



VENTNOR & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

## Flowers Brook Camping Site



One Wednesday in June of last year, the Heritage Centre was visited by a large family from Tyrone in Northern Ireland. There was a mum and dad, a large family of young children, and grandpa. They were a lively group and, when asked if this was their first time in Ventnor, the answer was that, many years back, the family had often stayed at the Flowers Brook campsite, as seen in this 1950s postcard image. In fact, they were still in touch with the people who used to run it and were hoping to make contact while on their present visit.

When, a few weeks back, I was working through the Heritage Centre's postcard collection looking for something else, I came across a series of postcards on Flowers Brook. Quite a few were familiar, notably the ones depicting the ornamental pond that has, at various times, been conserved and improved. But I had not seen this image of the neat lines of tents before, nor quite appreciated the idyllic nature of this spot when viewed from such a vantage point, Woody Bay and its beach to the left and Sugar Loaf in the left distance. I was then immediately reminded of the visit of the family from Tyrone and began looking in the late Fay Brown's copious index files to find out more.

Between 1946 and 1971, the site was owned and operated by Mr and Mrs C.J. Young. From an advertisement in one of the Ventnor guide-books of the early 1950s, it seems that there were caravans as well as tents for hire, although the former do not figure in the postcard. The caravans were equipped with gas and electric and were fully fitted, everything provided except linen. A four person family could stay for 6 guineas a week in June. Tents that accommodated six people were described as 14 x 14 x 7 feet, the weekly charge being £2 and 15 shillings, with safari or camp beds available for hire by the week, along with tables and chairs. There were flush toilets, mains water, as well as a refreshment kiosk, and tradesmen were said to call at the camp daily. In 1971, the business was taken over by a Mr Davies and a Mr Murray and it seems that it was still up and running as a caravan park (though not tents) in 1988, according to the information in a sale notice in the County Press which recorded the venture as including 21 static caravans, tea rooms, a detached house and a putting green. By the mid-1990s, though, the caravan site was no more, having been acquired by Southern Water as part of its waste water schemes.

Quite when the family from Tyrone enjoyed holidaying at Flowers Brook is unclear, but my guess is that it was probably later 1970s to early 1980s.

Michael Freeman, [Ventnor & District Local History Society](http://www.ventnorheritage.org.uk), from files in Ventnor Heritage Centre.



Ventnor & District Local History Society is a registered charity, working to preserve and record the history of our area and make it available to the public in the Ventnor Heritage Centre.

The Society and Heritage Centre are run and managed by volunteers.

[www.ventnorheritage.org.uk](http://www.ventnorheritage.org.uk)

