



# CELEBRATING 40 YEARS AT Highlands end - James Cox



Grandad Keeping the Park Tidy



Area 1 during the 80's



Swimming Pool Foundations



Swimming Pool Building



Block two rebuild (James, Robert and our first dog Toby)

## Decline of Farming.....

Could you imagine sharing your holiday with a herd of cows???

Well up until the 1990's the Dairy Herd on surrounding Farmland walked through the park twice a day to be milked.

Sadly during the mid 1990's the farm was sold and we purchased some of the land but this meant the end to our daily visits from the cows and the local dairy farm, a traditional family business which is missed in the village.

In 1970 the search began, Ken & Pat Butcher (My grandparents) decided it was time for a change. No longer would they farm pigs (over 1000) and grow vegetables in Hertfordshire, they decided to set up a new life with their two Daughters Vanessa and Katrina in the Tourism Industry. The search lasted about 18 months before finding a quaint little farm in West Dorset. Ken set his eyes on Highlands and instantly knew it was the one. In early 1971 Highlands End Farm entered the family or I should say the family entered Highlands End Farm.

In the beginning the park consisted of mainly pig and cow sheds and was very much what you would expect from the word 'farm' however it also had 60 Holiday Homes and 20 tourers with planning permission for 160 Caravan Holiday Homes.

The average prices back in 1971 to hire a Caravan Holiday Home for the week was 12 shillings and £67 a year for a Caravan Holiday Home pitch fee. It was £16 a week for a Tourer and 50p per night for a tent. The prices also reflected the amenities being shared with the farm animals!

The first major investment came over the winter of 1971 with the installation of a toilet block costing £18,000 even with no electric lighting. The showers were coin operated and many people had interesting times leaping in and out of the showers to add more coins. To try to paint a picture, before and after the 1972 holiday season the static caravans were removed to allow the farm animals into the park to subsidise costs. This was made easier as at this stage there were no services, including no roads and not even a main water supply. Up until 1976 water was pumped by Ken and his team from a borehole near to the entrance of the park. When I say team it consisted of himself, a warden and a holiday maker.

The View over Lyme Bay



Touring Area (Now Caravan Holiday Homes)



Ferguson 35 during the 70's

## THE 1980'S—an era of change!!!!

The beginning of the 1980's saw the purchase of the flats which are on the drive as you enter. These were redeveloped in 2009 to a building we are very proud of, offering three apartments for all year round holiday rental.

By 1982 wedding bells were ringing and Martin Cox and Vanessa Butcher married in St Mary's Church, Bridport.

Martin (Dad) worked for the Local Authority and the fire service, which he continued to do. Martin became the seventh member of staff in 1984 and encouraged the development of the bar which opened in 1985 and then the Swimming Pool in 1988. The bar involved the demolition of the old dairy to make way for the move towards increased holiday amenities.

Many of you may remember the heavy snow that occurred during 1985, and whilst they were trying to build the bar. Vanessa and Martin spent hours covering the concrete with straw to protect it from the frost.

*Next time you visit the bar imagine the size it used to be.*

Where you see the dessert chiller we still have the stainless steel from the old kitchen, it was tiny and we never expected the bar to become what it is today. If you look at what is called the 'Restaurant' you will see what was the old main

entrance door, now providing a barrier between the restaurant and part of the main room. The Bar and Restaurant area are more or less the same, however that was the complete size back in 1985.

The Bar has become an important focal point for the park and for many local events.

In 1988 Sir James Spicer opened Highlands End Swimming Pool, one of the first of its kind in the area. Also during 1988 we knocked down an old barn and built the main toilet block on the left side of North Rye Acres, or Area 2 as it was known until this year.

On the 20th January 1990 we were hit by one of the worst storms experienced in West Dorset. Some of you may remember the damage caused, but if you don't, it included damage to several caravans which had to be replaced by new models. Martin and Hilary (one of our longest serving employees) could do nothing during the height of the storm but had the foresight to order 25 new caravans from BK Bluebird in Poole which meant all owners affected were up and running by the 1st of April. Within 24 hours of ordering the Caravans there were many other parks after the same Caravans due

to the shortage of models.

Once over the storm it was time to bring some more of Martin's hobby to the park. The extension on the bar was built to house our very own 1936 Leyland Fire Engine, which now is the centre piece of what is believed to be one of the largest private collections of fire service memorabilia in the UK on public display. The Fire Engine was in Weymouth and during the 1960's it was based in Bridport and driven by two of Martin's Uncles who both served more than 35 years at the station.

The park road was put in during the early 70's and Grandad remembers that it cost £11,000. This was followed by slowly introducing electric pitches and services with the final pitch being completed in 1989.

The 'second new style Toilet Block' was built in 1998 and involved the demolition of the shower block which was built in 1984 - we demolished the first building constructed during our ownership - another milestone and something which maybe felt rather unusual, but was done to enhance the facilities

The Toilet Blocks are nearly ready for refurbishment again to keep up with customer expectations.



Follow us on Facebook (West Dorset Leisure Holidays) and on twitter (WDLH) for all up to date news, pictures, videos and special offers and as a way to keep in touch with friends from your holiday

Also— If you have any stories or pictures from the last 40 years we would love to see them!



### Special points of interest...

- 1971 Purchased Highlands
- 1978 Purchased Golden Cap
- 1985 Bar Built
- 1987 Purchased Alberlon and joined it to Golden Cap
- 1988 Pool opened
- 1990 Bar extended and Fire Engine on display
- 1993 Acquired Fields on the East.
- 1994 Tennis Court Built
- 1995 Shepherd's Down Pitch and Putt opened.
- 1996 Acquired Land on the West of the park
- 1997 Purchased Graston Copse and Larkfield
- 1999 Barn was Built at Highlands
- 2000 Acquired Watton Farmland on the East of the park
- 2009 Apartments demolished and rebuilt
- 2009 Pond constructed
- 2011 40th Anniversary

Highlands End Holiday Park—1971—2011

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Highlands from the sky



Fox Cubs enjoying the lake



View from one of our Hire Caravans



Gym, updated in 2007



Apartments 2009

In 2009 we decided that Highlands needed to give more back to the wildlife. This was helped by an interest in breeding ducks for the pond at Sandyholme. So in 2009 a pond was built which you can see as you enter the Park, this is now open to the public as part of a new footpath linking Highlands with Bridport. (Please keep dogs on leads and food for the ducks is available from the shop).

Please enjoy the new footpath.

Just so you know, we are now breeding our own Ducks and Geese as well as the odd Chicken!

**Jurassic Coast**  
We would like to thank you all for all your kind donations over the last 3 years towards the World Heritage Site and Jurassic Coast on which we live and you holiday. We are pleased to announce that you have donated over £18,000.  
*Thank you*



James Weld, Chair of JCT with Martin holding one of the information boards

## The last 20 years, how times and highlands end have changed

Development continued through the 1990's with the Tennis Court coming in 1994 and **Shepherds Down** pitch and putt in 1995, adding to the many amenities and activities Highlands has to offer. In the mid 1990's it was decided to add the Sauna and Steam room to the Swimming Pool, giving that extra edge of modern facilities on a holiday park which is also available to the local community.

The Reception and shop were redeveloped in stages during the late 1990's, providing a modern area for the day to day goings on of our busy reception and bookings office which was added in 2007 to take control of all bookings for all parks. The shop and tourist information have continued to grow and is now home to many local products and produce, we hope to add to this over the 2011/12 winter as we plan to change the existing shop store to make a small coffee shop with views across the valley.

In 2004 we obtained planning permission to build the new drive way, removing the park traffic from Mount lane and providing our customers with new and easier access, and the community benefit from less traffic in the lane.

Over the last 5 years, both in normal and park life we have found a huge move towards encouraging sustainable tourism and to think of our environmental impact. Because of this Highlands has been following and testing some environmental projects to help make the park more sustainable and environmentally friendly. These have included, the installation of recycling stations around the parks, including green waste which is recycled by the maintenance team and re-used across our many flower beds. The introduction of environmentally friendly vehicles, various trials have happened including milk floats, which ran on electric, sadly the health and safety hats caught up with these and they had to be sold. Other aspects have included water butts on all buildings, around 80% of our watering is now done using recycled water. The Showers in the toilet blocks, and swimming pool are now assisted using Solar energy and air source heat pumps, this includes all the water used in the bar and restaurant. We are investing in the future of alternative energy and the new apartments are our **most modern aspect of today's world, with all heating carried out by air source heat pumps. You may soon see PV Panels on the Swimming Pool roof, helping to heat and maintain the pool at its comfortable 29 degrees. For the future we are looking at rainwater harvesting and further use of solar panels and air heat source pumps.**

### Times are changing:

How have times changed, we used to send out endless streams of mail, including 10,000 brochures at one point. Now the mailshots have become email shots and online newsletters that are available from the website. The last few years have seen some great changes in our business ways, with the main being the bookings form disappearing and online bookings taking



over. However from our statistics we still have a great deal of customers booking over the phone, and a growing number booking via the internet on a mobile phone as they drive down the motorway.

*What will be next???*



The Team has made and will continue to make Highlands End a success.

From the staff that were here from the beginning to the current 30 all year round, and 70 in peak season everyone has had a key part in the success of Highlands End. We would like to take **this opportunity to say 'Thank You' to staff both past and present.**

A special thanks must go to those staff members who have worked with us for long periods of time, mentioning no names, some of the Highlands team members have completed: 30 years, 25 years, 20 years, 15 years, and 10 years!

## Thank you... and to The future

We would like to take this opportunity to say 'Thank you'.

We manage the park on four main principles, VICE.....

**Visitors** - We enable visitors to enjoy West Dorset and our wonderful coastline and countryside.

**Industry** - We are a part of the tourism sector which brings economic benefits to the local area

**Community** - We are part of the community and try to make tourism a benefit to the local people.

**Environment** - We wish to find the balance between tourism and the environment to support and help conserve the area for future generations.

### The Future:

We wish to continue bringing the benefits of the tourism industry to West Dorset and help where we can to improve the parks and surrounding land - **for instance.....**

Woodland trust schemes

Cliff care in accordance with English Nature

Beach Clean

Gully in Eype

Footpaths opened

Continue to use local suppliers and local produce as much as possible

Sustainable employment helping to make local services viable for the community all year round.

The purpose of this newsletter is to promote the celebration of **Highlands End's 40th Anniversary.**

### Working with the Community:

Over the years we have been involved and supported many community events, these include Eype Church, the restoration and well being of the farmland **and the 3 'pil' boxes from the Second World War**, one of which you can see as you enter the park driveway opposite the Apartments.

We must not forget our connections over the years with many local events such as the Carnival and in 1996 our fire engine joined the procession to celebrate 100 years of the Bridport Fire Station. Others include Bridport Rotary club, who meet here once a week, the sponsoring of both Bridport Football and Rugby Team and many local charities and events which we are always pleased to be part of.



The Steam Fire engine in the bar which sits alongside the one above belongs to Bridport Museum and was given a home at Highlands End in 2003, finishing off the collection for the time being.

We have put a number of 40th Birthday arrangements into place already -

- 2011 Brochure and Welcome Brochure designed to show the best of the parks.
- Our website has had parts re-written explaining the history of all parks including Highlands End.
- A flag pole as you enter the Park (On **Pat's / Grandma's request**).
- The first tractor at Highlands End which has been completely restored and is coming back to life and will be around from June. It will be joined by the Fire Engine which will leave its home for the first time in 15 years for a tour around the town!
- A selection of pictures from over the years can be seen on a digital screen in reception.
- All staff members are proudly wearing a 40th Anniversary name badge.

