



Pastor's Page

“Summer Dwelling Place”



Walking through golden sand dunes that adorned a small corner of Cardigan Bay, the young Christian couple felt a great sense of excitement as they approached the chosen spot. They were on the verge of making a decision that would have massive financial and personal implications for their family and their future. Furthermore, they had agreed, after much prayer, that the final basis on which they would make their decision would be circumstantial; namely, whether or not they could see the sea from the allotted plot of land! On arrival they discovered they had the most wonderful view of the bay, confirming their conviction that this was the place where their future summers were to be spent. They subsequently purchased a static caravan and named the spot **Hafod**, which is Welsh for *Summer Dwelling Place*. The year was 1964, the place was Abersoch in North Wales the couple were Joan & Derek Simmons (my parents) and this became the place where we enjoyed idyllic holidays for more than 30 years.

Looking back, I realize that it was a huge decision for my Father to make, and I know now that he was unsure at the time as to whether he was being paternally adventurous or financially reckless. The move was a bold step but I believe it was one in which the Lord guided him as the future years would confirm. Not only did this place provide wonderful holidays for our family it was also here that we began a long-standing association with Scripture Union Beach Missions, which played a huge part in my brother's, my sisters and my own spiritual journey.

We went to the mission every summer as children and we all worked on the team in later life. My brother also met his wife there and went on to lead the mission (his eldest daughter later served on the mission team) my sister has also become a trustee responsible for the two houses that the S.U use for this ministry. My memories of encounters with God in this place are numerous, from the early days of singing “*By Blue Galilee*” looking out across Cardigan Bay, to later days discussing theological issues in the team house.. But the one event I will never forget is the time that students on the team (who went on to form *Riding Lights Theatre Company*) acted out the final week of Jesus' life in the little village centre. The crowd though small listened and watched as the drama unfolded. By the time the passion play arrived at the scene where Jesus was about to be crucified the atmosphere was electric. Some slightly drunk holidaymakers joined in with the actors calling out for Jesus to be crucified! As I too watched I had a spine-chilling sense of history repeating itself in the most poignant way! Even today as I walk past the harbour wall in this picturesque village I often remember that night. My parents couldn't have foreseen all of this.

Since those days the gospel has continued to be proclaimed in this area each summer as members of the SU beach mission teams engage in evangelism. I too often return to this place even though our caravan has long since gone. However, I'll never forget **Hafod** because for me it was not only a Summer Dwelling Place it was also a special spiritual place where I met with God in significant ways over many years.

I'm so grateful to the Lord for the great blessings that He has poured out on me and many others in this unique place and for leading my parents there all those years ago.

13th August 2006