

Left: Article courtesy of Scarborough Evening News, Yorkshire Regional Newspapers YO11 1BB

Below: fountain - Sarah Daniels



Memories From Canada

By Alan Vickers

My first Butlin's holiday was at Skegness when I was about six or seven years old. Throughout my childhood and as a young adult I went on several Butlin's holidays until my wife and I moved to Canada.

In 1974 I went to Butlin's Filey, I did not know it then but it was to be my last holiday with Butlin's. My wife and I took our one-year-old son. He won the Bonny Baby contest and we had a great time. It was there that we saw a Redcoat called Liam Kelly, who was a fantastic singer and was performing in the French Bar in the evenings. Liam had recorded an LP, which we bought because we liked him so much. Though I did not know at the time, there was a group of young guys who were also fans of Liam. One night Liam nicknamed them the "Hole In The Wall Gang". Thirty years later I found their Internet site and I have been in touch with them since.

About five years ago my wife and I went back to England for a three-week vacation. My father-in-law knew how much we liked Filey, so he took us there for a day trip; we wanted to see the old place again. As we were driving along the coast road I was

keeping a look out for the Butlin's camp but somehow I missed it, or so I thought. I kept that thought for about four years until I took some time off work. In the eight weeks I was off I spent a lot of time on the Internet. One day in a fit of nostalgia, I typed the words Butlin's Filey into the search engine, I came up across a 'Butlin's Memories' website that had all the camps listed with pictures of the old days and how they look today. I clicked on the Filey Camp section and what I saw was totally devastating; the reason I did not see the camp when we went to Filey was because it was no longer there. Not only that, I spent over an hour looking at the pictures of how it was deserted and left to rot for so many years. It was like a part of my childhood had been destroyed along with the camp.

Sometime soon I am hoping to take another trip to England. Once again I will stand on the empty site that must hold so many memories for so many people.

God bless you Billy Butlin, progress can take away your buildings but it will never take away the wonderful memories you made for all of us. No amount of sunshine on a Spanish beach will replace the sunshine in every one of your Redcoats, nor will it replace the great people who staffed your camps and made our holidays so wonderful.