

Happy Memories of the Playgroup in the Sea Cadet Hall

Dorothy Clifford

We arrived in Aberystwyth in 1968 after spending four and half years in the USA. A year or so later our first child, Steven, was born.

We lived in Penrhyncoch where I was dependent upon infrequent buses to town because at that time I was unable to drive. When Steven became of nursery school age, I took him to a local Playgroup which did not suit him very well although the helpers were extremely kind.

So we tried the Sea Cadet Hall and we never looked back! Not only did Steven make new friends but I did too. Thirty-seven years later I feel 'almost a native' and meet those first new friends in town, even now. Happy memories are of coming into the big kitchen where we all congregated on arrival and of the chat and camaraderie amongst the mums. Sometimes we would go into town for coffee while the children were safely playing.

On asking my son, now a Senior Lecturer in Oncology at Newcastle Medical School, what it was that he remembered most about the Sea Cadet Hall, he replied without hesitation – 'the bikes!' But he was a sensitive soul and I remember arriving one morning to find Mrs Conway comforting him outside the story room because he did not like the idea of Peter Rabbit being put in a sack!

I found the staff to be just delightful people. Gwyneira held Steven in her arms the first few times on arrival, so that he settled down very nicely indeed. Esther was so sweet and Mrs Conway, such an excellent nursery

school teacher. I felt she was so very organised and the children had such a large variety of things to do.

We were fortunate to have the Playgroup at the Sea Cadet Hall because it made such a difference to the lives of the children and the mums in Aberystwyth. I even remember a very kind Sonia Dobson coming to Penrhyncoch to pick us up for the first few times. That seemed beyond the call of duty and was much appreciated. Since then Sonia and I have known each other for many years in a different capacity at Aberystwyth Arts Centre.

I am glad to have been given the chance to express how I feel about the Playgroup. It was invaluable to Steven at three years old and I would like to send my very best wishes and great thanks to each individual person involved.