Memories of Deganwy, by Martin Macdonald Gould

(emailed to us by his son Dominic Gould, August 2024)

Dear Vicky,
It was a pleasure to speak with you by telephone last week. As discussed, I am sharing some memories of Deganwy herewith.

Holidays in Deganwy 1936-1938

My father, Harry Gould; my mother Doris Gould (née Macdonald); and my brother Blair were my family. I was born 3 May 1929. I am now 95. These are memories.

1. We used to sail from Liverpool to Llandudno on the St Tudno and the St Cerial(?) and take a taxi to Deganwy.
2. We stayed in two houses on Marine Crescent. The one I remember was an end house with a veranda at the side where we put our buckets and spades etc. All the windows looked directly at Conwy Castle. We stayed up to see it lit at night.
3. We bought all the food. The owner cooked everything for us. The owner's relative or servant was called Rachel.
4. There was no wall by the sea. I used to sit and try to catch crabs from the edge of the pavement. One day I caught a big red crab which escaped at the water's edge. I was sad.
5. We collected the key to a wooden hut, one of about ten on a big wide beach stretching to the sea. We spent virtually every day there. If it rained, we played games in it, but it did not seem to rain often. Cricket was the staple game but we also made sandcastles with flags etc. We had many guests from Southport and Birkdale (we lived in Birkdale).
6. I was sad to find the beach and the huts have all gone, with the path and imported stones covering where the beach had been, plus a large area where grass has taken over.
7. Quite close to where we stayed was a wooden bridge. We used to stand on the bridge as the steam engines blew smoke through the gaps between the planks.
8. One or more evenings we ate at the Castle Hotel.
9. When we walked to the beach, we always sang "We joined the Navy… to see the sea… and what did we see…? We saw the sea…." Etc.
10. Blair and I wanted to climb the Great Orme but never did (achieved by tram 21 July 2024).
11. We also wanted to climb up Conwy Castle (achieved 22 July 2024). When we got there, heavy rain stopped us. We went to the cinema instead and saw Nelson Eddy. His song 'Stout-hearted Men' has stayed with me all my life.
12. I remember not being allowed to stay in the house when Len Hutton was on his way to scoring 364 runs, then the highest Test score.
13. I remember one lunch of salmon, green peas, new potatoes and parsley sauce (still my favourite), all cooked for us in the house where we stayed.
14. I have around twenty photographs of our hut, our guests, the beach, cricket etc., and a glimpse of our house on Marine Crescent.
15. Some friends had a motor-boat in which we often sailed, once getting stuck in the river by Conwy Castle.
16. One day we climbed the highest mountain on the other side of the water, hiring a boat to get us across and back.

On reflection, Deganwy is no longer a little seaside village, but a busy town. Developments around the Quay Hotel, the closing of the Castle Hotel, and the disappearance of my beloved beach have revolutionised it. But it is still a lovely place to remember. **- Martin Macdonald Gould**