred in the Bath Road area in 1960. The roof of the Balmoral hotel was cracked and there were serious interior structural problems, and in September 1961 it was decided to demolish it.

Land slips and movement are of course a constant threat here. Kevin Digweed remembers another landslip which occurred during the thaw that followed the 'arctic winter' of 1962/63. The fault line for this slip was, he tells us, towards the top of Bath Road just before - in fact on - the upper hair pin bend, well above the Monte Carlo/Balmoral Hotel. He recalls the result of the slip being a gap in the road of about 18 inches with an almost 2 foot vertical drop; there was a similar fault line on Shore Hill just below the entrance to the Winter Gardens, and there are still noticeably more severe gradients on these steep hills where the road was back filled.

Lesley Telford, [Ventnor & District Local History Society](#), using material from our archives. Thanks to Stephan Wells for the photograph of Undercliff House Hotel, and to Kevin Digweed for additional information.

