

Sea Water Supply Line Choked

INTERESTING ANGLES OF 50 YEAR OLD SERVICE

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BOURNEMOUTH'S town sea water supply is again giving trouble. Because of the blocking of the intake pipe, somewhere between the inlet off the Pier and the pumping station inside the Pavilion, there is at present no supply to the public baths and to private users.

THE CAUSE

Strenuous efforts are being made to free the pipe from a blockage which is caused by marine growths of various kinds and sand, which is washed into the pipe by tides.

Work is now proceeding on the preparation for what will be an experiment. Two large holes are being dug by Corporation workmen east of the Pier. These have the object of reaching the intake pipe at two different points.

A firm has been engaged by the Corporation and they will install some special apparatus in the hope of clearing the pipe.

An "Echo" reporter who made inquiries from a representative of this firm as to what form the apparatus would take was told that no statement could be made at present.

It is possible that a diver may have to operate from the Pier landing stages later on.

OVER 50 YEARS AGO

The sea water supply in Bournemouth was instituted 55 years ago in 1888.

It consisted of a sea water intake lying on the sea bed on the east side of the Bournemouth Pier with an inlet near the Pier-head.

The sea water gravitated to pumping apparatus in the Pleasure Gardens from which it was pumped to distributing towers situated at Holdenhurst-road and Norwich-road.

The pumps were embodied in the structure of the Pavilion, where they still are.

Sea water mains with hydrants were laid in parts of the Borough and at the time the scheme covered an area of 1,414 acres.

With the extension of the Borough there was no corresponding extension of the services, except for the extension of the supply to include Stokewood-road Baths.

FOR ROAD WATERING

One purpose for which the sea water service was laid on was for watering the roads to keep down the dust.

That was before the advent of tar and bitumenised road surfaces. When modern roads were constructed it was found that the salt content of sea water had an injurious effect on tar and bitumen.

Therefore, watering the roads with sea water from carts had to be stopped. Salt water had been used in preference to fresh water because it remained damp for a longer time.

Another purpose which was served by the salt water supply was for flushing out the ends of sewers by means of automatic flushing tanks as well as by hand operated flushing.

Besides this, stand pipes were distributed at prominent points in the Borough so that people who wished to draw off sea water for their own use could do so free of charge. These stand

pipes, however, were never very popular. They fell into disuse and were all removed long ago.

TO PRIVATE HOUSES

Then provision was made for the supply of sea water to private houses at an appropriate charge. A special fee was charged at premises where there were swimming baths. Later both the Stokewood-road and Pier Approach Baths were connected to the service.

The Corporation still has a few private customers who would draw salt water supplies if there were any to be had, but the blocking of the pipe has cut off the supply for the time being.

SEA WATER BATHS

In 1934 it was reported that 20 local hotels and boarding houses offered sea water baths to visitors. It was held, rightly or wrongly, that sea water was beneficial to sufferers from gout and rheumatism and many of these, notably the aged and infirm, found it impossible to go bathing in the sea.

Sea water was always in considerable demand in the town of Bournemouth, long before the pipe service was installed.

In the old days, so veterans declare, visitors to Bournemouth used to get their sea water in a more spectacular fashion. It was brought round in a large "tub on wheels" and was sold from door to door.

Drilling a Pipe

A REPRESENTATIVE of the General Descaling Company, Limited, of Sheffield, has told an "Echo" reporter of the method being adopted in an effort to free the Bournemouth salt water supply pipe, which is blocked up.

A large cavity is being dug on the beach just east of Bournemouth Pier. A section of the 12-inch pipe about a yard long will be uncovered and taken out. Then boring will be carried out by a special machine which is the only one of its type in the country. This works with long rods and bores first of all a three-inch hole, which is gradually widened to 12 inches.

The first part of the pipe to be cleared out will be that between the hole in the beach and the outlet in the sea off the Pier. If the pipe is still found to be blocked, the section between the beach and the pumping apparatus at the Pavilion will be then bored out.

Hard as Stone

MARINE growths which form in sea water pipes of this nature are of a hardness something like solid stone. But the special machine being used is stated to be capable of drilling out a pipe up to 300 yards in length in one operation.

Before drilling starts a diver has to go down off the Pier and seal off the open end of the pipe on the sea bed. Diver R. Hill, who will do this work, was the diver who went down from a Skylark recently in search of the body of the R.A.F. pilot whose Spitfire crashed into the sea when taking part in a "Battle of Britain" demonstration.

