



Brief History of County Campsite Carwynnen



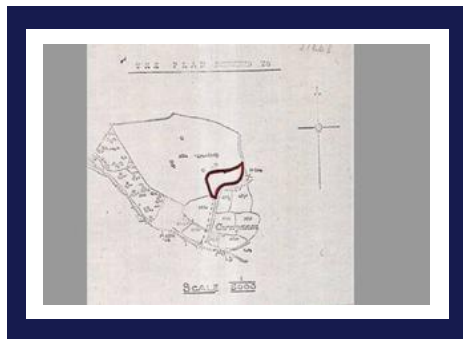


After a spell away, in 1968 Phyllis Hosking came back to guiding as District Commissioner. She was a big inspiration in getting a headquarters for Camborne instead of units meeting in several different buildings.

One day in 1970 Phyllis took her poodle, Topsy, for a walk. They were walking in Carwynnen on route to Troon. Phyllis passed the Primrose Meadow and immediately thought that it would make a marvelous campsite for guides. It was very overgrown but she saw the potential and decided to visit the owner Mr Honeychurch, asking if he would be prepared to sell it.



Mr and Mrs Honeychurch were very friendly and insisted that she had a cup of tea, while she explained why she had come . They were very interested and it was agreed, over that cup of tea, the two meadows which measured 1 1/4 acres could be bought by the guides for a sum of £500.



A meeting was quickly convened with guiders, one of whom was Dawn Hitchens, along with Mr Harvey Prisk, who was a manager of the NatWest bank, but he was also financial advisor for the district guides in a voluntary capacity. Although another £300 was needed to put the site in a condition to camp in, it was decided to go ahead with the project.



Those guiders who up until then took their company to camp regularly at Tehidy Woods, were getting fed up with all the mud. The site belonged to the Scouts so the Guides could only use it when the Scouts didn't want it, which wasn't very often.

It was hoped the site would be an attraction to other guide companies in the local area and beyond.

The husbands and dads used a mole plough to dig a trench to enable the site to have water.



Mole plough



Now that the site, they arranged an opening date, in the following autumn, giving a goal to get the work finished.

Over the Easter weekend some trees had to be cut down to make room for the building and the burning of all the rubble.

Phyllis and Betty Credland were the ones to go out and beg for equipment. They had to get six toilets and six wash basins, including taps and piping in addition to what was needed for the building. The cement was supplied by a concrete firm from St Austell, hardore came from Holman's quarry and Derek Bell, a local builder, dug and built the cesspit.



Towards the end of the year with no more camping until the end of May (Spring Bank Holiday) work started to build the permanent shelter. The blocks were given for free. The shelter was basic with canvas covering door and windows.

People again were very kind. Many organisations were written to ask if they would like to donate a tree on the site. There was a good response.

The trees flourished until the neighboring farmer allowed her goats to get over the hedge. The goats proceeded to strip the bark off quite a number of trees and needlessly to say, we lost quite a few.



On the opening day, Mrs Marjorie Warren performed the opening ceremony. The vicar of Treslothan church, Rev Peter Eustace, in whose parish the campsite stands, held a short service of dedication.

Fundraising activities followed the opening. There were stalls, slideshows, competitions, pony rides, tug of war, and clay pigeon shooting. The Salvation Army played light music and Camborne Rotary Club undertook a leading role in organising the evening, with Mr Harvey Prisk acting as announcer.

The site, at that time, had no electricity and was lit by oil lamps. Mr Piper (guiders husband) would go and light them when darkness fell. Dawn recalls when walking back from anywhere the girls would say it looked magical!



There were about 400 Guides, Rangers and Brownies in the districts using the new site at this time.

In the late 1970', when Phyllis retired, Dawn, who had always had Carwynnen in her heart took over the running of the campsite.

During her years as custodian, Dawn obtained grants enabling the site to have electricity and have a more permanent building with a kitchen. Grants were obtained for the car park, as many a time guides and leaders had to push cars out!

With a regular visitor in a wheelchair a grant was given to lay slabs to give access to as much of the site as possible.





Several things have been added over the years, including decking to the front of the building, a new cooker and fridge freezer, a boiler for hot water in the showers, and the general maintenance being kept up-to-date.

Dawn and her team continued to run and improve the site until in her eighties, she decided to step down in 2019.

A presentation took place to thank Dawn for all her years of work and dedication at Carwynnen. A plaque has been placed on the main building in recognition of Dawn's contribution to Carwynnen.





In 2020 Carwynnen Campsite was transferred into the hands of Girlguiding Cornwall and became known as County Campsite Carwynnen.

The site continues to be improved. In 2024 Alison Hallet (Division Commissioner) secured grants for installing solar panels to help reduce the electricity costs on site and to make the site more green.

Future plans include a new toilet block and Shepherds Huts so those that don't like camping can sleep in beds inside.