



All about  
**SEASIDE HOLIDAYS**

@LittlehamptonMuseum



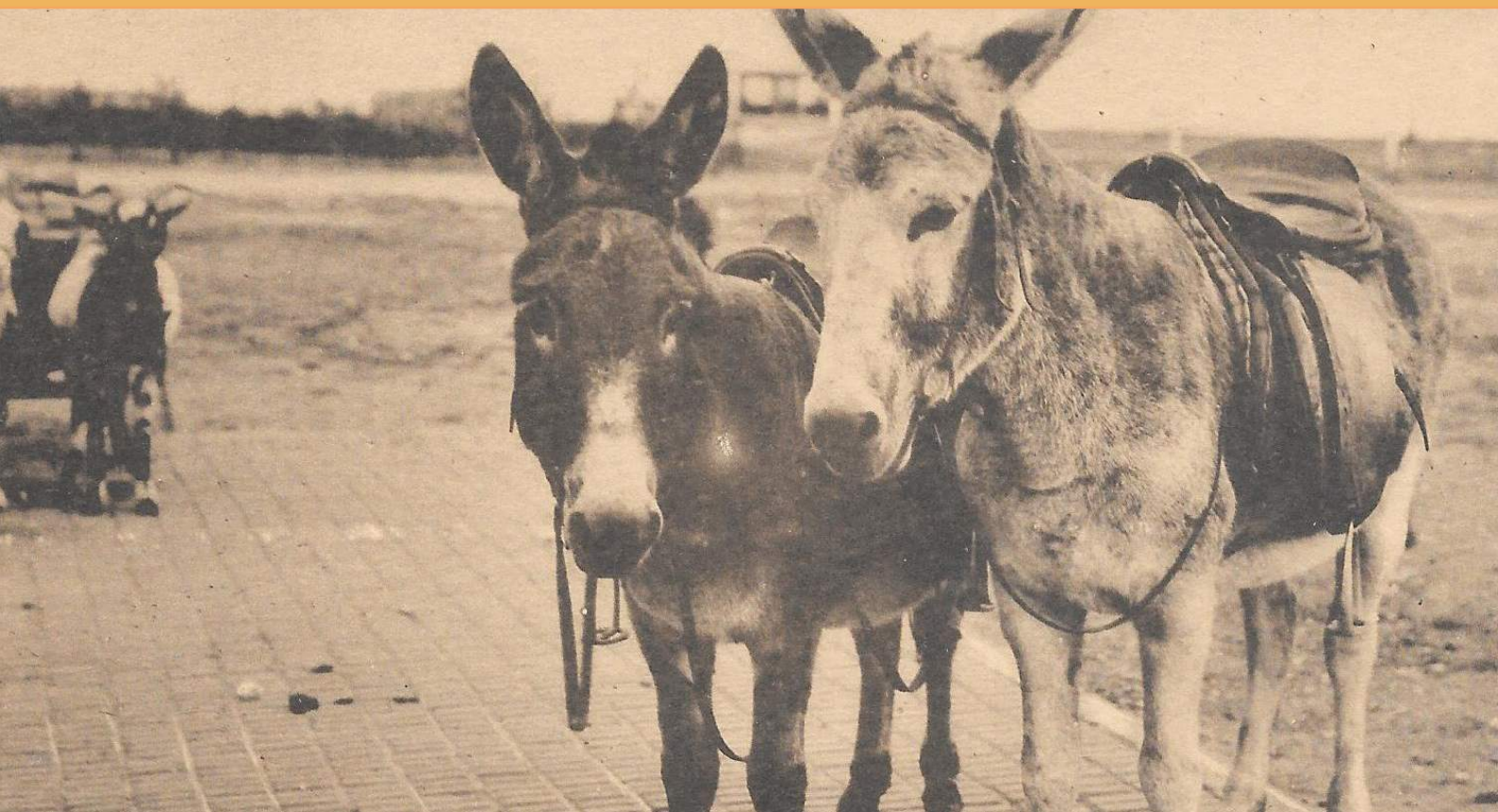


# All About Seaside Holidays @LittlehamptonMuseum

This pack looks at the development of Littlehampton as a seaside resort. Today many people travel abroad for their holidays, but 100 years ago everybody visited the seaside, and this had a very big impact on the little town of Littlehampton, which went from a small fishing village to a thriving seaside resort.

## In this pack:

1. Littlehampton's Seaside History
2. Activity suggestions
3. Postcard Activity
4. Teachers Notes for photo cards
5. Photo cards
6. Oral history quote cards





# LITTLEHAMPTON'S SEASIDE HISTORY

## A Quiet Fishing Village

Littlehampton, or 'Hampton' as it was known hundreds of years ago, was a tiny village set in miles of peaceful farmland. It was called Littlehampton by the Middle Ages to distinguish it from the nearby harbour town of Southampton. This basic, rural life continued without any major change for hundreds of years, with the nearby port of Arundel and the town of Chichester growing in wealth and size, but not Littlehampton.

**Jobs in Littlehampton during this time were:**

- Farmers
- Fishermen
- Shipbuilders
- Shopkeepers

## Things get Busier...

Times began to change about 200 years ago, when rich people from places like London realised what a relaxing time they could have on holiday by the sea. They would often send their children down to the seaside with their nannies for the summer holidays. People were also told that the sea air was good for their health and many people came to recover after an illness.

Because of this, during the 1800s Littlehampton became a very popular seaside resort.

At first it was difficult to get here, unless you had a horse and carriage, and it took a long time. This meant most visitors would have been wealthy, and able to stay in one of the grand boarding houses along South Terrace or at the Beach Hotel.

## Big Changes

In 1863 Littlehampton's own railway station was built and the town was much easier to travel to which meant that more people were able to visit. This was a huge turning point for the town and it began to grow quite quickly.

By the early 20th century the town was promoted as 'the children's paradise', a place of happy holiday memories by the sea.

The town grew in size and became richer due to the amount of people visiting Littlehampton. As well as those staying for the whole of the summer holidays, there were new 'day-trippers' who would travel down to Littlehampton by train and visit the town just for the day.

In the 1930s the 'weekend' that we know today was introduced (before this people would sometimes only have one afternoon off in a week), and people could take paid holidays from work for the first time. Now that most people were able to take a trip to the seaside, Littlehampton got bigger and busier!

This increase in visitors led to new entertainments being developed, like Butlins which opened in 1933.

The boom continued until the 1960s and 70s, when travel abroad became easier and more popular, which meant that seaside towns such as Littlehampton had fewer visitors.

## TERMS USED

**Middle Ages** – The period from the 5th -15th Century

**Nannies** – A lady paid to live with a wealthy family and look after the children

**Boarding houses** – Houses where you could rent rooms to stay in for your holiday

**Day-trippers** – People visiting just for a day





# ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

- **Design your own postcard** - Activity template included.
- **Creative Writing** - Look at the quote cards and invite children to choose their favourite. Use this as a starting point for a short story. Children can imagine they are the person giving the quote, or somebody mentioned in it, and use this to build a story around the original words. This could also be done using the photocards as inspiration.
- **Plan your trip** – Children should imagine they are a day-tripper visiting Littlehampton 100 years ago, what would they do? Use the photocards to help them plan their day!
- **Differences** – Using the photocards and quote cards, discuss the differences between holidays taken today, and those from 100 years ago or compare the Littlehampton from 100 years ago to the town today, which would they rather visit and why?



# ACTIVITY

*Using the template provided children can design and write their own postcard.*

## **Things to think about:**

- How many pictures will be on the card? Some postcards had one, some had several of different views.
- Will it feature a view of the town, an attraction or a funny image?
- Will there be any writing on the front?
- What will the message on the back be about? Who will it be send it to?

## **Don't forget:**

- Design a stamp for the back
- Add a name in the space at the bottom so everyone knows who the designer is!

**Why not take a look at the postcard slideshow on Littlehampton Museum's website to get some ideas!**





The first postcard ever sent was in Austria, in 1869. By the beginning of the 1900s, they had become very popular as they were cheap and easy to send, and available in many different designs. People didn't just use them to talk about their holidays, they were also used for birthday or Christmas greetings, simple messages such as what time train somebody would be getting, or in place of a letter for general news. They were the text messages of their time!

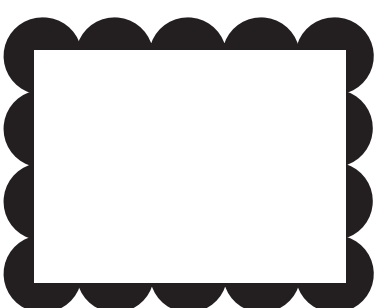
**Littlehampton Museum has a large collection of postcards, mostly dating from 1900 – 1970s.**



LITTLEHAMPTON



# POSTCARD



Your message here:

Address:

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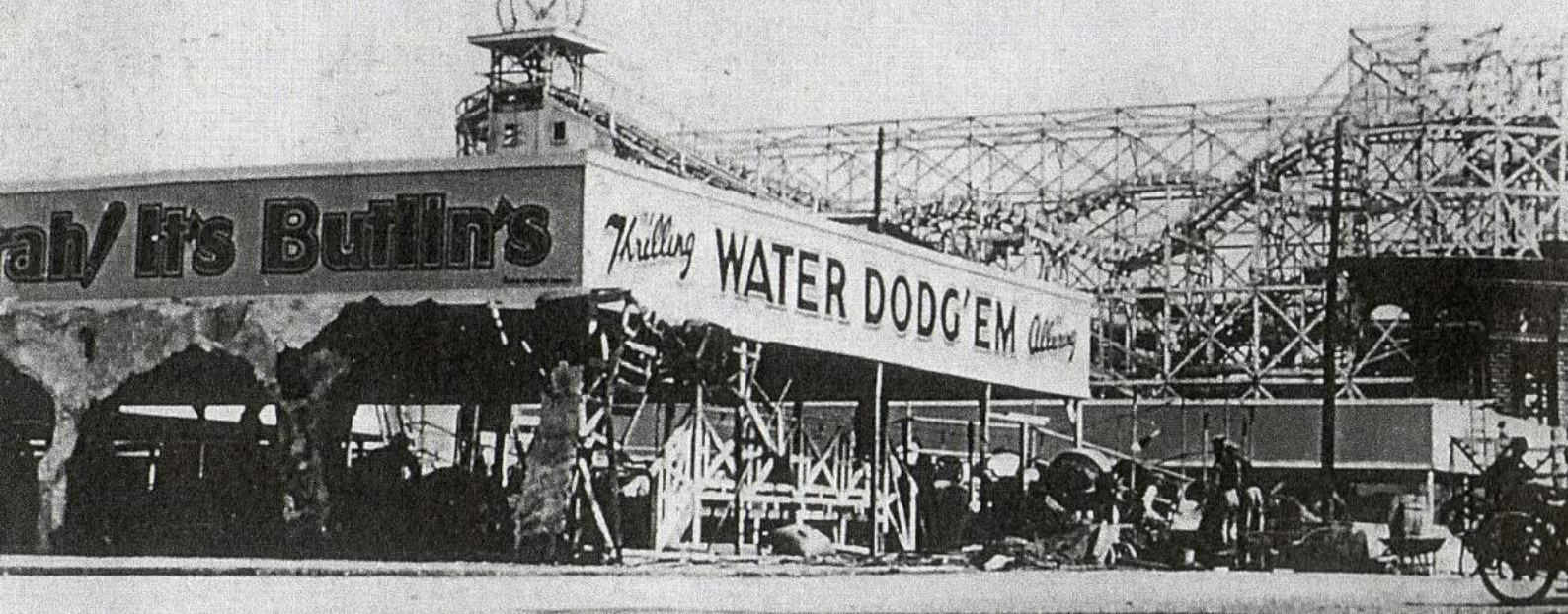
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# PHOTO CARDS

## Teachers Notes

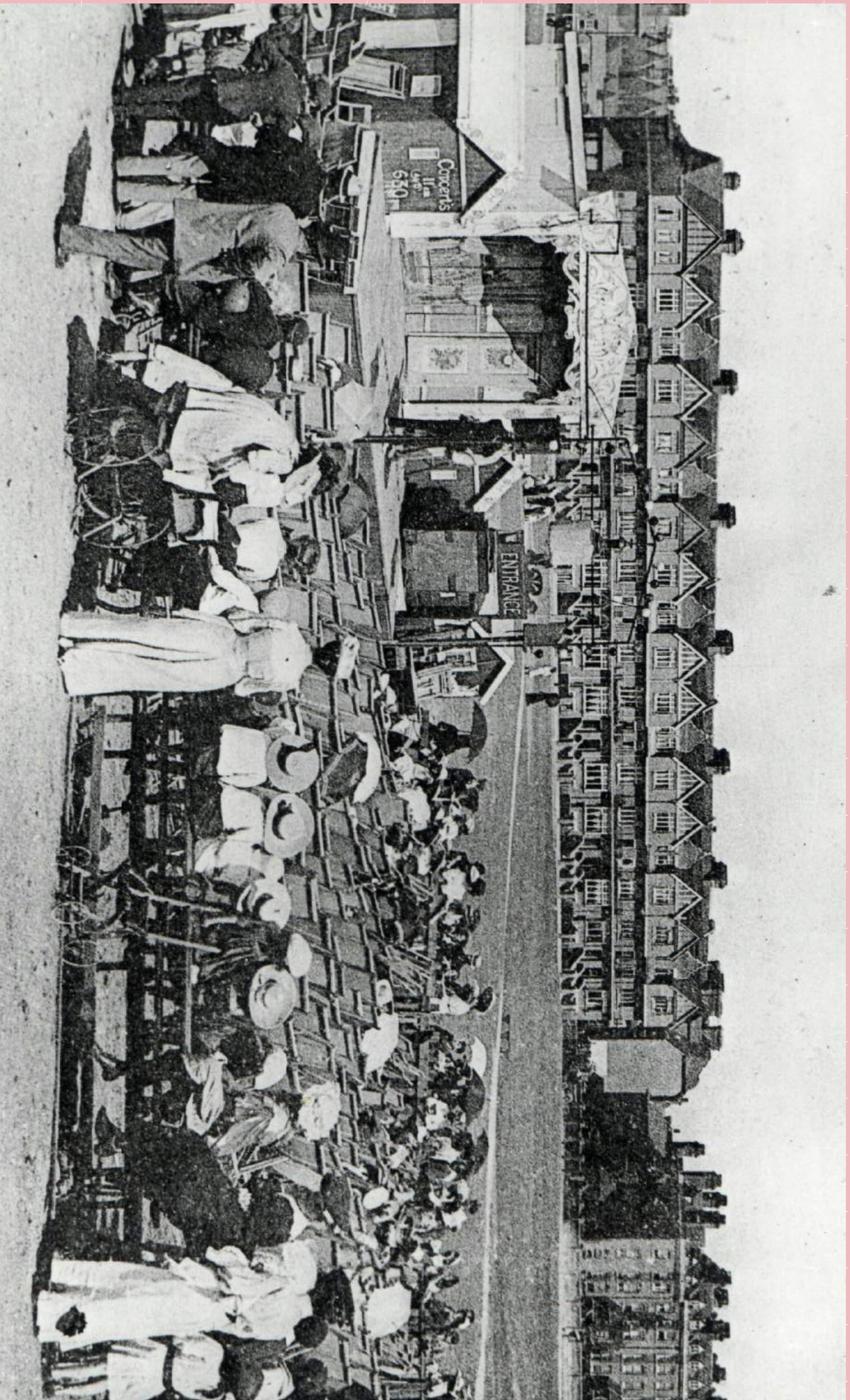
1. **Fred 'Freddie' Spencer as Mrs 'Arris of the Sunday 'Erald 1924** – Freddie used to entertain the crowds at Littlehampton with his variety performances during the early 20th century. Children and adults alike loved his impersonations and costumes. His repertoire included singing such songs as 'I have knitted myself a jumper'.
2. **Early 20th Century performance on the Beach Green** – Littlehampton had plenty to offer in regard to entertainment. This image shows a stage set up on the Beach Green ready for a concert performance – there would have been singing, dancing, comedy and drama, all aimed at a family audience.
3. **Exercise Class, 1930s** – The Daily Express newspaper sponsored keep-fit classes on the Beach Green at high tide, and on the sands at low tide. Physical fitness was a fashionable pastime in the 1930s and the keep-fit sessions were popular with holidaymakers.
4. **Donkey Rides, early 20th century** – A popular site at most seaside resorts, the donkey's at Littlehampton were owned by the Merrett family. If you were too little, or too nervous to ride a donkey you could have a ride in a goat cart (seen in the background of this image).
5. **Butlins, 1930s** – In 1933 Billy Butlin opened his new amusement park at Littlehampton on the site of the old Arun Windmill and Coastguard Cottages (these can be seen in image 6). He held a carnival to celebrate and gave local children free tickets for all the rides. Not all local people were happy with its arrival, but it helped draw huge crowds to the town and was very popular with holidaymakers. The site is now occupied by Harbour Park.

- 6. The Oyster Pond, c.1910** – The Oyster Pond began life as a storage basin for the oysters caught by local fishermen, it was in use for this purpose from c.1820 until c.1860. In the mid-1890s it began to be used as an ornamental lake, and for many decades children would use it to sail their model boats.
- 7. Boat Trip, c.1920s** – Holidaymakers ready for a pleasure cruise, a common activity during this time. Boats would slowly cruise upriver, often to Arundel. Sometimes a band would be aboard to entertain the passengers.
- 8. East Beach, c.1930s** – Littlehampton is lucky enough to have two beaches, the East and the West. This image shows summer crowds at East Beach. West Beach was accessible by road, or by a ferry ride across the river.
- 9. Littlehampton Swimming Pool, 1930s** – This pool used to stand on the Beach at the bottom of Norfolk Road until 1939 when the lease expired. It was a concrete enclosure that filled with sea water at high tide.
- 10. Sandcastle Competition, 1920s** – These competitions were run by a man named 'Uncle Dan', and children used to take them very seriously, using shells and seaweed to make intricate designs in the sand. Prizes were awarded to the winners and they would get their photograph in the local paper. There is a sandcastle competition still run every year on the beach.
- 11. The Beach Hotel** – The first building to stand on this site was the Beach Coffee House, built by Peter Le Coq, a well-known smuggler. By the late Victorian period it was a hotel, known as one of the best places to stay in the town. This image shows the new Beach Hotel which opened c.1890 replacing the original building. It closed in the 1980s and now the Beach Crescent flats stand in its position.
- 12. South Terrace, c.1900** – South Terrace, which can still be seen today, used to be full of boarding houses, where people could come and stay for their holidays. They usually rented rooms and had their meals included.
- 13. Bathing Tents, c.1900** - Bathing tents could be hired on the beach and used for changing into your swimming costumes. Those on wheels could also be pulled right down to the water for you (people were employed to do this) so you could step straight into the sea without walking down the beach in your costume, they were intended to help segregate the sexes when bathing.
- 14. Clothing, *Top image c.1910, Bottom image c.1920*** – The top image shows the Hewitt sisters, holding up their long dresses so they can paddle in the sea. Below you can see a family in full dress despite what appears to be a very hot day!
- 15. 'Uncle Terry's' Stall, c.1930s** – Harry Page or 'Uncle Terry' as he was known ran stalls on the seafront during the 1930s. Here he is selling refreshments, on other stalls he also sold sweets, books and magazines and ran a quiz with prizes.











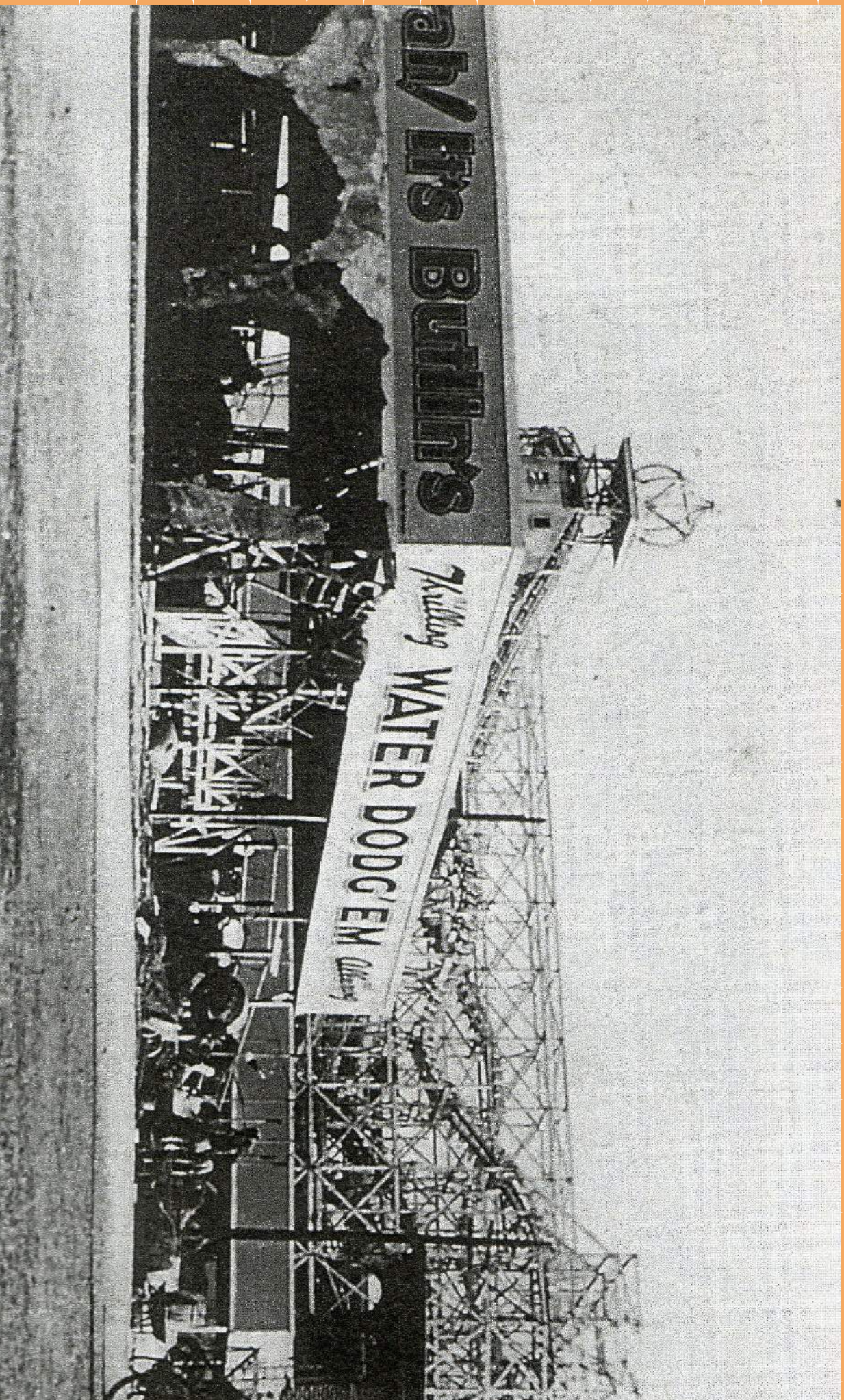






Littlehampton Favourites









Ornamental Water Littlehampton



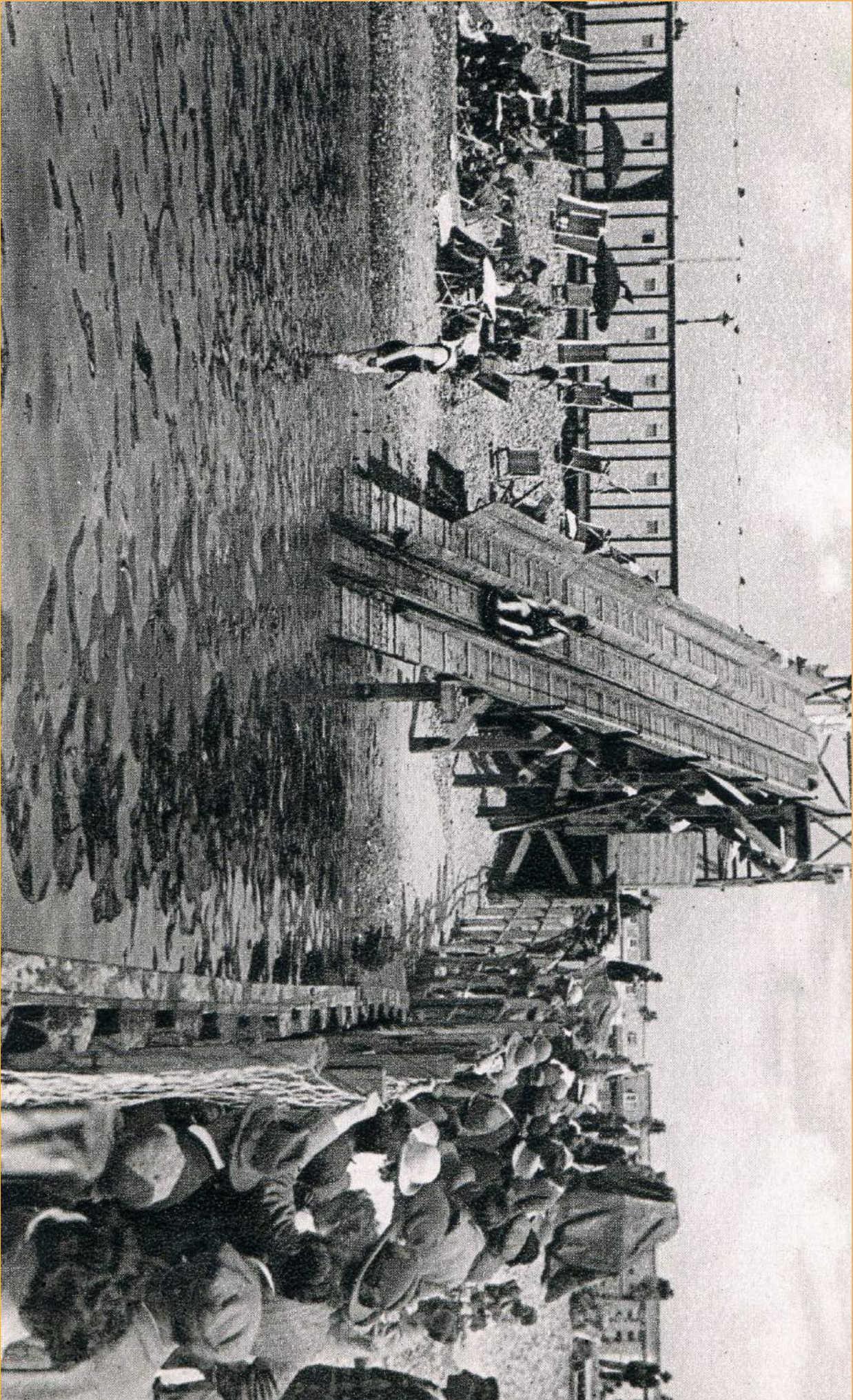




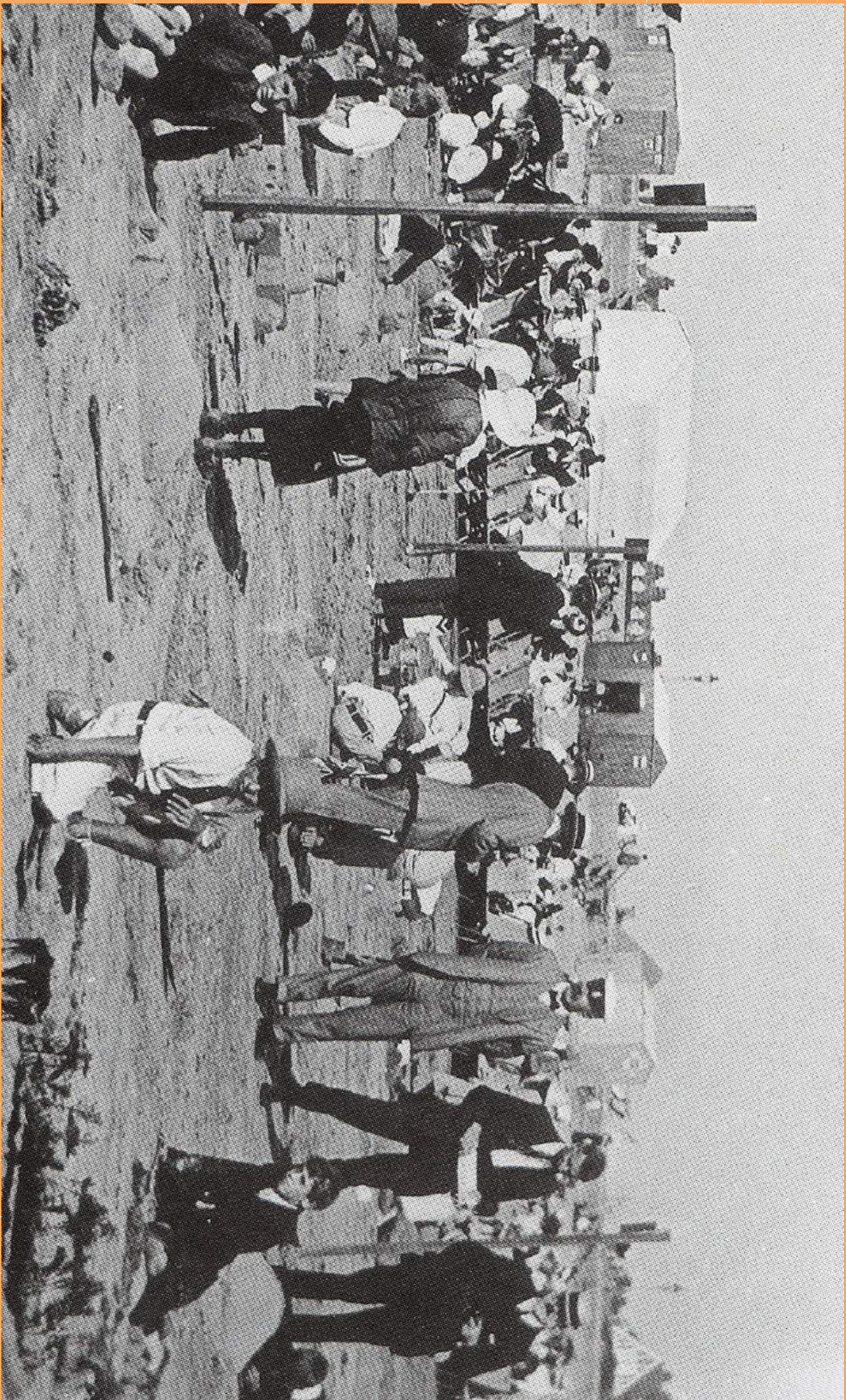


THE SANDS, LITTLEHAMPTON. 958.













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12



12 LITTLEHAMPTON. — Bathing Tents. — LL.







14









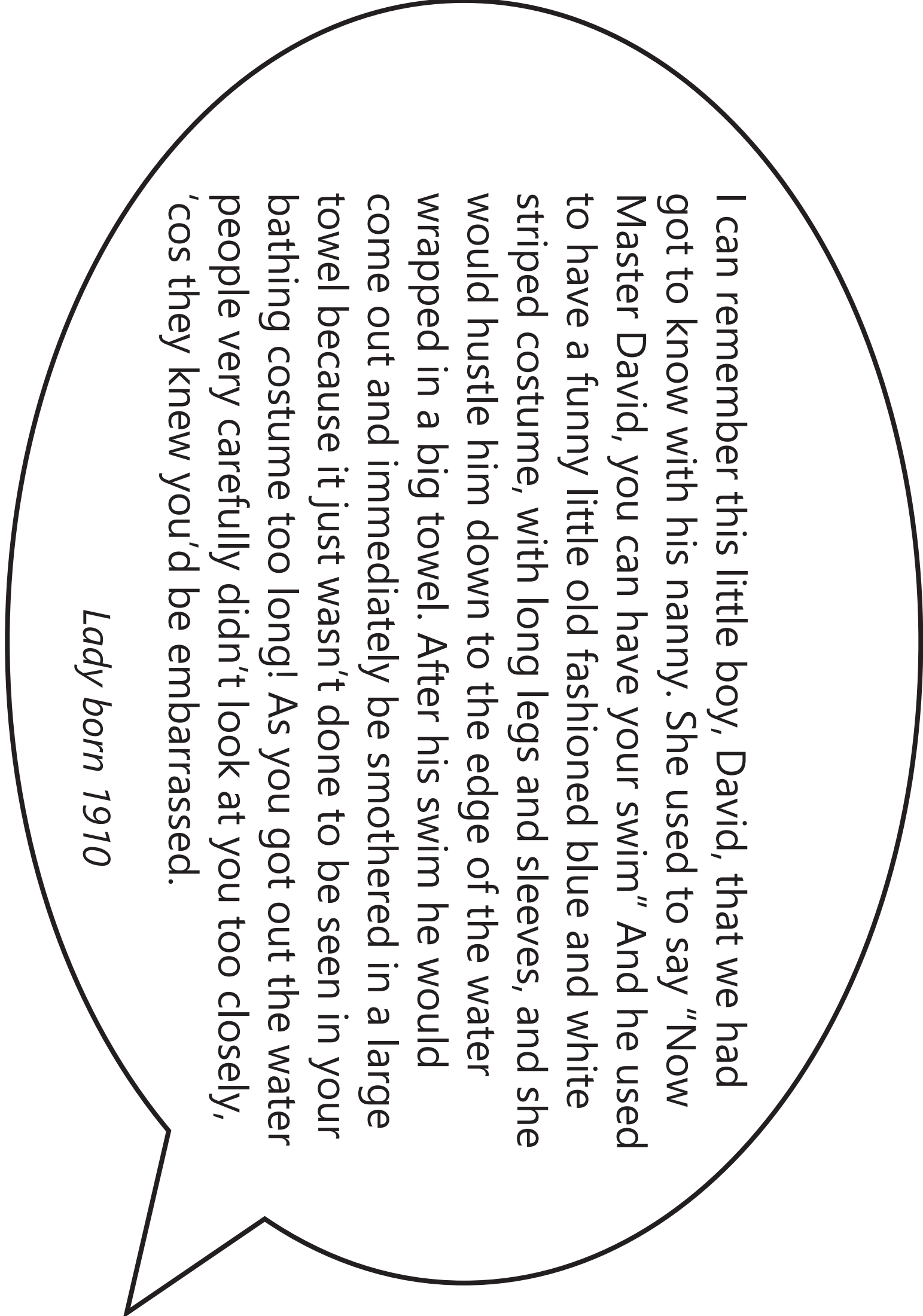
# QUOTE CARDS

These quotes are taken from interviews with local residents, conducted in the 1980s by Littlehampton Museum.

There was a band on the Common.  
That was really the most enjoyable.  
They used to play in the mornings  
and from a distance you could  
hear them play. All part of that  
lovely holiday feeling

*Lady born 1909.*

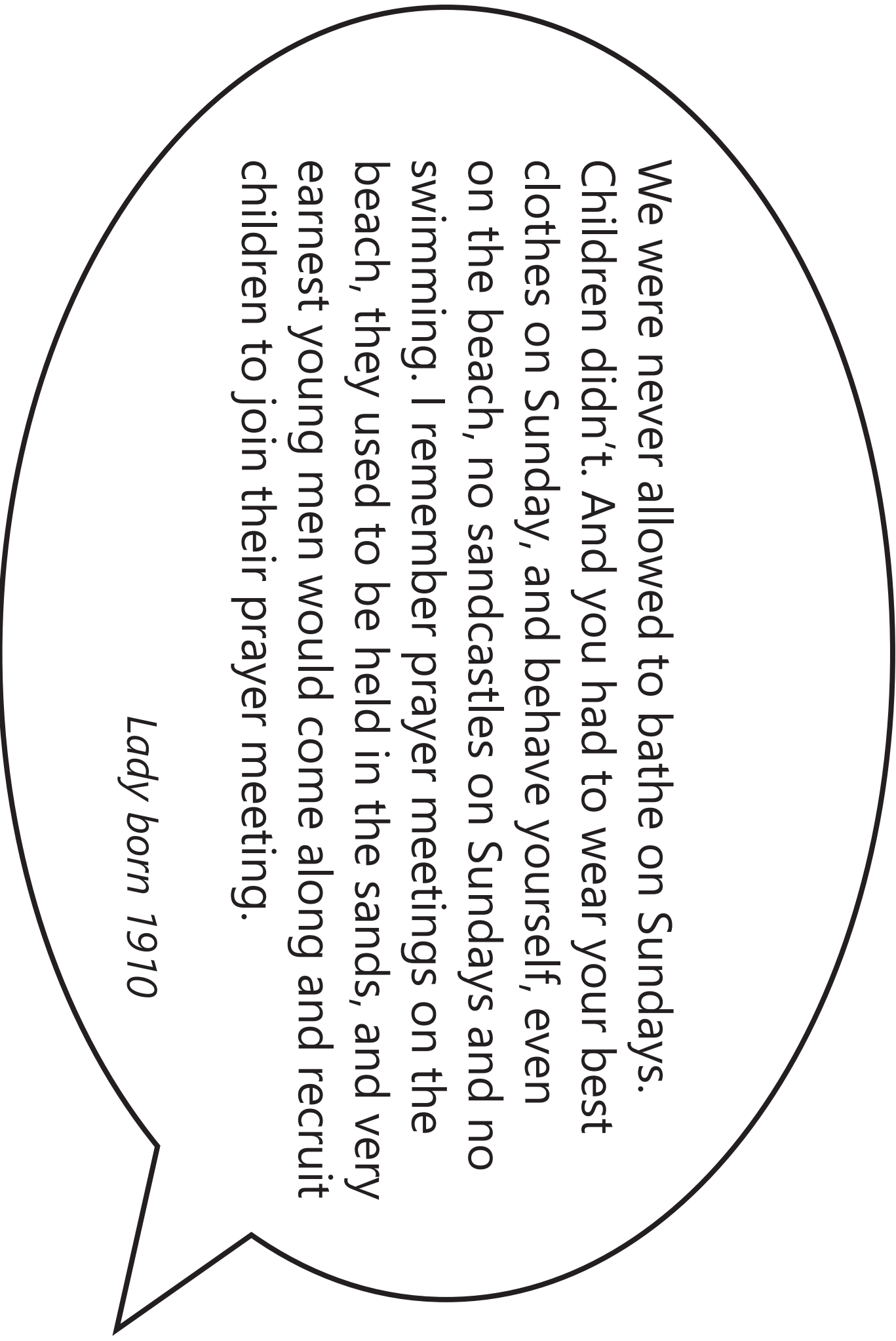


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I can remember this little boy, David, that we had got to know with his nanny. She used to say "Now Master David, you can have your swim" And he used to have a funny little old fashioned blue and white striped costume, with long legs and sleeves, and she would hustle him down to the edge of the water wrapped in a big towel. After his swim he would come out and immediately be smothered in a large towel because it just wasn't done to be seen in your bathing costume too long! As you got out the water people very carefully didn't look at you too closely, 'cos they knew you'd be embarrassed.

*Lady born 1910*

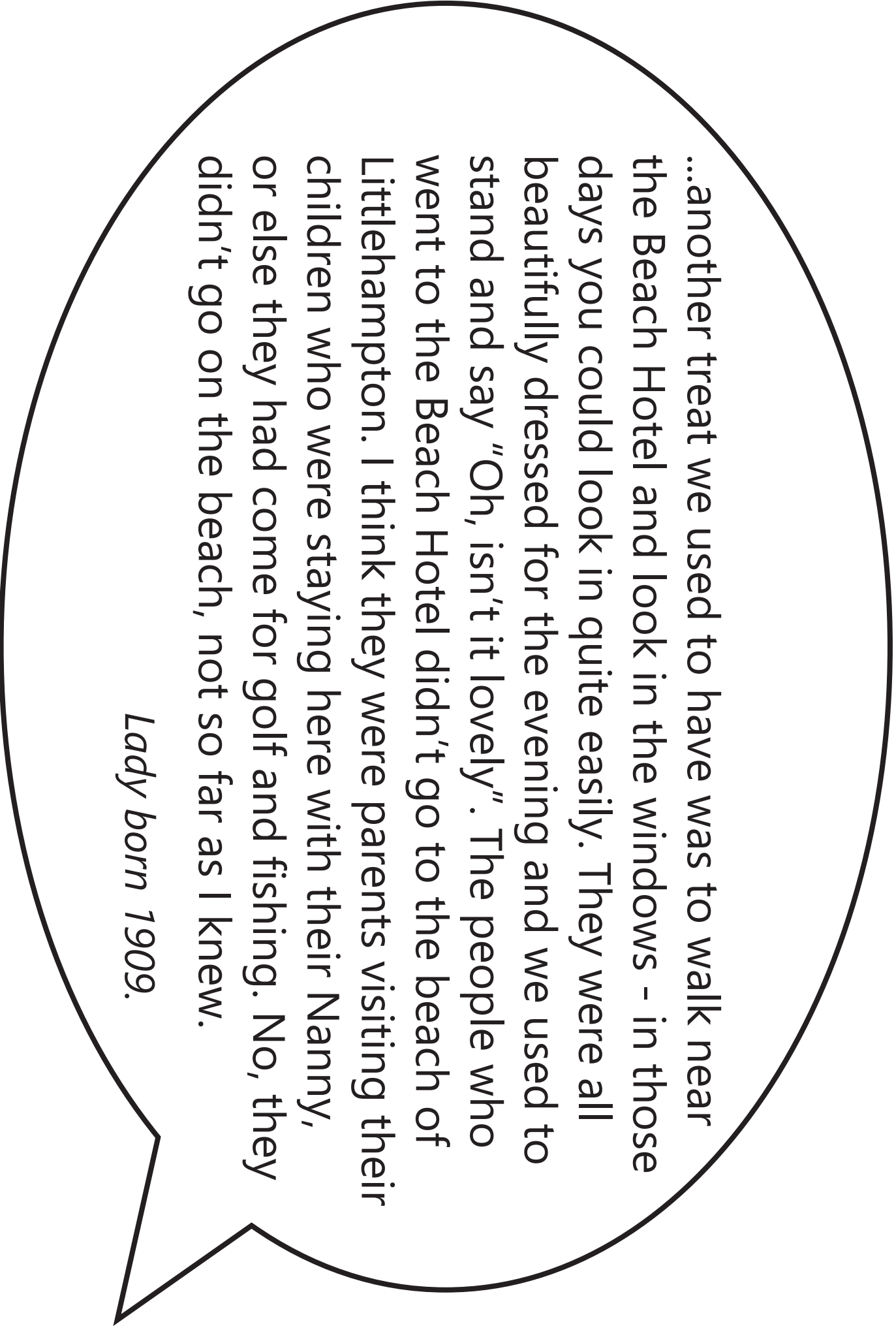




We were never allowed to bathe on Sundays. Children didn't. And you had to wear your best clothes on Sunday, and behave yourself, even on the beach, no sandcastles on Sundays and no swimming. I remember prayer meetings on the beach, they used to be held in the sands, and very earnest young men would come along and recruit children to join their prayer meeting.

*Lady born 1910*

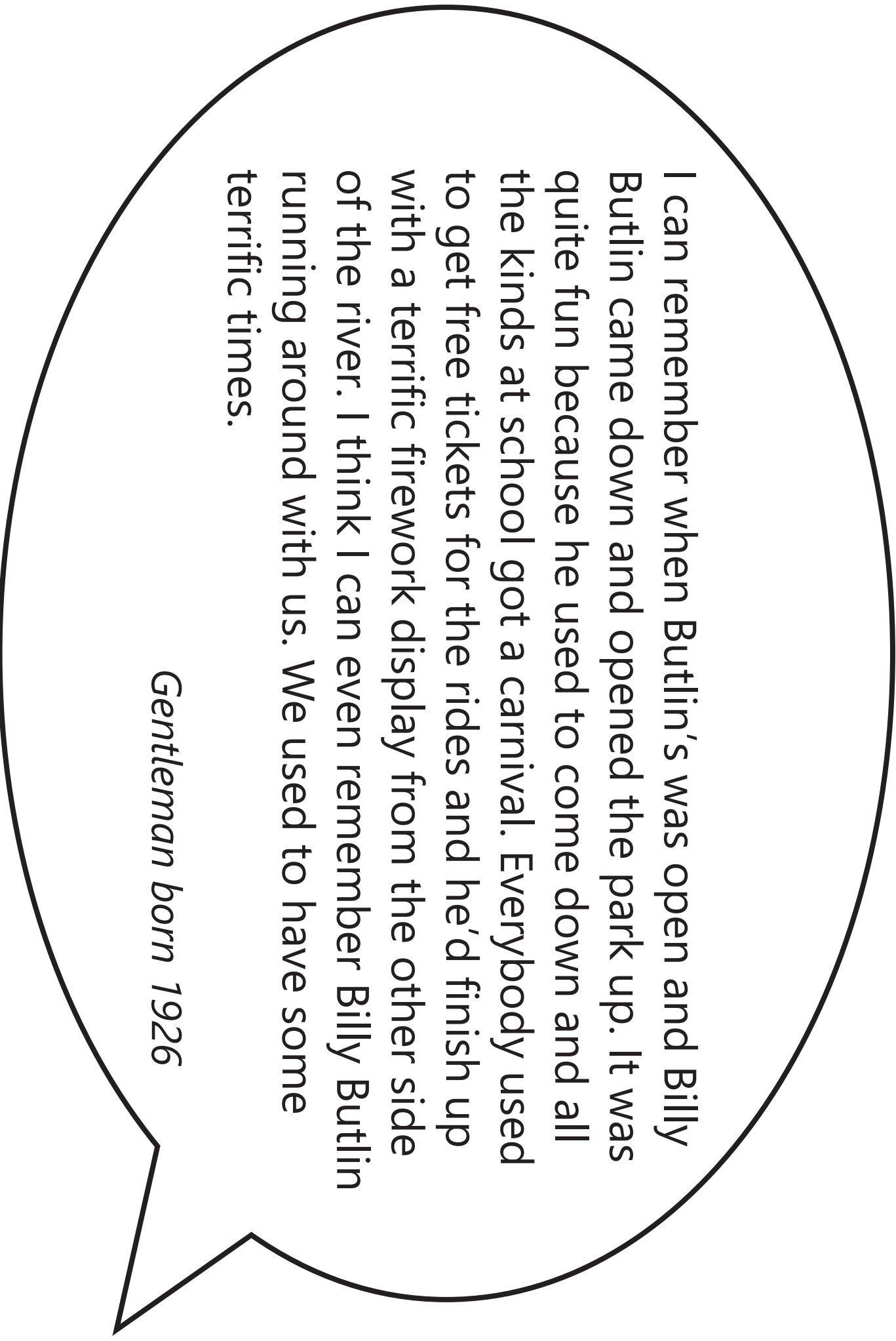




...another treat we used to have was to walk near the Beach Hotel and look in the windows - in those days you could look in quite easily. They were all beautifully dressed for the evening and we used to stand and say "Oh, isn't it lovely". The people who went to the Beach Hotel didn't go to the beach of Littlehampton. I think they were parents visiting their children who were staying here with their Nanny, or else they had come for golf and fishing. No, they didn't go on the beach, not so far as I knew.

*Lady born 1909.*

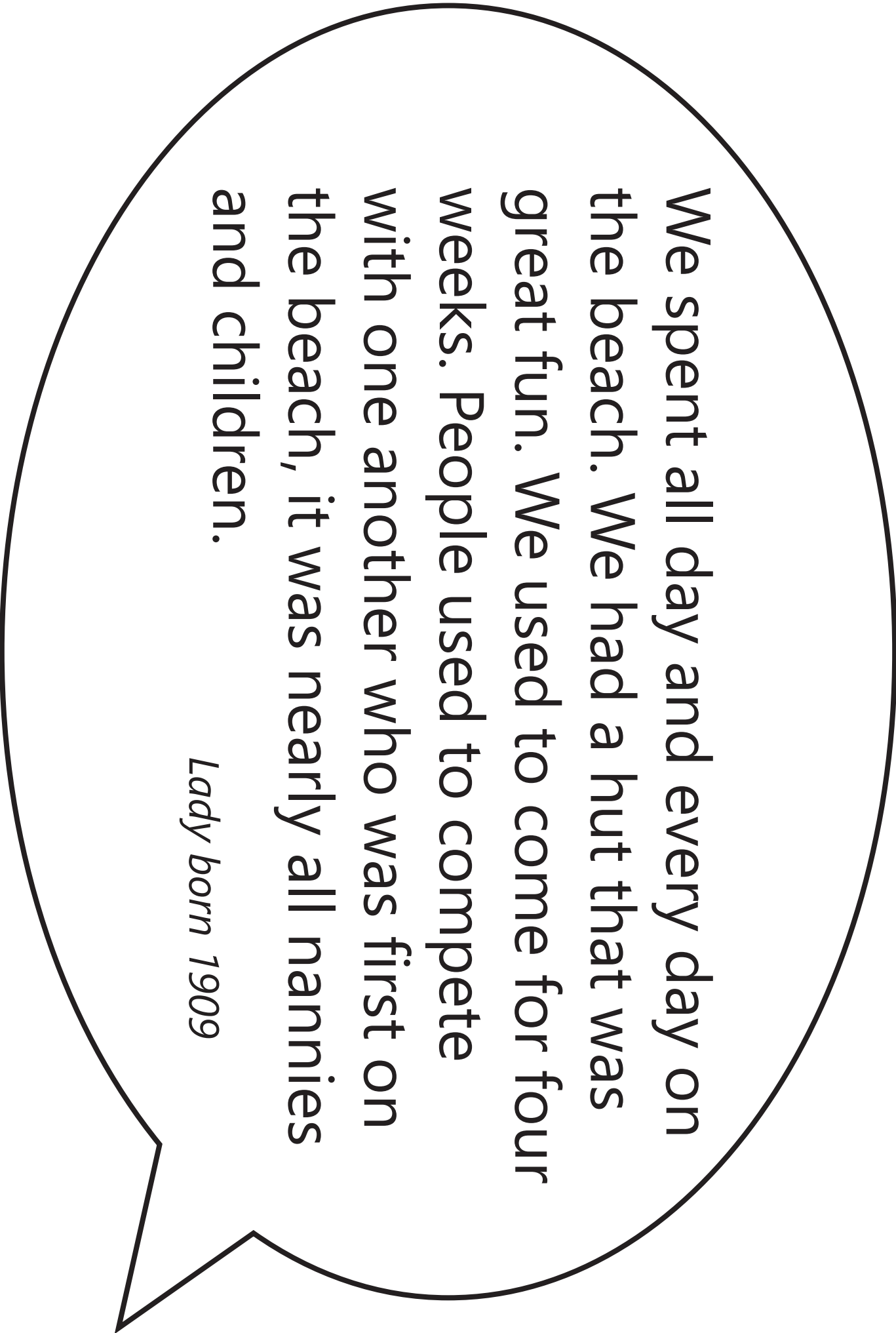




I can remember when Butlin's was open and Billy Butlin came down and opened the park up. It was quite fun because he used to come down and all the kinds at school got a carnival. Everybody used to get free tickets for the rides and he'd finish up with a terrific firework display from the other side of the river. I think I can even remember Billy Butlin running around with us. We used to have some terrific times.

*Gentleman born 1926*

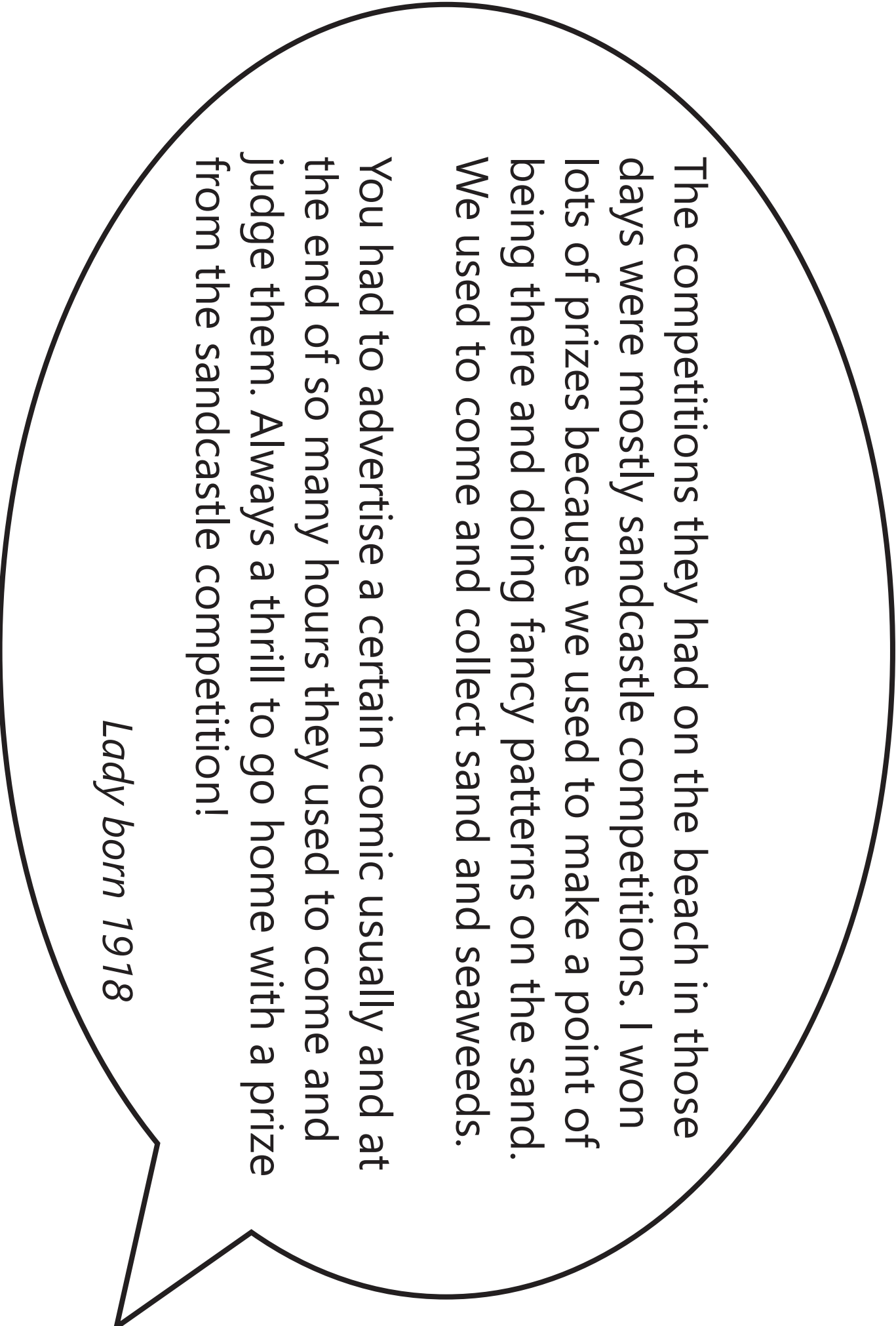




We spent all day and every day on the beach. We had a hut that was great fun. We used to come for four weeks. People used to compete with one another who was first on the beach, it was nearly all nannies and children.

*Lady born 1909*



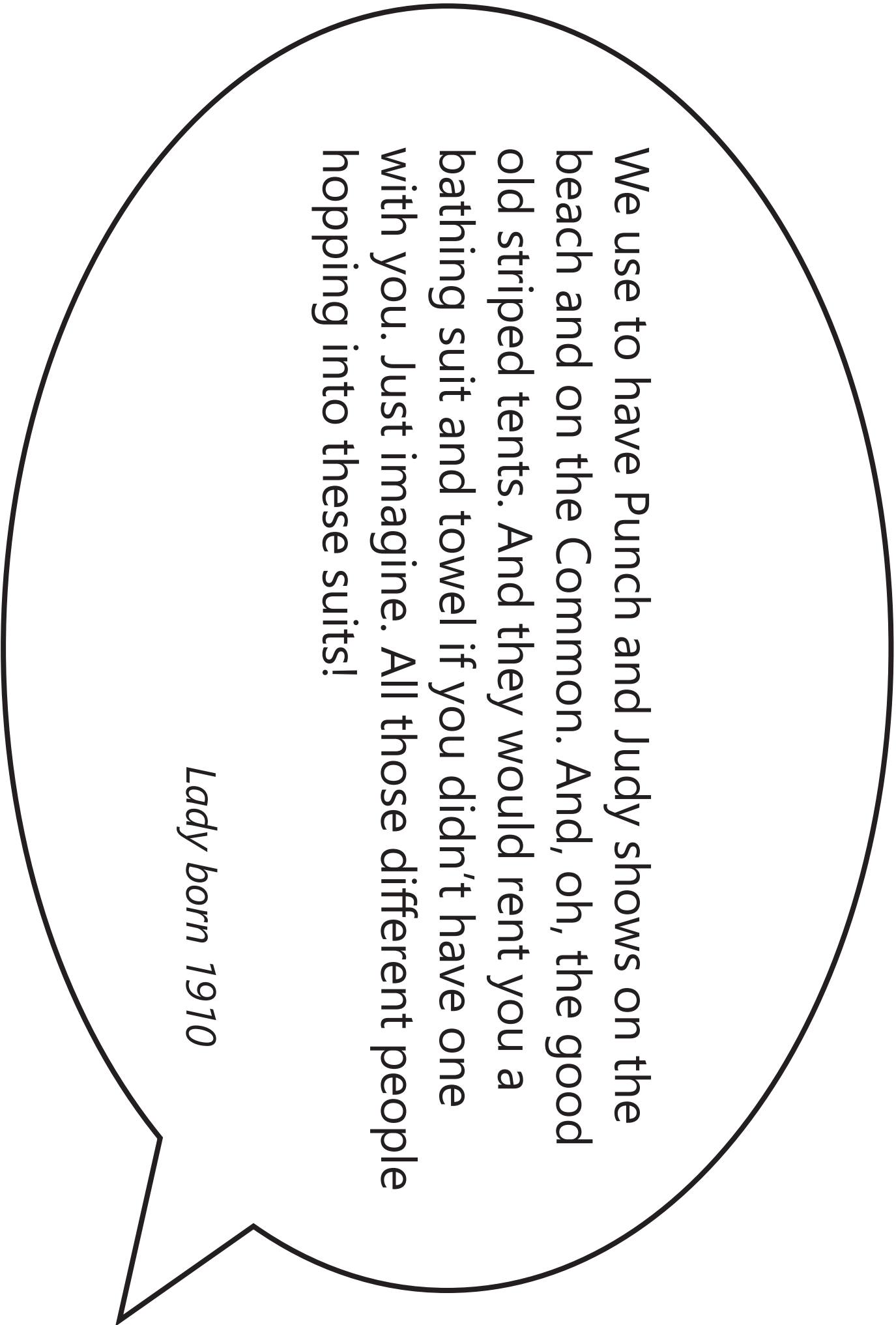
A large, black-outlined speech bubble with a tail pointing towards the bottom left. Inside the bubble is a two-paragraph text in a black serif font. The first paragraph describes beach competitions and prizes. The second paragraph describes advertising for a comic.

The competitions they had on the beach in those days were mostly sandcastle competitions. I won lots of prizes because we used to make a point of being there and doing fancy patterns on the sand. We used to come and collect sand and seaweeds.

You had to advertise a certain comic usually and at the end of so many hours they used to come and judge them. Always a thrill to go home with a prize from the sandcastle competition!

*Lady born 1918*

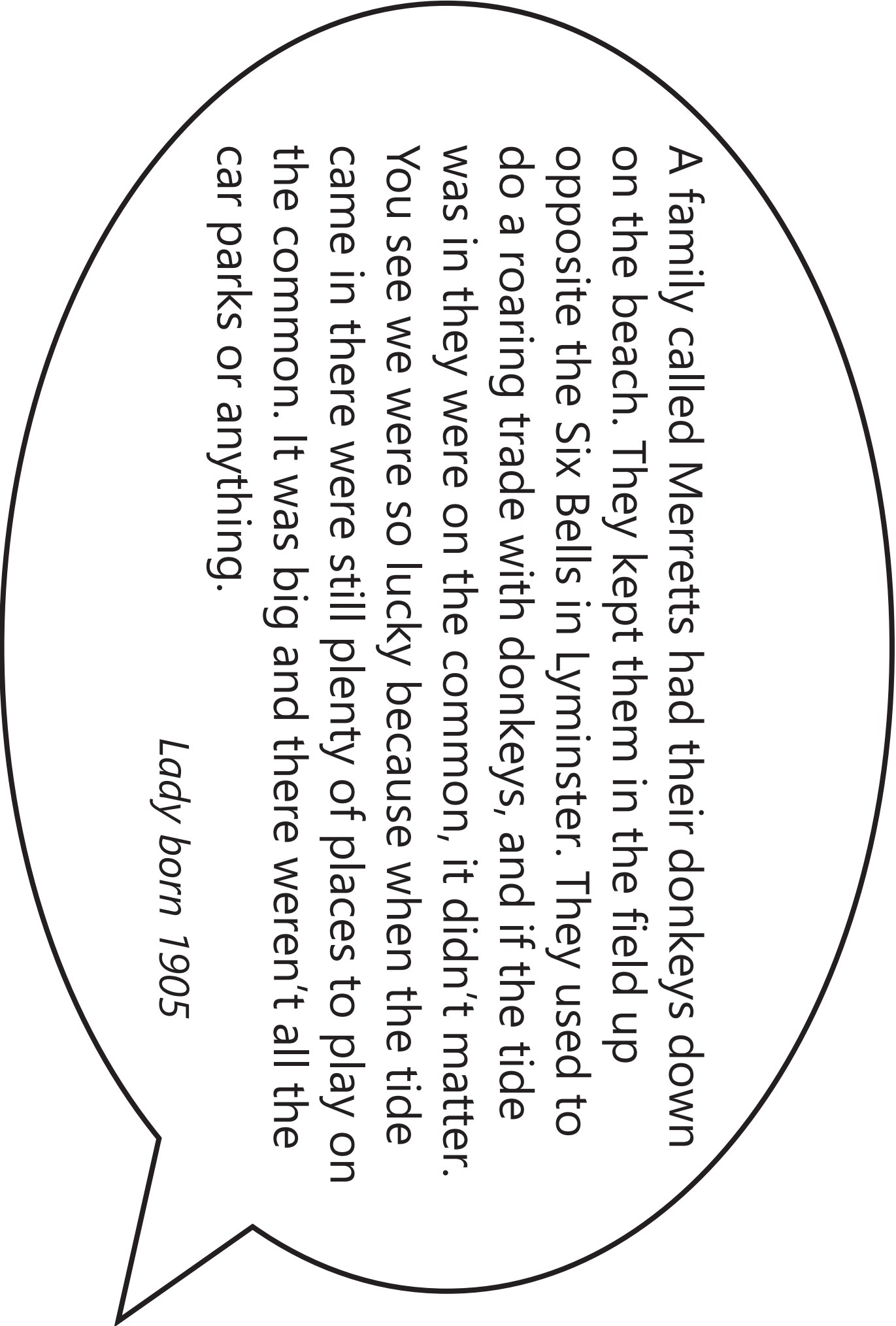




We use to have Punch and Judy shows on the beach and on the Common. And, oh, the good old striped tents. And they would rent you a bathing suit and towel if you didn't have one with you. Just imagine. All those different people hopping into these suits!

*Lady born 1910*

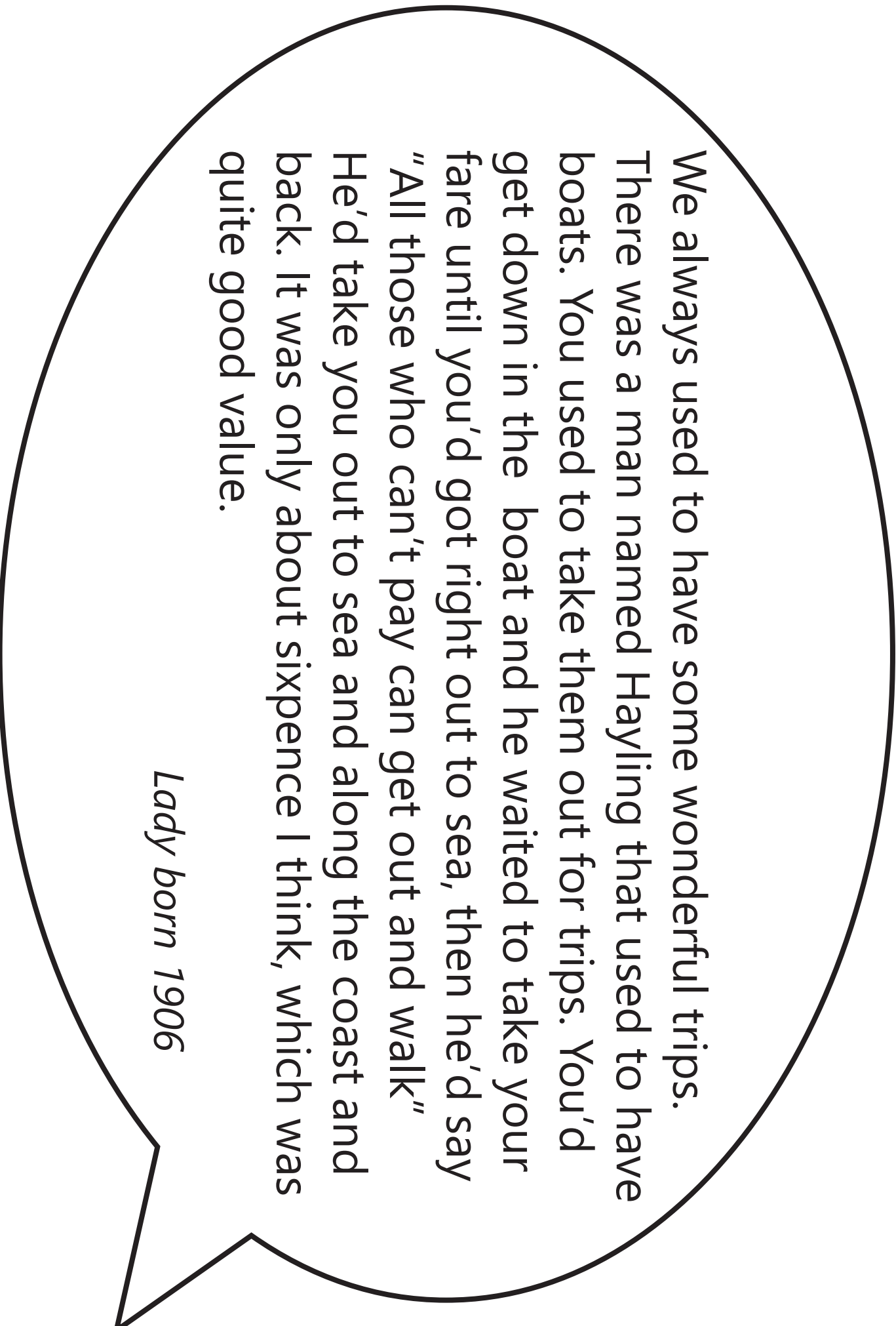




A family called Merretts had their donkeys down on the beach. They kept them in the field up opposite the Six Bells in Lyminster. They used to do a roaring trade with donkeys, and if the tide was in they were on the common, it didn't matter. You see we were so lucky because when the tide came in there were still plenty of places to play on the common. It was big and there weren't all the car parks or anything.

*Lady born 1905*





We always used to have some wonderful trips. There was a man named Hayling that used to have boats. You used to take them out for trips. You'd get down in the boat and he waited to take your fare until you'd got right out to sea, then he'd say "All those who can't pay can get out and walk" He'd take you out to sea and along the coast and back. It was only about sixpence I think, which was quite good value.

*Lady born 1906*





Littlehampton Museum, Manor House,  
Church Street, Littlehampton, West Sussex,  
BN17 5EW. 01903 738100.

[littlehamptonmuseum.co.uk](http://littlehamptonmuseum.co.uk)  
[museum@littlehampton-tc.gov.uk](mailto:museum@littlehampton-tc.gov.uk)

