

The Mail on Sunday

Associated Newspapers Limited
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Dear Sir,

I was absolutely disgusted with your article about Camelford in the Sunday Mail of 20/04/14!
As our Town Council has decided not to complain to you, I decided that I should.

I am Chairman of Camelford Association of Residents (CAR) and also webmaster of www.camelford.org our local website. The water incident 25 years ago was an accident and should never have happened and South West Water took full responsibility for it. It was not the fault of the people of Camelford although the negative articles, such as yours, which come out every year just prior to the start of the summer season which starts on 1st May, adversely affects the tourism business for the year. I understand and sympathise with the families of those who feel they were infected with aluminium due to this event but see no reason for the continuing bad publicity for the Town!

“Village of the Damned”!

This year we have had a double whammy as a South West drama group is touring with a new play about us called “The Man with Green Hair”. A couple of weeks ago in Plymouth I saw a lot of younger people with green hair and red and blue but I don’t think it represented aluminium poisoning.

Although I was born in Somerset I have lived in North Cornwall for over 30 years and at the time of the incident was working as a Bar Manager in a Public House in Tintagel. On the day we noticed that the water coming from the tap was discoloured and had a bad smell. It tasted awful!

Thinking that we could sterilise it by boiling for use in Tea and Coffee we observed that the milk curdled. It was unusable.

How people became infected I do not know but can safely say it was not by drinking. Over the years I have obviously met many who remember the incident but not one has said that they drank the water.

I used bottled water in my cold water fish tank and the fish lived for many years. I did have an established indoor Kentia Palm that died so I complained to the water company who asked its value and sent a cheque to compensate.

Camelford was granted a Royal Charter in 1279 by King Henry III as a market TOWN – you call us a “Village”. It now has approximately 3000 residents not 2000 and is considered by some to be the capital of North Cornwall. Situated on the edge of Bodmin Moor and a stone’s throw from the sea, it is a beautiful place to live and work and visit. Camelford is a walker’s paradise!

None of this was mentioned in your article.

I would point out that Camelford Water is now among the best in the country. The water is soft with no lime scale deposit facilitating a reduction in soaps and detergents. Many visitors say our water tastes as good as bottled.

The scientists will continue to examine the evidence presented to them and will no doubt eventually arrive at a conclusive report (but probably not before April next year).

Perhaps though, next year – year 26, might be the year that we get a good influx of tourists oblivious of the water tragedy who will appreciate exactly what Camelford has to offer.
The first year since the incident happened that there will be no disparaging article to put them off!

Yours Faithfully,

Alan Burgis
Chairman CAR