

Jan Carney remembers the historic well at Bartletts Beach

I remember surfing at Bartletts Beach, known to me as “Little Beach” when a very young girl. We would enjoy the surf and then go to the shower under the reservoir to rinse off the salt water. The water was crystal clear and ran non stop from the overflow of the well through a hole in the roof of the shower. The water came from a natural spring which runs through the reserve near the amenities.

Unfortunately, progress and development of Bonny Hills spoilt this wonderful reservoir as in the early seventies new residents to Bonny Hills were required to install septic tanks. The septic tanks were pumped out by a truck and disposed of. Due to the expense of having to pump out the tanks, many tanks were left to overflow with the effluent finding its way to the reservoir

Hastings Council as it was known then decided it was a health issue and ordered the reservoir to be emptied of its water.

My father Alex Sharkey worked for the Hastings Council in the mid seventies and was asked to “blow up” the reservoir.

He was quite upset about having to demolish it because he had also enjoyed holidays each year with his family the Suters, but as an employee of the Council proceeded to carry out their wishes.

He placed explosives at the base of the wall and set it off. The concrete in the walls was made from sand and grit from Bartletts Beach and was very hard and strong - it didn't succumb to the explosives much to his delight. However a small hole was made in the bottom which served to drain the water and that is how it stands today.

The well acts as one of the best environmental friends the old weathered cliff face could have. The natural spring plus water from the above residential area still spills into the reservoir. It then overflows onto the rock platform at the base of the well – NO EROSION.

Take note of the erosion caused by the drainage installed some 100 metres to the southeast of the well. Pipes were installed under the road and open out onto the reserve. In a downpour the local children ride their boogie boards down the reserve. The water channels its way across the reserve and gushes down the cliff face causing massive erosion.

I would love to see the well preserved for it is a very important part of Bonny Hills heritage and the history of its early settlement.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if life was still simple enough for the old shower and reservoir to return?

I have been a resident of Bonny Hills since 1973 and have photographs of the well as a keepsake but would much rather have the **“real thing”**.

Let us think back to all the things that have been knocked down in other villages for progress and look ahead to preserve our well.

Jan Carney
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