

# What did you do in the Summer Holidays?

**I REMEMBER** in my teaching days, asking that question when returning to school after the long six week break.

So living in Goxhill, what did we do in the early 1960's? To name but a few of our family activities: a memorable one is :

## **'A day on the River Bank'**

On one particular day, Dennis and Myself (Ramona), Kevin and Wendy teamed up with our widowed neighbour, Eva Morris and her children Irene, Peter and 'Tiggy'. We had prepared our bikes, the night before (some borrowed). Each person carried some 'equipment: this consisted of balls, bats, bottles of water, tin kettle, teapot, tea, a cup each, sausages, bread and individual jellies (my bright idea).

Arriving at the Haven, after a three mile bike ride; we selected a spot, where there was a decent sized grassy patch, beside the river. Now to work! In those days, the bank was very different from today. We collected brick waste, stones, and anything which would make a base for our fire. Now everyone picked up twigs and wood washed up by the tide; there was always plenty of that in those days. We built the fire ready to light; then fixed ourselves up with a 'Rounders Pitch' Never was there such fun and hilarity as this game of rounders, the ball going into the mud, and one of us after it, slipping as we ran.

Now the children, and us were hungry! We had brought matches for the fire (cheats!). Eventually we got it going. I think it was we who invented smokey sausages, and smokey cups of tea; But Hey we were hungry! We ate everything, buns we had made; apple pies now for the jelly!! Oh dear they had melted, so everyone enjoyed a fruity drink.

At the end of our day, muddy, bedraggled, tired but happy; we loaded our bikes, and set off on the three mile ride home. We were so 'mucky', we had to wash before having a bath. Tomorrow there would be all the muddy clothes to put in the 'dolly tub' (no washing machines). But we were all happy 'mudlarks', and slept soundly.

Another favourite activity enjoyed by Kevin and friend Jim Brennan (Still friends today).was:

## **'Let's build a bike'**

This was a job, lasting several days; Off they went to the rubbish dump! In those days things were just thrown in there, no 'keeper'. They would come home

with wheels, pedals frames, chains, mudguards and whatever they could find for the bike. These took several days to collect.

Now they could start work. Dad's sheds were raided for tools to construct the bike; they spent hours on the project.

Sometimes they came home with a set of pram wheels; to make a trolley; steered with a rope, no brakes!

At the end of the holiday, most of the things found their way back to the tip.

## **How about a Rag Doll?**

This was for Wendy and her friends; we had loads of material; I spent hours with them, cutting out and sewing, by hand, to make the doll. We chopped up all sorts of material into small pieces to stuff the doll. We made Doll Beds out of cardboard boxes; clothes from old scraps; we always had a 'rag bag' in the days before the 'throw away society'.

Well I could go on forever, but that will not do! Just one more activity that was enjoyed by all the Village. That was the annual "Sunday School Outing" to Cleethorpes on the train. We all packed up changes of clothes, swimsuits, and as much food as we could carry to last the day. The day was spent on the beach, as much as possible; only at the last few minutes did we go near the 'slot machines'; money was limited. On a sunny day it was great. Rainy days were best forgotten.

How different the children of today spend their holidays, many going to foreign lands, or to stay in hotels in this country. Most people have cars to travel away from home. Then we only had bikes, if we were lucky. A bike then was a means of transport not a toy.

Today's children will have a very different tale to tell of their holiday. Well we must move with the times; but not throw away our happy memories **Ramona Percy**

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