



# Tide helped us avoid toll gate

**O**UR recent Looking Back report headed 'Serving the needs of happy day-trippers' brought memories flooding back for Tony May.

Tony, who now lives in Whitstable in Kent, said: "I spent many happy hours, as a lad, both at 'Jenny' and 'Bovi', and Mac would always be outside in the car park.

"I remember a space at the end nearer the Coastguard Cottage where the Western National bus would turn around and wait for the return trip to Plymouth.

"I can remember many a time talking to Mac at home in the Coastguard Cottage.

"I would either be going down to get the boat from Fort Bovisand back to the Barbican, or take the top cliff path back to 'Jenny' past 'Whitepatch'. It used to come out halfway down the hill towards 'Jenny' from Staddon Heights.

"My father had a caravan over the second beach – or Sandy Parlour – to which, from the first beach, you had to go through the toll gate at the top of the hill.

"I think it was either a ha'penny or a penny to get through, but lads being lads, we would wait for the tide and climb around the rocks and avoid paying, as we had no money anyway.

"I remember the tea hut at 'Jenny' – first beach at the bottom of the path on a raised level. I seem to remember it being smashed by storms, when the sea breached the raised platform and damaged the café.

"I often used to go from 'Jenny' to Bovisand when the tide was right, by rock-climbing. You had to be nimble.

"If you made Whitepatch in time you could get all the way around to the Fort. If you couldn't make it past Whitepatch, you had to go up to the path to Bovisand, which had a sheer drop on to the beach.

"I wonder if anyone recalls a passenger ship that was visiting Plymouth called SS Venus (I think).

"She was anchored out in the Sound one night when a gale got up and she



dragged her anchor and ran aground off Mount Batten, between RAF Mount Batten and 'Jenny' fourth beach, where the Coastguard Hut was situated. It must have been about 1952.

"There was a loud knock on our front door about 2am. It was the Coastguard Officer, Ernie Demmonwick (?) asking

my dad to turn out to the ship and man the breeches buoy.

"I went over the next morning to see this ship hard on the rocks. I think she was later pulled clear on the tide by Dockyard tugs. I don't think she was badly damaged. Does anyone remember it?" Over to you, folks.