

Wicky's Then and Now

Wicky concludes his memories of his earlier years in Piha and on the West Coast with a comparison between then and now.

Surf Boards

In those early days surf boards were just that, flat boards usually of five ply wood about five feet by eighteen inches. Some were curved up at the bow to obviate digging into the sand on take off. Their use gave us an immense amount of fun, at least for those times.

The Road

The final six miles of narrow winding road out to Piha were notorious for the dust which percolated everywhere especially the engine compartments of our cars.

Heat and Light

Some bachs had wood burning stoves whilst others used kerosene burning primuses for cooking and general heating purposes. Lighting was obtained from the old fashioned Tilly pressure type incandescent lamps or from plain kerosene wick type portable lamps. Otherwise candles found a use where less light was required such as in the bedroom.

Toilet facilities

These were mostly of the "long drop" type whilst the "more modern" cottages had flush toilets plus septic tanks.

Water Supply

The water supply was from corrugated

galvanised iron or silo type concrete tanks. Quite early on, our end of North Piha boasted a group supply system. Water was treated and pumped to two huge silo type concrete tanks atop the ridge behind our bachs. The water was then reticulated to the bachs.

Corrosion

Corrosion and rust were real problems. Pure aluminium corroded completely away whilst alloys were more resistant. Galvanised iron corroded and then rusted all too readily. Hence, at that time, fibrolite was recommended for roofs and brass for fittings such as hinges.

Those were, indeed, the golden years – the 1950's to the 1980's.

Written by Newton Wickham CBE, Aged 93 years