

Photographs courtesy of Lynda Taylor



An Interview with Lynda Taylor

By Lesley Yasmin McCallion

Lynda was ten years old in 1957 when she first went to Butlin's at Filey. She travelled there with her parents and a school friend whose family were also going. Travelling along in her father's van, Lynda and her parents were in the front and her friends in the back; the journey seemed to take ages, something like half a day, though with hindsight Lynda says she realises it was not really all that far. The excitement of going on holiday was doubled by having her friend along and by having looked forward to the trip for so very long.

Having arrived at the camp, Lynda describes a real "buzz" about the place. There was so much to do and so much freedom for her because she was able to go off after breakfast and take part in all the free events on offer, often not needing to come back to her parents until lunchtime. She then had her freedom again until tea time. Lynda talks about the safety of the environment but there were also rides, games and theatre shows which all made for great excitement; almost like paradise.... It was fantastic! She said, "You must remember there was nothing like it on the streets of Hull." At this time in the 1950's a visit to Hull fair had been the greatest excitement in her life, prior to her holiday.

She would often go off all morning, taking the opportunity of all the free activities at Butlin's such as swimming, which she had great fun trying to master. She and the other children loved the fountains and would run underneath the stream of water letting it splash down their backs while other children played in the pools.

Lynda talks about her autograph book and in common with other children at the camp, running up to the various artists and other staff asking for their signature. She realises now they were "just workers"; ordinary people in fact, but to her they seemed really famous, "like film stars." Her dad recognised Billy Butlin himself in the ballroom at Filey and although she felt a bit nervous, Lynda asked for his - the "ultimate"- autograph and it is in her book to this day. She says she thought he looked quite round-faced but "serious" - surprised perhaps even to have been recognised. Lynda remembers, too, the waitress who looked after her family all week. Lynda and her family always had the same

table and three solid meals a day served by their own waitress and plenty to eat all round.

The highlight of Lynda's week though, was the time she spent horse riding. She had already had some riding lessons for her tenth birthday in the April before her summer holiday at the camp, but now she had the chance to ride on the sands at Filey, which she describes as really exhilarating with the fresh easterly breeze blowing! The pony seemed large and friendly and very well behaved. She was even captured on film and had the opportunity to watch herself on horseback in the cinema at the camp. Meanwhile during their stay her parents took it easy, enjoying the theatre shows or playing cards outside or in a beer garden with Lynda and her friend playing nearby.

Lynda feels something special has been lost with the passing of Butlin's at Filey and the increased popularity of package holidays abroad. She remembers how no one seemed to worry about the safety of children going off to play all day and how the children never had to go to their parents to ask for money because everything was free. You could go in the pool as many times as you wanted. This was a real novelty and added to the sense of freedom she had on a holiday that felt to her like a week in paradise.

