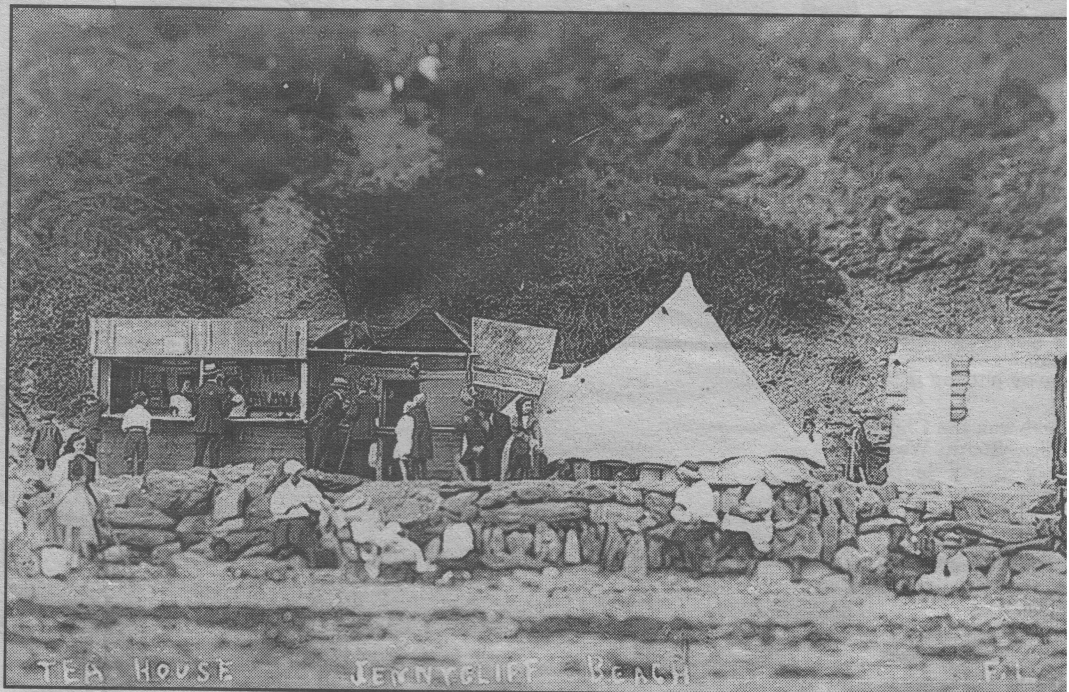
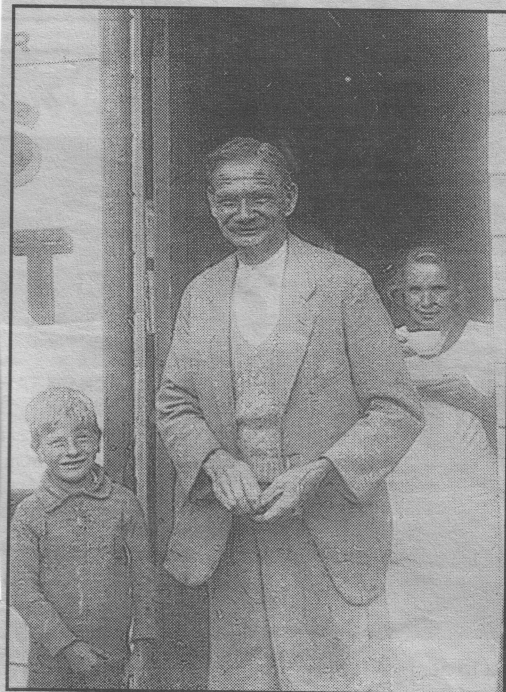


Serving the needs of happy day trippers



OUR picture postcard of Bovisand a couple of weeks ago prompted a host of memories from Len McVicar, who has had a very long and very happy association with the place.

It all goes back to the beginning of last century when Len's granddad, Jacob Smith, had premises at Mount Batten.

From there he sold drinks and food to happy day trippers from the Barbican, Turnchapel and Oreston and anywhere else that the boatmen and ferry-men plied their trade from.

He even had a few of those once-popular swing boats and everything was fine until the day the newly-formed Air Force took over the Mount Batten peninsula.

"We'll find you another place," they said, and duly relocated Mr Smith to a beach hut at Jennycliff.

And there he stayed for a while, before moving further around the coastline to Bovisand.

First he left his son Fred, with his wife Bess, in charge at Jennycliff, then Fred's brother Bill and his wife Milly, who lived at Hooe. A third brother, Stan, and his wife Rose were the last of the family to have it

Jacob meanwhile was now living in the No 6 Coastguard's Cottages at Bovisand.

Len said: "My mum (Lil Smith), dad and I were living at Nos 2 and 3 - it was pretty basic, we had no toilet (it used to be my job to empty the bucket) and no electricity.

"There were no buses either and I used to walk to school in Plymstock.

"The original hut my granddad had burned down. There were commandos training there in the bay, stationed in the big house, and a thunderflash went up the valley and caught the felt roof of the hut and up it went.

"My grandfather meanwhile had bought a hut that had been owned and operated by Mike Antonucci's grandparents, but that one went up too, after a landmine fell right in front of it during the war.

"You could have put a double-decker bus in the crater it made," added Len, who remembers finding the parachute that the landmine drifted in on.

"Dad (Robert McVicar) and I salvaged the wood and built a temporary hut, on the cutting and then another uncle, Bill Cowan from Polperro, came up and helped build a new hut on the old Antonucci site.

"I remember the slogan we all worked to: 'Never let 'em go down on the beach without buying anything, 'cos they never come up again'.

"Back then there were several others selling to the visitors - Mr Floyd, Mr Slee, Mr Rocky and Mr Courtney.

"The latter later moved on to Sandy Parlour and had a hut on the green, on the ground that belonged to Mr Lympany (father of the famous local pianist Moira).

"You had to pay to get onto that land, which was entered through a turnstile."



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Len with his granddad, grandma, and Ada Smith outside the Bovisand refreshment tea house Jennycliff Bovisand with the coastguard cottages on the side of the cliff. The Breakers