

Interview Summary

Monday 12th June 2023

Cathy Welch

Croyde Bay

[Croyde Accommodation | Croyde Bay Holiday Resort | Croyde Bay \(croydeunison.co.uk\)](#)

Facebook Group : [\(11\) Facebook](#)

[\(11\) Photo Memories of Ye Olde Croyde Bay | Facebook](#)

Cathy went to Croyde Bay every year with her family from the age of 3 between 1961 and 1979, then again from 1985 to around 2010.

A total of 52 times!

Her dad chose Croyde Bay as it was created by the NALGO Union (later Unison), which he was a member of. Her mum was a little snooty about it at first - she was a bit of an intellectual. But ended up loving it.

Preparations and Travel:

Everyone excited a few days in advance. Mum made lists for each child (5) for sundries, clothes, etc...

Dad would drive all the way, from 3am! Suitcases wrapped in plastic on the roof, kids singing, dad would park and nap with everyone inside.

On arrival:

Shouting and excitement. Cathy and the kids would sit by the entrance on the lookout for friends arriving at camp too.

Accommodation:

Basic furniture, no privacy. As a teenager, had to hide alcohol in the ceiling!

Food:

Fully catered, loads of food, 4 meals a day! Breakfast, Lunch, Tea, Dinner. Classic English fare.

Very big hall, full of campers. All ate as a family.

The whole place would sing grace, very convivial and loud. Some would organise evening activities.

No Bar or alcohol on site, and not approved when it was proposed to open one later. Probably to keep things family orientated and safe.

People: A real mix of classes and due to the nature of the camp, very much a leveller, from CEOs to Refuse Collectors, Librarians, etc...Mostly white folk.

Activities:

Not much family time apart from meals.

Real sense of Freedom, kids left to their own devices, so much for them to do with their friends.

Kids given pocket money (sixpence) to go to the village and get ice-creams and visit the Teddy Bear Shop and Museum.

Dad loved dancing with mum, saying it is the closest thing to heaven for him.

Concerts, Singing, loads of games and sports: Ball games, Cards, Billiards, Egg and Spoon race, Fancy Dress, Sand Castles, etc...a novelty: Cork and Ball game.

Entertainment:

Woody and His Orchestra, playing Clarinet, Drums and Keyboards.

Parents would organise competitions, write sketches, songs about the camp and perform them altogether with the campers.

Sound and smells:

The Wakey Wakey Bell, No tannoy nor music. The sound of sea, kids having fun around the pool, music, laughter. Sunscreen, Pool, food,

1st times:

Illicit drinking (getting Scrumpy from the village), canoodling, smoking, sexual adventures...all the naughty things a teenager gets up to. Falling in love and getting heartbroken.

Later:

Cathy's son was born in 1989 and went every year until 2012. It had changed a lot - more self catering. People are not so communal any more. A very different atmosphere.

Now:

She goes for city breaks, camping, walking, and visiting Croyde but staying with friends.

She still has a massive affection for the camp where she made lifelong friendships, gave her the confidence to go on stage and sing. It made her who she is.

"If you cut through me, you see it".

There are still regular meetings of fellow campers and even a Facebook group.