

Graham Lockington

WATERFIELD
SWIMMING BATH
MELTON MOWBRAY

INTRODUCTION

I was invited to attend a meeting of a Melton Borough Council Committee concerned with arrangements for the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Waterfield Swimming Bath, on Monday 21st July 1975.

As I listened to the ideas of possible events which could take place during the week November 24th - 29th 1975, I recalled that the first meeting of the Committee set up to explore the possibility of building a swimming bath was held on November 24th 1955. It seemed to me, that the ten years from 1955 - 1965 should also be commemorated in some way, for these were the years when the people of Melton Mowbray and the surrounding villages worked to raise a considerable sum of money. There are many people in the town today who are quite unaware of the tremendous voluntary effort which made the building of the Bath possible. The Committee accepted my offer to write an account of those ten years.

In writing the account of the activities of the Melton Mowbray Swimming Bath Association I have tried to acknowledge the contributions made both by individuals and organisations and to give some idea of the great effort which resulted in the realisation of a dream. Although a great deal of time has been spent in checking the facts, it is possible that there are errors and omissions. I apologise for any inaccuracies.

It has been an exciting story to relate and now all those who use the Baths and those who will swim in the future will know how the money was raised to provide this excellent amenity for the town.

I am grateful to the Officers of the former Association for reading the script and making corrections. I wish to thank the editors of the Melton Times, the Melton and Rutland Journal and the Leicester Mercury for the help I have received from reading cuttings from their respective newspapers. My thanks are due to Mr. L. H. Chester also, for supplying photographs from which boys have made the illustrations in the book. I wish to place on record my thanks to members of my staff for their help, Mrs. A. E. Wilford for correcting the final copy, Mrs. D. Jones for helping the boys with the illustrations, Mrs. M. M. Barclay and Mr. S. J. Marriott for encouraging the girls and boys to write the essays. I think the expressions of opinion of the young people of today will give the reader an indication of the fact that the Waterfield Baths are appreciated. There is no doubt at all that those who gave so generously of their time for ten years can feel rewarded to see the Bath so well patronised today. (Is it bath or baths?).

I wish to thank Mr. A. Cotton the Superintendent of the Baths for his notes from which I compiled the 1965 - 1975 chapter. Finally my thanks to my Secretary Mrs. S. A. Baguley for typing the script.

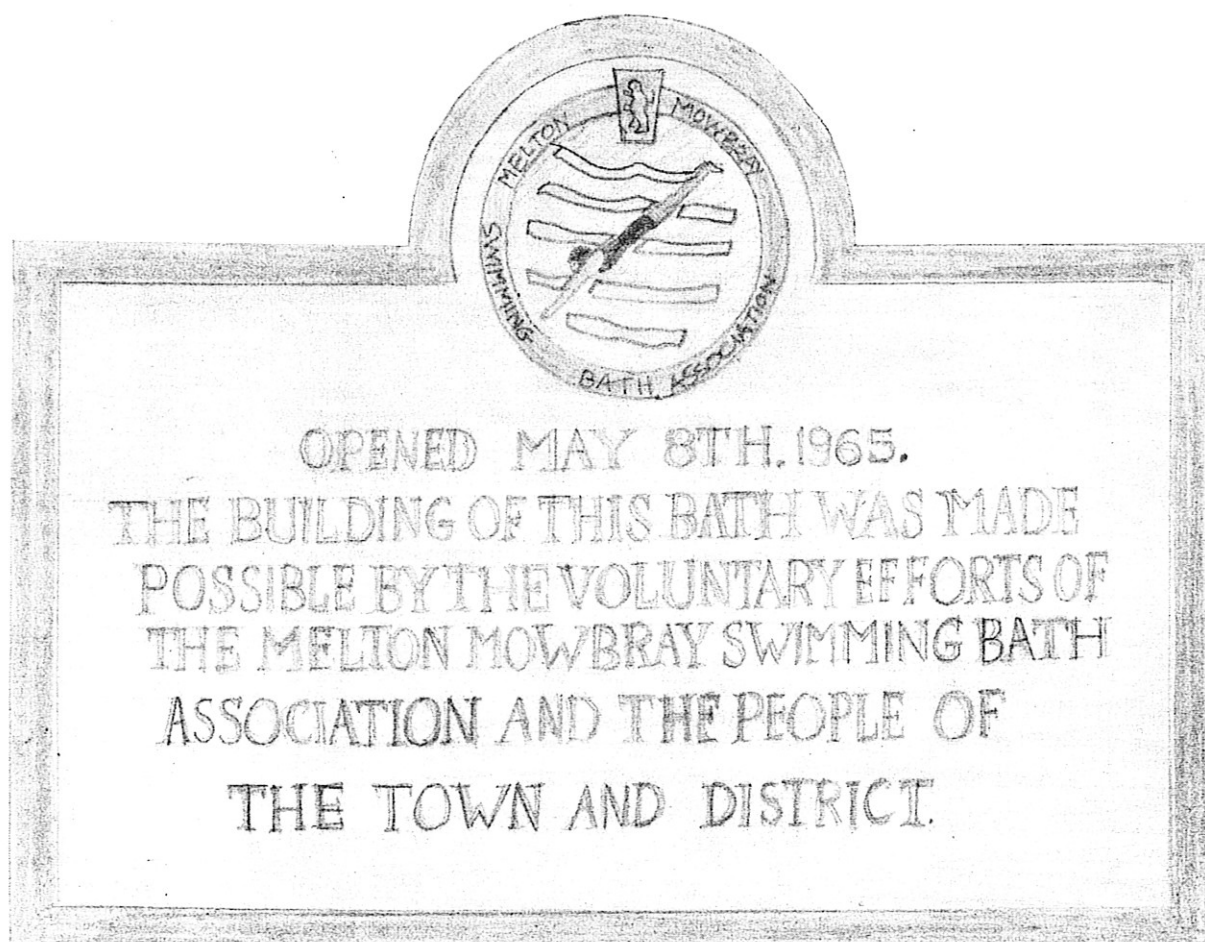
The dream of the Toc H members came true with the help of the people of Melton Mowbray and district and of course the architect and the builder.

It will interest those who have asked the meaning of Toc H to know that it is a Christian fellowship. It was started in Talbot House, a Soldiers' Club in Poperinghe, France which was opened in 1915 by the Rev. P. B. Clayton. The house was named after Gilbert Talbot who was killed in action in 1915. He was the son of the then Bishop of Winchester. Toc H used to be the Army signallers' method of pronouncing T H.

J. K. Penstone
Headmistress

Sarson High School
Melton Mowbray

20th October 1975



The Commemorative Plaque

Stewart Tiltman

MELTON MOWBRAY SWIMMING BATH ASSOCIATION 1955 - 65

The Early Days

On August 29th 1955 a group of people met at the Old Club Cafe, Burton Street, at the invitation of Mr. George Atkinson. Mr. Atkinson explained that the local branch of Toc H was convening the meeting in order to explore the possibility of providing a swimming bath in the town.

Those present included Mrs. G. K. Ward (Chairman of the U.D.C.) and U.D.C. members Mr. J. W. Greenslade, Mr. J. W. Mills and Mr. R. Abney-Hastings; Town Wardens Mr. John Smyth and Mr. John Crosher; Mr. W. E. Warner (a County Alderman); Mr. P. Maher (Melton Rugby Club); Mr. Rex Barber and Mr. T. Barber (Round Table); Mr. W. E. Katz (a member of the former Melton Swimming Club); Mr. N. Alder and Toc H members; Miss J. K. Penstone (Schools) and Mrs. J. M. Furness and Mrs. D. E. Heawood.

Mr. George Atkinson, Toc H Secretary, was elected Chairman. He had written to some organisations not represented at the meeting and also to other individuals. PERA and Messrs. Chappie Ltd. (now Pedigree Petfoods) said they would help if the plan to provide a swimming bath went ahead. A grant from the Chappie Charity Fund was promised.

On view were some plans of an open-air swimming pool built in Guildford in 1933 at a cost of £25,000 - £30,000 and it was thought that a similar pool could be built in Melton Mowbray. It was suggested that a suitable site would be in the Play Close near the existing paddling pool and that the two pools could be run together and so economies could be made. The addition of a car park and a catering establishment would make an attractive area.

Then came the question of cost and the raising of the money. It was suggested that a group of business men might take over the pool as a Limited Company, another suggestion was that the U.D.C. should take it over. The latter suggestion led to a discussion on the question of a rate levy. It was not envisaged that a pool could be maintained by the local authority at a profit and a 4d. rate was considered a possibility. It was wondered how the people of the town would react to an increase in the rates, "There is always an outcry when the rates go up", murmured someone. Another member of the committee thought there would be little criticism of an increase in rates when there was a swimming pool in existence. Alderman W. E. Warner pointed out that an assured source of income would probably come from the County Council who would pay for school children to use the pool during the daytime.

A question was asked about funds still in existence from the old Swimming Club and Mr. Katz said that though he could not speak authoritatively about it, he thought the fund was less than £100. A further suggestion was made that the trustees of the Bickley Trust, Mr. H. K. Barker and Mr. A. P. Marsh should be approached to see if the Trust could make a grant.

The final outcome of this meeting was that four representatives from the meeting were empowered to arrange a meeting with three representatives from the U.D.C., three from the R.D.C. and the two Town Wardens. It was agreed that when the results of this second meeting were known then Toc H would consider calling a public meeting at the Corn Exchange to launch a campaign for public subscriptions. The four representatives were – one from Toc H, one from the Round Table, Alderman W. E. Warner and Miss J. K. Penstone.

The second meeting was held on the 13th September and after the minutes had been read by Mr. Rex Barber, various representatives emphasised that they could not commit their respective organisations in any way and they were attending the meeting for exploratory purposes.

Mr. Barber presented a draft plan of a lido which could be built in the Play Close and mentioned a figure of £2,800 as the cost of concreting an existing excavation. He said that it was very difficult to give an estimate as no local authority had built a pool since the end of the War.

Miss Penstone expressed doubts about the advisability of building an open air pool in a town as far north as Melton Mowbray. This led to a discussion on the possibility of turning the Corn Exchange into an indoor pool. It was agreed that the local authority representatives should ask their respective surveyors (Mr. P. B. Sutton and Mr. L. Hesford) for their views on this idea.

Arrangements were made to hold a Public Meeting in the Corn Exchange on 27th October 1955, under the Chairmanship of Mr. R. W. Brownlow.

THE FIRST PUBLIC MEETING

The Corn Exchange was crowded, in fact it was considered that the meeting was the best attended in living memory. The Chairman, Mr. R. W. Brownlow, handled it in a masterly way – “Don’t be mealy-mouthed about it, we want no sour personal criticism here. We want it to be free and friendly for we all want the same thing – if we can afford it!”

Mr. John Smyth, Senior Town Warden reviewed progress since the first meeting on 29th August. He said the two Surveyors of the Local Authorities had inspected the Corn Exchange and their report indicated that the maximum size of bath which could be installed there would be 65 feet by 27 feet. The minimum size recommended by the Amateur Swimming Association was 100 feet by 42 feet. Although no real estimate could be given, the nearest price they could suggest for such a conversion would be £20,000 which, taking into account the loss of revenue that would result from another use of the Corn Exchange, was in their view out of proportion to the benefit derived. “Which means,” said Mr. Smyth, “that we must think of some other method of providing a swimming pool.”

"Even if it had been a practical proposition," commented octogenarian, Mr. R. W. Brownlow, "there would have been a serious loss of income in converting the Corn Exchange, which would have been a serious thing."

The Melton Times reported — "Then came the voices of those who felt it must be a covered in pool or nothing. Gales of applause greeted the first exponent of this cause — Miss J. K. Penstone, Headmistress of the Sarson School for Girls. She gave some interesting statistics about the interest shown by her pupils in swimming. There are 142 girls who can swim and they have learned by going to Baths in Leicester or by spending holidays by the sea. There are 387 girls who wish to learn to swim — a total of 529 who are interested in swimming. She went on to say that there would be limited use of an open air pool and the school would be on holiday during the best summer weather. She stated that her staff and pupils felt it would be preferable to spend a longer time raising the money for an indoor pool."

Mr. J. C. Foster, Headmaster of the Grove School, supported Miss Penstone's views. He said he had had 20 years experience as a competitor and a coach and he felt that children could not be taught to swim satisfactorily except in water of a controlled temperature between 72° and 78°. Mr. Brownlow quipped, "It appears that children are a bit more tender than they were in my day."

Mr. George Padgett said it had to be an indoor pool and the local authority should pay for it. "We are suffering now from what previous councils did not do, a swimming pool would not be a liability to the town, for although it might require a sacrifice on the part of the ratepayers now, it would be a future asset."

Councillor A. B. Eagles also thought the needs of future generations should be considered and if it were the wish of the public then it was possible the Council should give more serious thought to it.

Councillor J. W. Greenslade said the U.D.C. had not been completely lazy in the matter. There were roars of laughter when he said that five years ago the Cemetery and Allotments Committee had considered the possibility of building a pool. Then he said, "Even if we were willing to take the plunge the Loans Board would never sanction a loan, especially after yesterday — Budget Day! The meeting continued and voices came from all parts of the crowded hall — hold a referendum of all the residents, organise football pools ("Run a pool to make a pool" quipped Mr. R. W. Brownlow) ask everyone to give 3d a week, seek the co-operation of the large firms, etc. Then a vote was taken, only a handful of people supported an open air pool but a sea of hands assented to the indoor pool proposals.

An exciting meeting was brought to a close after it was agreed that the "next move" should be left to a committee consisting of Mr. Rex Barber as convener, Mr. A. C. Bishop of Lloyds Bank as treasurer, and various representatives from organisations including Mr. George Atkinson, who in his capacity as a Toc H official, was the sponsor of the proposal a few months previously.

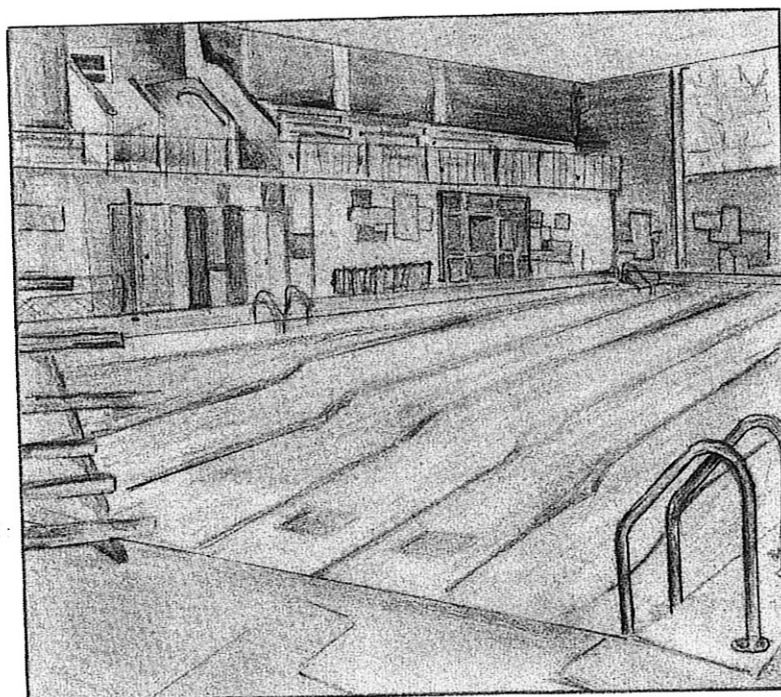
MELTON MOWBRAY MUST HAVE AN INDOOR POOL

The provision of a pool was the great topic of conversation, it was discussed in the schools, in the streets, in the shops, in the factories, in the public houses, at Council Meetings and wherever people met together. The Committee set up by the Public Meeting had its first meeting on 24th November 1955. Those who attended were Miss J. K. Penstone, Messrs. J. Smyth, G. Atkinson, A. C. Bishop, J. W. Mills, W. Stanley, P. R. Hill, J. C. Foster, J. W. Greenslade, N. Alder and R. Barber.

Mr. Atkinson was elected Chairman, and Mr. Barber offered to carry out the duties of secretary until someone could be found to fill this position. It was unanimously agreed that the project of providing the town with a Swimming Bath was a long term one. Although Government policy at that time was to cut spending, it was hoped that the position would improve. It was decided to strengthen the Committee by inviting representatives from more organisations. It was agreed that a letter should be sent to the Town Estate expressing gratitude for the offer of a site for the Bath.

Half-crowns were painlessly extracted from all present for petty cash, a total of £1. 7. 6d. was collected from eleven persons present at the meeting.

At the next meeting on 8th December 1955 Miss J. K. Penstone took over the office of Secretary in the place of Mr. Rex Barber who had undertaken the office in a temporary capacity. Two sub-committees were formed, one was asked to draw up a list of local firms, organisations and individuals to be contacted and asked for donations, and the other was to explore the possibility of running a Football Competition.



The interior of Waterfield Baths

Graham Lockington

TARGET – £10,000 IN 3 YEARS

The next Committee meeting was held on 19th January 1956. In addition to discussing the findings of the two sub-committees a further sub-committee was set up to make arrangements to hold a Garden Party at the Sarson School in the Summer and to organise a White Elephant Sale in April. It was also decided to hold Dances in the Corn Exchange and Miss K. M. Hanbury suggested that Snowball tea parties would bring in some money. As the Association entered into more activities it was decided to have printed note paper and it was agreed that sample designs should be brought to the next meeting.

At the February meeting it was decided that the Association should set a target for itself so that people would know that the Association meant business, and to give an aim to the work. It was agreed that £5,000 should be raised by efforts in the next three years and a further £5,000 should be collected from subscriptions and donations in the same time. Then with £10,000 within the Association's grasp it was hoped to build up to £60,000 from Councils and various charities.

The Committee was firmly of the opinion that money could be raised by arranging all kinds of activities. There was rejoicing when Miss. K. M. Hanbury handed in the results of the very first effort – snowball teas. A modest £37. 10s. but it was a start and more money was handed in as a result of this novel fund raising effort as the weeks went by. Miss Hanbury invited six guests to tea, Miss J. K. Penstone, Mrs. L. Crookes, Mrs. B. Liddiard, Mrs. M. D. Packwood, Miss M. Marriott and Miss. M. Lorenz, and charged them 2s. each, an income of 12s. Each of the original guests invited a further six guests to tea and so on until a great many people had been involved in the tea parties. The final result was £72. 16. 6.

Mrs. G. Welsh gave the first donation of £1 as a result of a Whist Drive. Mr. A. C. Bishop expressed the view that it was disappointing that the first sums of money had come from women. He said he was keen to start a fund raising scheme to be run by men which would bring in a steady £30 a week. Now that the money had started to come in, it was decided to open an account at Lloyds Bank.

The Association was becoming established and Mr. J. Smyth had been appointed President. Although the members were enthusiastic there was a certain amount of apathy at this stage. The R.D.C. was worried about the cost and in view of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's plea for economy, Councillors thought it was an inopportune time to embark on such an ambitious scheme. It was becoming evident that the Council did not wish to commit itself in any way by being officially represented on the Committee. The councillors were thinking it was a waste of time to attend committee meetings without any real authority from the Council. They were awaiting a meeting with the U.D.C. to decide what action they should take.

Meanwhile the U.D.C.'s attitude was neutral. Miss J. K. Penstone was also a U.D.C. councillor and she sought clarification of the Council's attitude. She received the answer that while councillors as individuals were sympathetic, they dare not as a council express their sympathy. But she said, "Do we not exist as a council to improve the town and the general facilities for the people?" The Chairman Councillor W. Greaves – "Yes; – commensurate with our ability to pay!"

THE FIRST GARDEN PARTY

A great boost was given to the members of the Association when over 1,000 people flocked to the Sarson School on Saturday, June 30th 1956. There was a strong wind blowing and there was a risk of showers, but the stall holders and those responsible for the entertainment were undeterred. The crowd assembled on the Lawn by the statue of Euterpe to welcome the opener Sir Robert Martin, Chairman of Leicestershire County Council. He referred to the scheme to build a swimming bath as a "very fine project indeed", and said, "I think it is very enterprising of Melton people to make up their minds that Melton will not be complete without a swimming bath. It will greatly add to the pleasure of life in Melton but it will take a good deal of money probably between £60,000 and £70,000, and determination. Nevertheless, you will do it all right in a year or two." Then he offered one possible solution to the problem of raising the money – "There are 15,000 people in Melton and if every inhabitant contributed just a shilling a week then in 20 months you would get all you want for your swimming bath!" He added, "There is nothing like spreading it thin – and that is what all of you are here for today."

Sir Robert's words were so appropriate and were just right to give the Association the spur to continue its work. He said he thought people should not be afraid of going in for "the big jobs." He went on to say if they believed in what they wanted, then their ambition would be achieved. After the presentation of flowers and buttonholes to the platform party by Diane North, Elizabeth Adams, and Judith Bennett and thanks expressed to Sir Robert, the helpers worked non-stop to keep the money rolling in. The entertainment included folk dancing by Polish children, a gymnastic display and national dancing by girls of the Sarson School, land drill by pupils of the Grammar School. Then while tea was served, music was played by the Great Dalby School Band under its conductor, Mr. G. V. Underwood, Headmaster. A concert was given in the evening by the Misfits Concert Party from Long Clawson, after which Miss J. K. Penstone presented prizes to the winners of the competitions. The day's proceedings amounted to £185. 10. 3d.

A WORTHY CAUSE

Cheered by the success of the Garden Party and the fact that small amounts of money were coming in the Association decided to hold a Public Meeting in the Corn Exchange on October 8th 1956. Unfortunately, an air of despondency hung over this meeting as only about 50 people, including the officers and committee, turned up. The first public meeting in 1955 had attracted about 400 people and it was very disappointing for the hard working committee to find such a poor response. It was a wet night and this would have kept some people at home. The committee members tended to blame themselves for not reporting back to their respective organisations and they resolved to persuade the people of Melton Mowbray that money raising was the job of the whole town if a swimming bath was to become a reality.

A House to House collection was planned to take place from 19 – 24 November, but there was another set back for the Association. It was decided to postpone the collection until 3 – 8 December owing to the urgency of the national Hungarian Relief Fund collection. The Association's collection brought in £177. 13. 2d. which was far beyond the expectations of the collectors.

The Brownies of Somerby presented Mr. G. Atkinson with a cheque for 10 guineas and they promised to organise more fund raising activities. People sold flowers and vegetables from their gardens and handed the money in. The people of Elms and Oak roads agreed to give a shilling per house a week for 6 weeks. A collection was made at a Dance, the schools had collections, ladies held coffee mornings and a Christmas Draw was planned. Children collected ship half pennies and handed them in when £1 had been collected.

Someone found a purse and returned it to the owner who gave him 5s. reward and told him to spend it on himself or give it to some worthy cause. Without hesitation it was given to the Swimming Bath Association.

A cheque for £3 arrived from Sir Robert Martin. His balloon had won a prize in the balloon race which was organised at the Garden Party. The Central Townswomen's Guild presented Mr. G. Atkinson with a cheque for £30. The schools of the town held a concert at the Sarson School which resulted in £17. 4s. 3d. The Egerton Park Cricket Club took a collection at the final match in the Salaman Cup and £5 was collected.

A sale with a difference was held in Messrs. Sikes and Smith's auction room. It was a voluntary effort organised by the Round Table. For several weeks prior to the Sale appeals had gone out for surplus furniture and white elephants and local tradesmen rallied to the cause and donated gifts including toys, radios and items of furniture. The auctioneer was Mr. Gordon Southwood who gave his services, as also did Mrs. Joyce Barber who acted as auctioneer's clerk. There was keen bidding for Jack Archer's tankard and Tim Moloney's crash helmet. These two items brought in £7. The sale resulted in £220 being handed over to the Association.

The Association came to be regarded as a worthy cause by Melton people and a top priority job.

In May 1956 Mrs. G. Gooch of Burton Road offered to give £100 provided nine other people would do the same. The widow of a former race horse trainer Mrs. Gooch's offer was made in the interests of the youth of the town. She felt that children were being molly-coddled and not given sufficient physical activity. She thought the Association's final target of £60,000 would be difficult to achieve. She made the gesture to start the ball rolling. Unfortunately, only one donation of £100 from Miss E. Attenburrow was received and Mrs. Gooch gave her £100. Both these ladies became Vice-Presidents and helped the Association in many ways.

The Hon. Secretary wrote to 59 'influential' people asking for a donation but there was a poor response. She wrote to the Duke of Windsor but his secretary replied stating that although the Duke was in sympathy with the scheme he was unable to give a donation because he received so many requests for donations. She also wrote to Baroness Ravensdale and received a similar reply.

AN OUTSTANDING YEAR — 1957

On October 31st Miss Penstone stated in her report at the Public Meeting that 1957 had been a notable year and she said, "If ever anybody has the need or feels the desire to write a history of the town then 1957 will stand out as the year in which the Swimming Bath Association was really set in motion." It would seem that the poorly attended public meeting in 1956 gave the small faithful band a firm resolve to press ahead with the project. The work of the Association went from strength to strength throughout the year. There had been excellent attendance at all the Committee and Sub-committee meetings which had taken place in the Old Club Cafe in Burton Street (now Kevin's Record Shop) Mr. George Atkinson gave the Association free use of the Cafe and the Hon. Secretary placed on record the Association's appreciation of the Chairman's generosity.

Mention was made of the great amount of time which the representatives gave to the Association and the hope was expressed that even greater co-operation could come from the organisations by even closer contact with the representatives. The Association was very much alive to the need for devising new methods of raising money.

During the year an indicator board was erected over the premises of W. H. Smith & Son Ltd. in the Market Place. The money was coming in rapidly and it was felt people would like to note progress by watching the swimmer swimming over the waves.

THE FOOTBALL COMPETITION

Throughout this time a sub-committee had been exploring the possibility of running some form of weekly competition which would bring in a regular income. It was not until the passing of the Small Lotteries and Gaming Act 1956, that this sub-committee considered it could advise the Executive Committee to go ahead with this scheme. The members of the Sub-Committee were — Mr. A. C. Bishop, Mr. H. Orton, Mr. C. A. Lane, Mr. S. Lawrance, Mr. F. Palmer, Mr. R. Pepper and Mr. T. Webster.

The Sub-Committee's first effort was the organisation of a successful Christmas Draw in December 1956. Local tradesmen very kindly donated the prizes. The sum of £137. 2s. 4d. was raised.

Before launching the weekly competition, later to be known as the Football Competition, it was necessary to find a number of people who would be willing to act as agents to collect the shillings from at least 1,000 people. The first competition was run on Saturday 15th December 1956 with a membership of 1,662, the Association benefitting by the sum of £33. 5s. 2d. By Saturday 11th May 1957 the membership had increased to 4,200. The sum handed over to the Association in that week was £84. 3s. 1d. The total for the first 22 weeks was £1,400. 2s. 8d. Everyone agreed that this was a remarkable amount and congratulated the Sub-Committee.

In order to raise such a large sum of money it is obvious that the members of the Sub-Committee worked very hard indeed. The Association was most grateful to the Working Men's Club for the use of a room to carry out the necessary work. When Mr. A. C. Bishop left the town Mr. H. Orton took over the responsibility for running the competition. Both Mr. Orton and Mr. Bishop were assisted most ably by the members of the sub-committee. There is no doubt whatsoever that if it had not been for the work of these gentlemen, the bath would not have been built. They devoted hours and hours every week to the task of collecting the money from the agents, paying out the winners, paying direct to the Bank the amount due after the deduction of expenses, etc. The agents who collected the shillings from the members on their respective lists gave up many hours of their time to help in the task of raising the money.

There was no let up in the Summer months because the Competition went on without the Football Matches. A draw was held in the Old Club Cafe every Saturday evening and members of the public were invited to attend as spectators.

The Association expressed its appreciation to the members of the Football Competition Sub-Committee and to the agents by having a Social Evening in the Trades and Labour Hall every year. The refreshments were given by the President.

After eight years of giving up several evenings a week, the members of the sub-committee had raised over £58,000. What a tremendous voluntary effort! It is obvious that this supreme effort by a small group was responsible for the fine Bath which we have today.

TARGET – PASSED

The Public Meeting in 1958 was held on 16th October at the Corn Exchange and very encouraging reports were given. There was rejoicing again because over £14,000 had been raised (£4,000 more than the target). The people of the town were now taking a lively interest in the project and this was evident by the large attendance at the meeting. Now that the money was coming in people were becoming more interested in the Bath and they felt the Bath would become a reality. It was estimated that the Football Competition would bring in £8,000 in the coming year. Local firms were taking a greater interest and Petfoods Ltd., and the Midland Woodworking Co., had each donated £100. The Stanton Iron works had promised £250 worth of materials when building began.

During the year the officers of the Association had met Mr. Arthur Turner, the local representative of the Central Council for Physical Recreation. It was discovered that this Council could not give financial help but would be pleased to give technical advice.

The officers had met Mr. Anthony Stuart, Secretary of the Leics. County Playing Fields Association. Mr. Stuart sought help for us from the National Playing Fields Association. He had extracted the relevant sections of the Physical Training and Recreation Act 1937 and in accordance with these sections we hoped that help would be forthcoming from Leics. County Council and the Ministry of Education.

Mr. F. J. Johnson and Mr. P. Kitchen, the Authority's Advisory Officers for Physical Education, had been very helpful in offering advice. They recommended that the Association should make a direct application for assistance to the Ministry of Education. The public were made aware that all possible sources of help both financial and technical were being followed up and explored.

The Association was given a vote of confidence at this meeting and hopes were expressed that the good work would be continued. Those present voted in favour of the Association asking Feoffees of the Town Estate for use of the site at the corner of Dalby Road and Leicester Road.

The Chairman of the U.D.C., Mr. John W. Greenslade, thanked the Association for the voluntary effort, which he said "would be written in the history of Melton Mowbray as a very great voluntary effort."

LAND AND ARCHITECT

Elated by their success and encouraged by the fact that they were now an accepted part of the community the Association was enthusiastic about the future. The Public Meeting held on October 16th 1958 was considered the most successful meeting so far. Then in December of that year Mr. R. W. Snelson (Senior Town Warden) wrote to the Hon. Secretary offering the site at the corner of Dalby Road and Leicester Road for £300 and this offer would be subject to a formal contract. The Executive discussed the site at a meeting on 29th January 1959 and it was agreed that the land should be bought and so the Hon. Secretary wrote to the Town Warden asking if a formal contract could be submitted for consideration and it was hoped approved also. When the Executive Committee met again on 14th May 1959, Mr. J. Smyth reported that he had received the contract but the signing would be delayed until the County Planning Committee had given permission to build the Bath on the site. Also it was necessary to ascertain that the site was a suitable one.

It was realised that the Association could not make further progress on its own and the time had come to appoint an architect. It was unanimously decided that an approach should be made to Mr. F. W. Keyworth L.R.I.B.A.

In addition the Association wished to keep in touch with influential bodies as the time was approaching when it was thought that grants could be made. Consequently the Hon. Secretary wrote to Miss Mervyn Pike M.P. in order to get her approval of the scheme and to advise on the subject of grants from the Government. A letter was sent to Sir Robert Martin reporting the amazing progress since he opened the Garden Party in 1956, and asking him for information concerning the County Council's policy about Swimming Baths.

When the Executive Committee met again on 10th September 1959 Mr. F. W. Keyworth's appointment as Architect was confirmed and letters from Sir Robert Martin and Mr. S. C. Mason, Director of Education, were read. Unfortunately, a meeting with Miss M. Pike which had been arranged had not taken place as Miss Pike had been detained in London.

It was decided to send letters to the Clerks of the U.D.C. and R.D.C. acquainting them of the Association's financial position and requesting consideration for grants.

At this meeting Mr. Smyth reported that the Charity Commissioners had given the Town Estate permission to sell the land for £300. He also said the Association was recognised as a recreational charity because it was investing money and receiving interest, and it now came under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education.

At a meeting of the Executive Committee on October 29th 1959 Mr. Keyworth and Mr. Marlowe exhibited proposed plans of a Bath and answered questions. Final plans were made for the Public Meeting on 20th November 1959.

The great amount of work that had been done by the Association was reported to the general public at the meeting. Everyone present was impressed by the volume of work and there was rejoicing that the day when Melton Mowbray would be the proud possessor of a Bath was creeping nearer.

The plans were on view and the Architect explained the various aspects and answered questions. There was an air of general approval but the President stated that a great deal of work would be done on all the detailed planning and he assured the meeting of the Association's devotion to its task and that in the following year the money raising activities should gain renewed impetus now that the Association was at the planning stage. It was reported that the total amount raised was £25,814. 7s. 6d.

The following months were spent in making detailed examinations of the plan, several sub-committees were set up with power to co-opt people with specialist knowledge of various aspects of the proposed Bath. Such details as methods of admission at various baths were studied both by visits and reading. Even translations of articles in foreign journals were read. Heating and filtration plants were visited, the Amateur Swimming Association was contacted and asked to comment on the plans. Towards the end of February 1960 Mr. Keyworth and Mr. Marlowe took notes of the reports of the sub-committees and they said would consider them.

Mr. F. W. Keyworth, Mr. C. T. Marlowe and Mr. M. B. Lane (Quantity Surveyor) attended a meeting of the Finance Committee on 17th March 1960. A lengthy discussion took place on the plans and the Architect said he would present a revised plan incorporating the suggestion at the next meeting on 28th April 1960. There was unanimous approval of the revised plan and the Architect was asked to get tenders for the building of the Bath.

In September 1960 Mr. George Atkinson, Chairman of the Association, announced that he would be leaving the town in order to do more work with Toc. H. He had been offered a post which would give him the opportunity to do more social work. He expressed his regrets at leaving and also his great regret on resigning from the Association. Mr. Atkinson was thanked for all his efforts on behalf of the Association and he was invited to become Vice-President of the Association.

Mr. Atkinson paid tribute to the work of the Officers and members of the Committees and remarked that he thought the figures for the attendance at Committees must be a record.

A month or two later when Mr. and Mrs. Atkinson were on a visit to the town a presentation of a camera was made to Mr. Atkinson and a bouquet to Mrs. Atkinson.

Following Mr. Atkinson's resignation the following changes were made in the Association's Committees:—

Executive Committee:—

Chairman	Mr. J. Smyth
Financial Officer	Mr. A. C. Bishop
Hon. Secretary	Miss J. K. Penstone

The Finance Committee was changed to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Chairman	Mr. A. C. Bishop
Hon. Treasurer	Mr. S. Lawrence
Hon. Secretary	Miss J. K. Penstone

Carnival Committee

Chairman	Mr. R. Pepper
Hon. Secretary	Mr. J. Cunliffe
Hon Treasurer	Mr. P. G. Ashby

Amid the sadness of losing the originator of the whole scheme there was a happy note — the Hon. Secretary had received a letter from the Ministry of Education stating that grants of up to £3,000 could be considered for the Bath. In "special" circumstances a grant of up to £6,000 could be considered.

The Hon. Treasurer reported that donations of £100 each had been received from the U.D.C. and the R.D.C.

The Association had now raised £35,534.

When in the Summer of 1960 it was decided to invite tenders for the building of the Bath, the Association was aware that the whole scheme would cost more than the Association could raise. However, it was felt that certain parts could be deleted such as the Cafeteria and the teaching pool, also fencing, car park and cycle racks etc. if necessary. The Association was ever mindful that it wished to do a first class job and an ideal Swimming Bath was the ultimate goal. In fact, if the Association had presented plans with various features left out there would have been criticism. Therefore, the correct policy seemed to be to present the ideal and encourage the people to raise the money to build the best.

An application form for a grant had been received from the Ministry of Education. The U.D.C. stated that it had found a way to make a loan for the Bath and the Director of Education sent a letter in which it was stated that a grant could be made if the Bath were publicly owned. The tenders had been received and opened by the President. A meeting between the officers and members of the U.D.C. took place and suggestions were made and agreements reached subject to approval by the Council and the Association. A deputation from the Council took the plans of the Bath to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government on the day of the public meeting. The delegation arrived back in time to give a favourable report to the Public Meeting on December 8th 1960.

It was at this Public Meeting that the President announced that the lowest tender received for the construction of the Bath was £140,000. He remarked that it was interesting to see that no one in the Hall had fainted! He went on to say that to have a first class swimming bath in Melton Mowbray would require a lot of money. He went on – "If we as an Association are going to raise £140,000, then it is going to take quite a long time. As soon as we knew of this tender we knew that we must look elsewhere if we are going to get the Baths in a reasonable time. We have been in touch with the County Council and it is possible that they will make a substantial grant – but only provided the Baths are publicly owned."

Councillor A. J. Roper, Chairman of the U.D.C., reported that he had just returned from a visit to London with the Plans and he said officials were impressed by them. But, he said, if the Council were to take over the Baths then they would have to borrow money – the difference between the Association's Funds and what they might get from the County Council and the total cost. He agreed with Mr. Smyth that if that did happen then the Association would have a great say in the running of the Baths.

Councillor Roper went on to say that the loan repayment on £50,000 would be £4,000 a year or £80 a week. In addition he estimated the loss on the Bath would be another £4,000 a year. "Who can afford a sum like that?" he asked. "Your Council are the only ones who can do it and keep solvent – but it will cost a 10d. rate."

"What happens if the Council don't want it?" asked a member of the public.

"Then we think again," replied Mr. Smyth.

The Association received assent from the Public Meeting to continue negotiations with the U.D.C. about the question of the ultimate ownership of the Bath and finances. The Association had made astonishing progress in five years. A total of just over £40,000 had been raised and the annual income was around £11,000. The latter figure could have been improved upon with more helpers.

On Wednesday 27th January 1961 the President, Secretary, Financial Officer and Architect journeyed to London to meet officials at the Ministry of Education. The Ministry's architect was pleased with the plan and expressed her thanks to the Architect from whom she was able to gain a considerable amount of information. It was agreed that a few minor points would be altered and informed that the scheme was acceptable and would be recommended for a grant.

The delegation was complimented on the scheme in particular that committee rooms and a clubroom had been included – facilities which are so often lacking in most Baths.

On the following day the members of the Association were disappointed to hear that the U.D.C. had passed a resolution stating that it was willing to take over the assets of the Association and build a Bath for £70,000 or alternatively they would take over a completed Bath costing not more than £75,000. It was felt that it was a pity that this decision had been reached before the negotiations, which had been started before the Public Meeting in December, had been completed.

The officers of the Association had always considered themselves to be the Trustees of the funds that had been raised. The Association was a Recreational Charity, subject to the direction of the Ministry of Education and doubts were expressed concerning the question of handing over the assets to the U.D.C.

The resolution was sent to the Hon. Secretary in a letter written by the Clerk of the U.D.C. and after discussion at an Executive Committee meeting on 9th February 1961 it was decided to inform the Council of the Association's regret on receiving the resolution but it would still be willing to have discussions with the Council.

The time at the next meetings was taken up with amending the ideal plan. It was considered that about £36,000 could be saved by omitting the cafeteria, teaching pool, clubroom, parking facilities etc.

Meanwhile the Councillors had their say at their Committee meetings. Such words and phrases as "Fantastic", "Grandiose", "Alarm", "Heads in the Clouds" were freely used. They viewed with great seriousness this proposal to spend £140,000 on a Swimming Bath. Someone said he had great admiration for all that the Association had done but he would never vote to spend such a sum on a Swimming Bath. "£140,000 for a town of this size! Why it is fantastic!"

Another Councillor went on to say that by the time work was started the figure could be £180,000. "Does that figure include everything?" he asked. "Does it include architect's fees and quantity surveyor's fees? And what about maintenance?"

Councillor W. Greaves, the Father of the Council said "To have a bath of this description – why bless my life and soul! It is what a town of 200,000 people might aspire to." He appreciated what had been done and great praise was due to the Association, but the town could not carry a load like that. "It is too grandiose and I only hope the promoters will get their heads out of the clouds and come down to terra firma."

Remarked the Chairman (Councillor A. J. Roper) "I would rather leave my comments to the special meeting."

"I'm saving mine till then," added another Councillor.

The Association reflected on its position. It had been set a task in 1955 to raise money, then prepare the plans and purchase a site. A very considerable sum of money had been raised by voluntary efforts, a reasonable site had been purchased and plans which the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Housing and Local Government thought suitable had been prepared.

Mr. A. C. Bishop wrote, "Be assured that a bath will be built; without substantial help from authorities it will take longer, but it will still be built. Remember when you are working hard each week for this cause and you read and hear criticism which certainly does not make your work any easier, that without the efforts of the Association the chances of having a Swimming Bath in this town would be very much less."

During the Summer of 1961 the Association studied plans of a smaller bath. The Architect agreed with the idea of having talks with the Superintendents of Leicester and Nottingham Baths. Many meetings and lengthy discussions took place.

On 23rd November 1961 and 1st and 15th December 1961 meetings took place between the Association and the Urban District Council. Councillor A. J. Roper presided over the meetings. He indicated that the hard facts were that the town would have a Bath costing in the region of £100,000. A sum of £50,000 had been raised, it was

hoped that the Association would raise another £25,000 (the income of the Association was approximately £12,000 a year) and the U.D.C. would provide £25,000. A committee was appointed to supervise the final stages of the project and equal representation was given to the two parties. Also it was decided that a form of agreement should be prepared.

A public meeting was held in the Corn Exchange on 15th January 1962. Coloured slides of all the various plans for the Bath and the one finally agreed upon were shown. Mr. F. W. Keyworth gave a very clear and informative explanation. After Mr. Keyworth and Mr. Smyth had answered questions the audience of about 200 people was asked to vote on the motion, "We are on the right lines and we can go ahead." There were only two hands held up against the motion. "Now we know where we are," said Mr. Smyth, "We can go ahead. It should be possible for work to start on the baths this summer."

Mr. A. C. Bishop announced his resignation from the position of Promoter of the Football Competition at the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 15th February 1962 as he was taking up a new post in Nottingham. Mr. H. Orton was elected Promoter. Mr. Bishop was willing to continue as Chairman of the Association. Mr. S. A. Lawrance took over the post of Treasurer of the No. 2 Account.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee approved the signing of the agreement with the U.D.C. on the recommendation of the Executive Committee on 5th April 1962.

In the Autumn of 1962 plans for the Bath were again in the hands of the Ministry and approval was awaited. The Ministry insisted on a soil investigation and approval was held up until the results were known. A few modifications by the Ministry were incorporated in the Plan.

On 6th June 1963 the tenders were opened at a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee. The tender for £101,904. 0s. 0d. from T. Denman & Sons (Melton Mowbray) Ltd., was accepted. The members of the committee passed a resolution thanking Mr. F. W. Keyworth, Mr. Marlowe, Mr. M. B. Lane and Mr. W. E. Brown for all their efforts and especially for expediting matters so that positive information would be available at the time of the Carnival.

In August 1963 there was great rejoicing again. The Association's funds stood at £68,000. the amount the Association had undertaken to raise was £75,000 and the local firm Petfoods Ltd. decided to make up the difference by giving a donation of £7,000, by entering into a Deed of Covenant for £1,000 per annum for seven years. A senior director of Petfoods said that the gift had been made in admiration of the tremendous amount of work that had been put in by members of the Association and the townspeople in raising so much money by voluntary effort.

Even although the target had been reached, the Association decided to continue with their efforts in order to actually raise £75,000 themselves.

The Association was fortunate in that a number of professional people gave free help and advice. Mr. J. B. Easom, F.C.A. and later on Mr. W. Osborne, F.C.A. audited the accounts. Their voluntary work was much appreciated.

The building of the Bath was started in September 1963.

THE CARNIVALS

In the Autumn of 1956 a Sub-Committee was set up to explore the possibilities of holding a Carnival in the Summer of 1957. In addition to the Officers the following were the members of the original Sub-Committee:— Mrs. J. Bell, Mrs. D. Nall, Mrs. E. A. Webb, Mr. A. Brown, Mr. J. E. Cobley, Mr. R. Pepper and Mr. C. H. Briggs. Other people were co-opted and various sub-committees of the Carnival Committee were formed in the following years.

The following programme of events took place during Carnival Week 1957 —

Saturday, June 29th	Fancy Dress Parade. Carnival Band Contest. Egerton Park.
Sunday, June 30th	Band Concert in New Park followed by Community Hymn Singing.
Monday, July 1st	Whist Drive at Conservative Club.
Tuesday, July 2nd	Grand Concert at Sarson School. Items by local schools.
Wednesday, July 3rd	Dancing in the Market Place
Thursday, July 4th	Cricket Match at Egerton Park
Friday, July 5th	Athletics, Tug of War, Display by RAVC Dogs at Egerton Park.

More than 1,000 people gathered in Egerton Park on the Saturday afternoon. It was a very hot day and temperatures soared into the 90's. A large number of people were content to sit in the shade and dream of the swimming bath and others supported the many side shows. One of the most popular was skittling for the pig donated by Mr. A. W. R. Houghton. Seven more pigs were kindly donated by Mr. Houghton in the following seven years.

There was a display of Carnival Bands from all over the Midlands. The winner of the contest was Spondon Coronation Band and Melton's Tally-Ho Band came second. Another attraction was the Fancy Dress Parade. A Carnival Dance was held at the Corn Exchange in the evening.

The activities which were held on the other evenings of the week were well supported. The whole week was a great success both socially and financially.

After the very enthusiastic response to Carnival Week the Sub-Committee met in September 1957 to plan another week of activities for June 1958. Mr. C. H. Briggs of Halex Ltd. volunteered to act as Hon. Secretary and Carnival Organiser. It was decided that the basic programme used in June 1957 should be repeated; in fact it was used in all future seven Carnivals.

It was thought that a Carnival Queen would be an extra attraction. Mr. T. Webster said he was prepared to organise a series of dances in the villages and in the town with the final selection of the Queen at a Gala Dance in the Corn Exchange. Mr. E. Underwood and Mr. S. Ecob assisted Mr. Webster in his tours of the countryside. The 1958 Carnival Queen was the first of several Queens chosen as a result of this team's efforts. Unfortunately, Mr. Briggs had to resign in March 1958 as he left the town. Mrs. G. Atkinson very kindly undertook to act as Hon. Secretary of the Carnival Committee.

The first Carnival Queen was Miss Pauline Welch of Thrussington and her attendants were Miss Doreen Barnard of Melton and Miss Angela Hemmington of Hose. Mrs. E. Hammond took responsibility for choosing the dresses for the Queen and her attendants. During the evening she took them on a tour of the hospitals. Mrs. Hammond was pleased to look after the "royal party" in following years and the hospitals looked forward to their visits.

Saturday 14th June 1958 was a glorious day and everyone enjoyed all the fun of the fair. The Queen was crowned by Councillor J. W. Greenslade, Chairman of the U.D.C. Selections were played by Munn & Felton's Band and Sports were arranged by Mr. A. W. Perry a former Middle East R.A.F. champion runner. Mr. E. R. Finch was responsible for amusements for the children including a scenic railway. There were lemonade, sweet and cake stalls, also various side-shows. The activities during the rest of the week were very successful.

In November 1958 the Carnival Committee met to plan the next Carnival. Mr. M. J. Hawes took over the post of Hon. Secretary of the Committee. Several months of hard work were rewarded by another grand Carnival week in June 1959. Decorated vehicles and people in fancy dress assembled in the Scalford Road Car Park. After the judging, Police Superintendent R. Boocock and motor scooter riders headed the procession and were followed by the Dagenham Girl Pipers. Following the strains of highland music, came music from Melton's Silver Band and the Tally-Ho Band.

Then followed the tableaux. The entry by Melton Round Table complete with tubs of water and swimmers was most ingenious. Some children from Kirby Bellars dressed in swimsuits and bath wraps were seated in a replica of a swimming bath. Sarson school girls enjoyed themselves as the girls of St. Trinians and Grammar School pupils gave the spectators a glimpse into education of the future. Looking even further ahead were the boys of the Modern Boy's School aiming to be the first Meltonians in space. There were many other attractive and colourful entries. The Carnival Queen Miss Perdita Daykin and her attendants Miss Doreen Barnard and Miss Daphne Heathcote rode in state in a sixty year old bus.

The Queen was crowned in Egerton Park by Group Captain Johnny Johnson – Melton Mowbray's own wartime fighter ace. Then the large crowd enjoyed more music by the Bands and Pipers. There were the usual sideshows and stalls and again many people were content to sit and dream about the swimming bath on another very hot afternoon. A show was given by the R.A.F. Police dogs of T.V. and Olympic fame.

The Bentley Street Barbecue Society consisting of Mr. Brown and Mr. Kewley and helpers roasted a pig and Mr. J. Smyth, the Association's President auctioned the first slices. Mr. E. Underwood organised a tug o'war and teams from local firms took part. These were annual events.

In the Autumn of 1959 the Carnival Committee started work again on planning the Carnival for 1960. This one was to be the greatest financial success as over £1,000 was realised. It had been decided to make the Carnival a bumper one to give the people of Melton Mowbray something of a return for the generous help which had increased the fund week by week. Mr. J. Cunliffe had been elected carnival organiser and Hon. Secretary of the Committee as Mr. M. J. Hawes had left the town. Mr. V. C. Watts was in charge of the Street Parade and publicity. Mr. C. Handley who was in charge of Admission tickets arranged for a larger number to be printed.

The annual parade through the town was led by Melton Scooter Club and highlighted by the King's own Royal Border Regimental Band. There were many colourful tableaux. The Round Table had a pirate theme and among the trade floats was the Melton Farmers Egg Packing Depot whose display consisted of monster eggs.

The opening speech was made by Councillor A. J. Roper who congratulated the Association on raising £32,100. The Carnival Queen, Miss Joan Jeffreys of Syston, was crowned by the athlete, Miss Diane Leather. The Queen's attendants were Miss Ann Kilbourn of Old Dalby, and Mrs. Rita Humphreys.

The displays included the Tally-Ho Band, trampolinists, Melton's T.V. star Mr. Jack Skinner known as the Wizard on Wheels, a gymnastic display by the Boys' Modern School, Polish children in colourful national costumes gave an exhibition of dancing; Melton ATC gave a Drill Display and the day ended with a Gala Dance in the Corn Exchange.

In the Summer of 1961 the traditional parade and Carnival attracted huge crowds again. The Chairman of Melton Mowbray U.D.C. Councillor Miss J. K. Penstone made the opening speech and introduced Mr. Matt Gillies, Manager of Leicester City Football team who crowned the Queen, Miss Christine Knapp. Her attendants were Miss Maureen Hack and Miss Ann Mould.

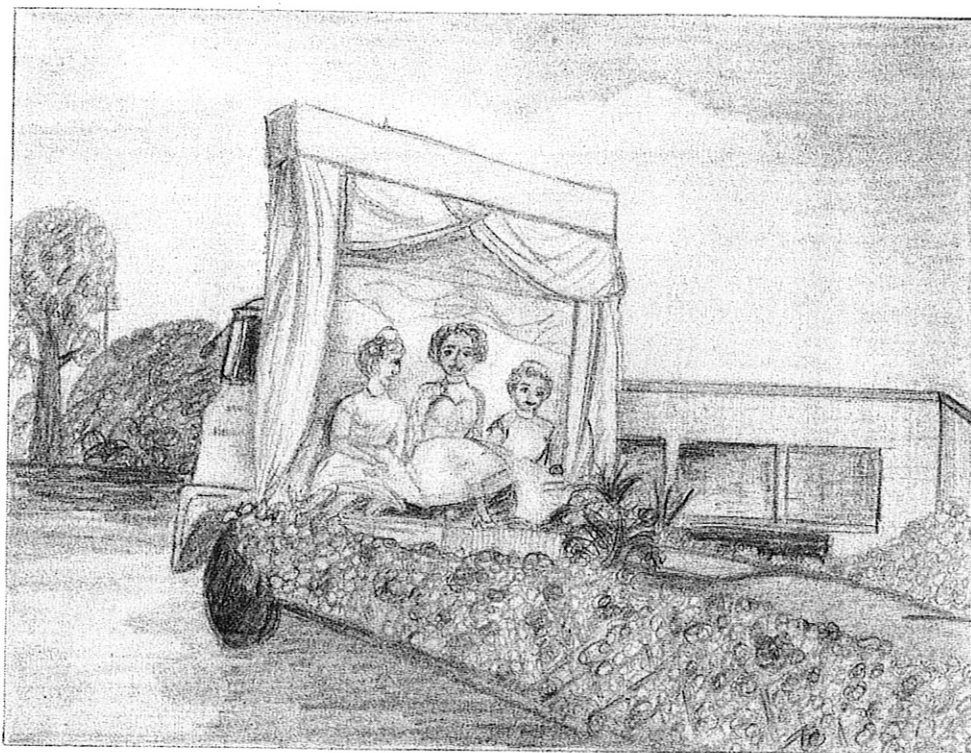
The theme of the Carnival procession was Countrylife. The Round Table gained first prize with their interpretation of "Widdicombe Fair", the 2nd Melton Guide Company also gained a prize with their Gipsy Encampment scene. Long Clawson Dairy, PERA and the Townswomen's Guild entered comical floats.

The receipts were down on the previous year and the weather was blamed. For the first time rain threatened to spoil the proceedings, but fortunately it held off until the evening. Both Sunday's tennis tournament and Monday's programme were affected by rain but on Tuesday for an indoor event, the Concert at the Sarson School, there was brilliant sunshine!

There was great excitement at 1962's Carnival because the building of the long awaited Swimming Bath was due to start in a few months. Mr. R. Pepper, Chairman of the Carnival Committee announced the good news. He said, "More than £50,000 has been raised, the largest amount ever raised by a voluntary organisation in the town." Mr. Pepper went on to tell the cheering crowds that an agreement with the U.D.C. had been reached and a Building Committee set up consisting of representatives of the Association and the U.D.C.

Mr. R. Pepper introduced Councillor F. W. Keyworth the newly elected Chairman of the U.D.C. who was carrying out his first public duty since his election. It was very appropriate also to have the opportunity of honouring the Association's architect. Mr. Keyworth crowned the Carnival queen, Miss Margaret Knapp (sister of 1961's queen). Her attendants were Miss Gillian Fawcett and Miss Ruth Wild.

Carnival festivities started with the Parade of decorated floats and fancy dress led by the No. 1 Regional Band R.A.F. who later gave a musical display followed by a display by members of Melton A.T.C. It was almost an R.A.F. carnival as there was a Bofors gun demonstration by No. 37 L.A.A. Squadron!



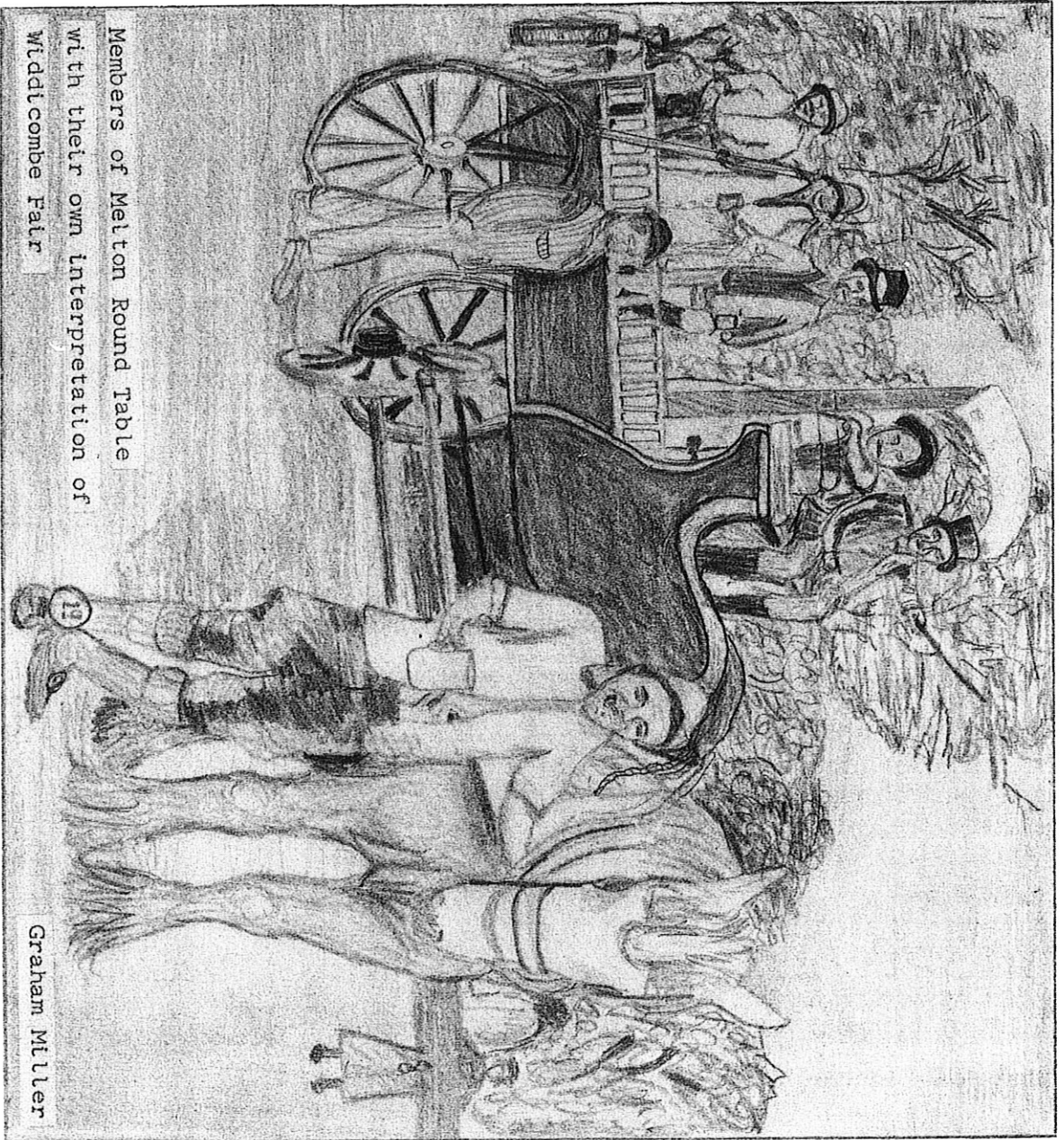
The Carnival Queen

Nicholas Drane



The Polish Dancers Float

Richard Dixon



Members of Melton Round Table
With their own interpretation of
Widdicombe Fair

Graham Miller

The theme of the procession was Sporting Life. The comic section was won by Long Clawson Dairy depicting "Sporting Life Down Clawson Way". Second in this section were members of the Melton Grammer School who covered sporting activities from the Stone Age to the present day. Third were members of the Round Table who had a wrestling ring on their float. The Central Townswomen's Guild won a prize for their presentation of Robin Hood.

During the afternoon and evening demonstrations were given by Leicestershire and Rutland Constabulary Judo team, the Cytrix Motor Cycle team, the Boy's Modern School and a sheep dog demonstration arranged by Mr. R. Gill. There was also a dog show organised by Melton Canine Society. In addition there were all the usual stalls and side-shows. Mr. R. Pepper and Toc H members were responsible for the sideshows, as usual.

The Carnival Sub-Committee worked hard again through the winter months of 1962 – 1963. On June 15th 1963 a large procession made its way from the Scaford Road Car Park to Egerton Park. The Melton Times reported that, "only royalty could have packed Melton's Streets more tightly." A float which attracted great attention was a comic entry by the Melton Farmers Ltd. Social Club. It was a replica of Steptoe and Son and the organisers wanted to rig up a recording of Steptoe's signature tune to play but the recording rights prevented them from doing so. The St. Mary's Youth Fellowship's "Dr. Beeching's Railway Closures," came second and in third place was PERA's "Surgical School."

In another class, Melton Townswomen's Guild Keep Fit Section came first, Melton and District Boating Club and Venture House Youth Club's float were second and 2nd Melton Guides "Ladies Enclosure at Ascot" were third. The tradesmen's vehicle class went to Long Clawson Dairy followed by Harold Stapleford of Sage Cross Street and Brookside Service Station were third.

Mr. R. Pepper introduced the opener Group Captain R.H.G. Weighell, D.F.C., officer commanding R.A.F. Cottesmore and spoke of the tremendous achievement in raising £67,000. More than £49,000 of that had been raised by the weekly football competition and Mr. Pepper remarked that if it had not been for the agents and the sub-committee the Association would not have been in such a favourable position. Group Captain Weighell congratulated the Swimming Bath Association on their tremendous effort. He crowned the Carnival Queen, Miss Linda Giblett of Melton. Her attendants were Miss Linda Morrison of Long Clawson and Miss Marjorie Holloway of Loddington.

The arena entertainments included sixteen ponies and riders of the Allerton Equitation School, a clown act by the Brooklyn Trio, the maypole dancing by children of Markfield School. A musical interlude was given by the massed bands – Melton Silver, British Marcos, Woolsthorpe and guest players from Ransome and Marles of Newark. In addition there was a baby show with 200 entries, the Melton Boating Club organised speed boat trips and there was a special centenary year display by the Red Cross. There was a non stop demand for teas and other refreshments and Mrs. E. A. Webb and Mrs. D. Nall and their helpers worked extremely hard. The sideshows and stalls were well supported and everyone agreed the day had been most successful.

In the Autumn of 1963 the Carnival Sub-Committee met to plan the eighth Carnival. Everyone agreed that it was getting difficult to plan something bigger and better each year. In many cases the same people were shouldering the heaviest burdens every year and although people had worked so enthusiastically it was natural that there should be a slight falling off of interest.

Also the bath was being built and now that the money had been raised there was not such an incentive to work hard to raise money. However, it was decided to hold the last Carnival in 1964. Mrs. W. Atkinson and Mr. T. Wiles helped to secure Mr. Ted Moulton as the opener. Mr. Moulton crowned Miss Julie Thody the Carnival Queen. Her attendants were Miss Lesley Langton and Miss Barbara Goodson.

It had been the policy of the sub-committee to put on something new every year and expenses were going up each year. It was felt that care had to be taken to avoid a loss on a Carnival. In actual fact the 1964 Carnival took place on a very wet Saturday and the meagre proceeds compared with previous years were boosted by the proceeds of the Pluvius Policy taken out to cover bad weather. A profit of £150 only was made.

Although the last Carnival was not so successful as those in previous years it was felt that all who had associated themselves in any way in helping with the Carnivals deserved the Association's warmest thanks. A whole book could be written on the subject of the eight carnivals and this account does not do justice to all who worked to make the Carnival Weeks a success. Every year there was a full programme from Saturday to the following Friday. The schools, organisations of all kinds, tradesmen and industrial firms all rallied round and helped to make an interesting programme for the whole week. The carnivals were tremendous community efforts and pleasure was given to thousands of people. The keynote of all this activity was the spontaneous enthusiasm of all who helped.



Melton Mowbray Swimming Bath Association Badge

THE OFFICIAL OPENING

The official opening of the Bath by the Marquess of Exeter on 8th May 1965 was a memorable event. There were 380 guests in the balcony seats and packed round the pool side. Those who had been unable to get inside peered through the huge windows to catch a glimpse of the ceremony. Mr. George Atkinson unveiled the plaque in the foyer which had been made by Mr. Arthur Rollings, a Brass Moulder and presented by Holwell Works. He spoke briefly about a well remembered occasion ten years previously when a few members of the local Toc H met together to formulate the idea of providing the town with a Swimming Bath. "It is rather appropriate," said Mr. Atkinson, "that this opening should coincide with the Toc H jubilee year."

Introducing the Marquess to the assembly Mr. John Smyth, President of the Association said, "This is a day of fulfilment for a large number of local people who for ten years have been working at great strain to achieve the result you see here today. Even now it is difficult to believe. The cost alone," he went on, "cannot record the countless meetings of committees and sub-committees and the wonderful co-operation we have received from local organisations."

The Marquess — remembered by many as Lord Burghley, the Olympic Games hurdler, told his audience, "Directly I looked through my list of commitments, I realised that this was a must to attend. This is a remarkable achievement and a truly wonderful job. Ten years ago there was nothing and now you can see the result today. The fame of this will spread far and wide to other areas who will turn round and say — 'Look what they can do in Melton Mowbray. If they can do it, we can!'"

Commenting on the communal effort which lay behind the success of the venture, the Marquess added that if there was something worthwhile to do then as a race of people, we have a gift of working together to achieve our aim. "I can think of nothing better," he continued, "than for young people to get together in a place like this and enjoy their recreation, for it is not merely a question of fitness but of the establishing of character."

"Perhaps this area will produce a British champion who will perhaps go on and bring back that coveted of awards, an Olympic Gold Medal. You have done a wonderful job and your reward will be the providing of pleasure to many young people in the area."

At this stage the children from the Sarson High School (Patricia Richardson and Christopher Jackson), Ferneley High School (Elaine Cooper and Timothy Hall), King Edward VII Upper School (Celia Lomas and S. Horsley), Franciscan Convent School (Anne Stockdale and Deborah Croasdill), Brownlow Primary School (Vanessa Banton and James Thomas) and Grove Primary School (Eleanor Cooke and John Hall) had the opportunity of swimming in the newly opened pool.

Then a team of international swimmers and two divers gave a demonstration. Included in the party were Bob Lord who was semi-finalist in the sprint at the Tokio Olympic Games, Jackie Enfield, Graham Sykes, Graham Symonds, Dennis Young, Anne Hollick and John Parsons.

The official party at the Opening:—

Mr. John Smyth	President of Swimming Bath Association
Miss Mervyn Pike	M.P.
Councillor B. G. A. Brewster	— Chairman of Melton Mowbray U.D.C.
Mr. W. E. Brown	U.D.C. Clerk
Mr. A. C. Bishop	Chairman Swimming Bath Association
Miss J. K. Penstone	Hon. Secretary Swimming Bath Association
Miss K. M. Hanbury	Assistant Hon. Secretary
Mr. S. Lawrance	Hon. Treasurer Swimming Bath Association
Mr. A. J. Bishop	U.D.C. Surveyor
Col. P. Lloyd	Chairman of Leics. County Council
Alderman Mrs. M. E. Keay	Chairman of County Education Committee
Mr. G. Atkinson	First Chairman Swimming Bath Association
Mr. J. W. Greenslade	Chairman of the Joint Planning Committee
Alderman P. R. Hill	Chairman R.D.C.
Mr. H. Hinchcliffe	U.D.C. Treasurer
Mr. H. Orton	Chairman Football Competition Sub-Committee
Mr. F. W. Keyworth and Mr. C. T. Marlowe	Architects
Mr. M. B. Lane	Quantity Surveyor
Mr. R. Denman and Mr. T. Denman	Building Contractors
Mr. R. Sealy	Senior Town Warden
Mr. A. R. Hunt	Junior Town Warden
Supt. R. Boocock	Police
Mr. D. Mathias	Managing Director Petfoods
Mr. F. J. Johnson	County P.E. Adviser
Mr. R. Pepper	Chairman Carnival Sub-Committee
Mr. P. G. Ashby	Hon. Treasurer Carnival Sub-Committee
Mr. V. C. Watts	Chairman Opening Sub-Committee
Mr. J. Cunliffe	Hon. Secretary Opening Sub-Committee

**MEMBERS OF COMMITTEES FOR VARYING PERIODS
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1965 – 1975

After the official opening on Saturday 8th May, the Waterfield Swimming Bath was officially handed over to the Melton Mowbray Urban Council on Monday, 10th May with Mr. A. Cotton as Superintendent. In the first few weeks it was unbelievable to see the long queues of people waiting for admittance to each session but it was most encouraging to those who had worked to build the Bath. Although there are more bathers today there are no queues because all sessions are well supported and so a steady flow of swimmers passes through the turnstiles.

It had been decided that the pool would be open to the public all day on Sundays during the Summer months only, but owing to popular demand, it was decided on 13th October 1965 that it should remain open all day on Sundays during the Winter months also. This arrangement has remained to this day.

It was a disappointment that the pool had to be closed for the first time on 29th November 1965 owing to the flooding of the plant rooms when the river overflowed its banks. During subsequent periods of very heavy rain the pool has been closed on a few occasions, but fortunately only for a few hours each time.

In October 1965 the Council organised its first Life Saving Course. The Course is held every year during the Winter months. It is well attended and members of the original class return each year in order to keep in practice.

In 1966 the Council discussed the provision of Sauna Baths for the second time. Unfortunately the project had to be shelved as the money was required for the tiling of the walls and floors in the changing rooms instead. In December 1966 a public address system was installed for use at galas and other functions.

The question of providing a teaching pool came up for discussion in October 1967 and in the following June the Council decided to proceed with investigations to build this pool. It was eventually built and opened to the public in September 1973. A teaching pool was included in the original plan as it was thought to be an essential part of the whole scheme. Naturally this extra facility is proving most popular and is a great asset in teaching young children to swim.

The provision of a sun bathing area was also considered by the original planners, but lack of money will prevent the development of this amenity. As a result of requests by many patrons, a cold drink machine was installed in August 1969 and a telephone for the use of patrons was provided in December 1972.

In October 1969 The Council at the instigation of the Baths Superintendent approved the formation of a Water Babies Club. This club has proved to be very popular and the membership has risen from 365 in the first year to 656 in October 1975. Many members of this club are able to swim without the use of aids before they start school. The council acceded to a request to hold sponsored swims and the first were held in 1970.

The Baths have been closed on two occasions during the ten years. The main pool was re-tiled during the period January 29th to September 15th 1972. Then from December 1973 until mid January 1974 both pools were closed for six weeks during the oil crisis.

It has been necessary to increase the admittance charges at intervals owing to the rise in the cost of living. The first increase was made in June 1968. A second increase was necessary in August 1970 and then in 1973 the introduction of Value Added Tax necessitated another increase. The County Council was forced to make reductions in expenditure in April 1975, and one of the economies was the abolition of payment for school swimming. The Borough Council has taken over the administration and allocation of times for school swimming and parents are now required to pay for their children. The Council has reduced the number of staff as an economy measure.

In these days of high prices and economies it is difficult to plan for the future. When financial restrictions are eased it is envisaged that the area surrounding the Baths, including the canalside will be comprehensively landscaped. In addition to tree and shrub planting, provision will be made for a sunbathing area, squash courts, a cafeteria and sauna baths.

The money raisers, the planners and the builders have reason to feel proud of Mr. A. Cotton and his staff. The Waterfield Bath is proving to be a great asset to the town and district. On considering the number of bathers who pass through the turnstiles it is to the credit of Mr. Cotton and his staff that very few accidents have happened over the years. The diligent supervision of the staff and their great interest in promoting all aspects of swimming is worthy of great praise. This opportunity is taken on behalf of all the swimmers to thank them for their devotion and hard work.

WATERFIELD BATHS

COMPARISON OF ATTENDANCES	1965/66	1974/75
Bathers public	91,988	113,267
Spectators	16,432	11,203
Swimming instruction	2,097	25,473
Clubs and Organisations	*15,750	18,350
Schools	*37,600	59,873
	163,867	228,166

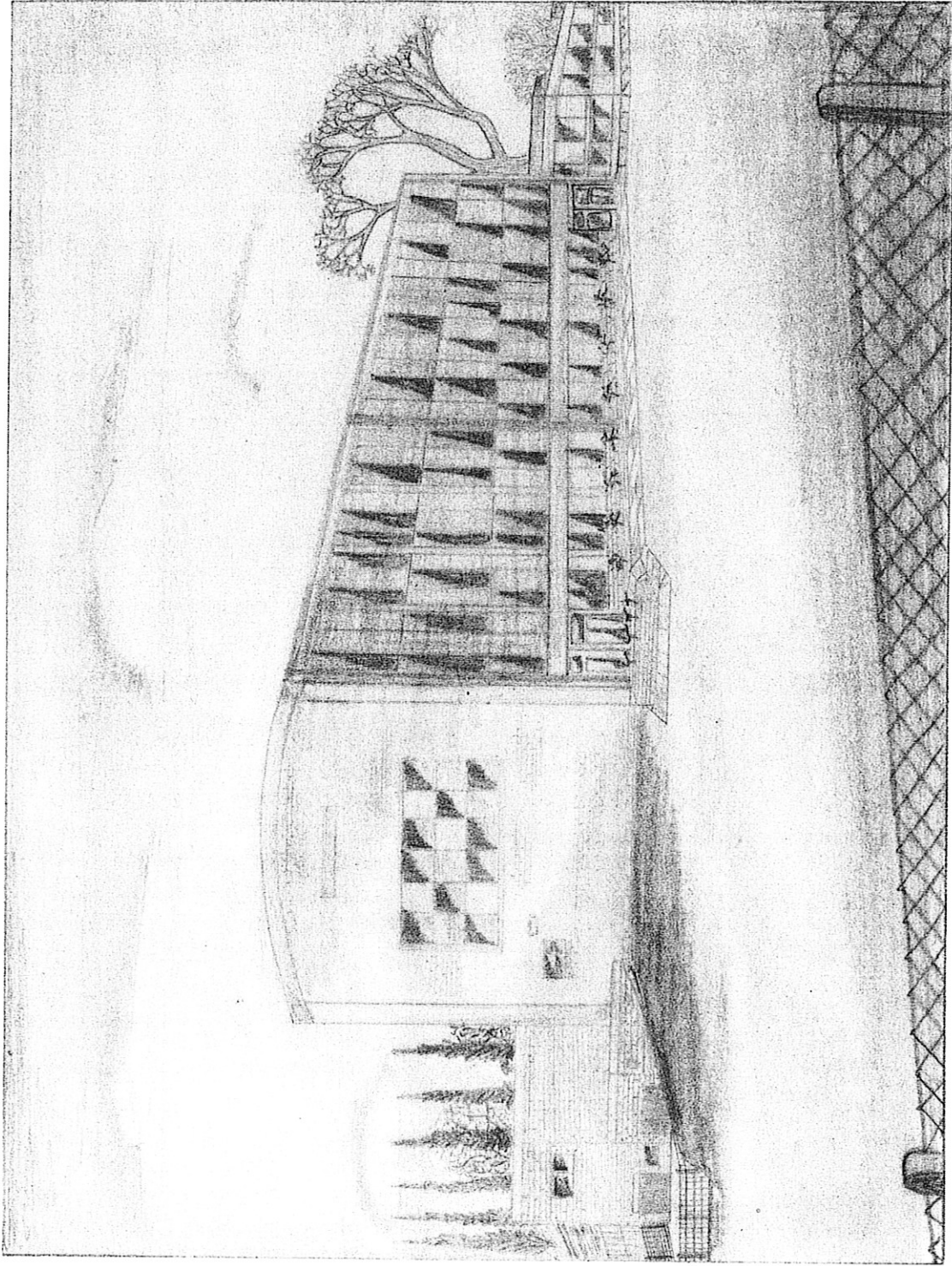
* Approximate figures

TOTAL ATTENDANCES – MAY 1965 – MARCH 1975

Bathers public	867,543
Spectators	98,357
Swimming instruction	115,500
Clubs and Organisations	*108,350
Schools	*483,282
	1,673,032

* Approximate figures

ADMITTANCE CHARGES	1965	1975
Bathers		
Adult	1/6 (8p)	20p
Junior	9d (4p)	10p
Weekend		
Adult	2/- (10p)	20p
Junior	1/- (5p)	10p
Spectators		
Adult	1/- (5p)	10p
Junior	6d (2½p)	5p
Swimming Instruction		
Adult	4/- (20p)	50p
Junior	3/3 (17p)	40p



The Swimming Bath from Dalby Road

Andrew Norris

THE DAY I SWAM FOR THE SCHOOL

We had an early tea the Saturday that I had been selected to represent the under twelves for Rotherby and Frisby schools in an annual Gala between the villages around Melton. When we arrived we found that the car park was almost full. Inside it was also crowded and it was lucky we had bought tickets.

In all there were about twelve villages competing in the gala. To gain a place in the final you had to come either first or second in a heat which consisted of one length of the baths. I was to swim in the crawl and the breast stroke. Once we were changed I was taken and shown to our bench where we sat for half an hour waiting for our names to be called. Then we lined up ready for the start of the breast stroke race. Suddenly the starter blew his horn and we were off.

As soon as I hit the water I swam and swam as fast as I could. I could hardly believe it when I arrived first on the other side. We were then given a ticket that showed our positions and this had to be taken to a lady at a desk. Once this was done we went to sit down and wait for the front crawl heat or the breast stroke final.

As it happened the front crawl heat was our next race, and as before, we lined up. This time, however, I felt more confident as the same children who were in the breast stroke heat were competing. I hoped that I could beat them at front crawl also and, to my relief, I did.

The next race was the final of the breast stroke and for the third time we lined up at the deep end, but this time we had a false start and had to line up again. The second start was successful. I knew I had to swim even faster than before because I was competing against other heat winners. In a close race I managed to swim a little faster than everybody else and come first. This immediately gave me a place in another gala which was to include both the village and the Melton schools.

Immediately after showing our tickets we had to hurry off to compete in the finals of the front crawl. I arrived just in time to hear my name called out and I lined up for my last individual race. I could hardly believe it when I came first again for the fourth time. This result enabled our team to gain third place in the relay.

Although I was successful in both events, I must hasten to add that this was not entirely unexpected since I had enjoyed the benefit of two years swimming lessons at Melton Baths. The results of the day justified my weeks of training.

Steven Hurst

1st Year

HOW THE SWIMMING BATHS AFFECTS MY FAMILY AND MYSELF

I first became interested in swimming when I went to lessons and learnt to swim. After my name had been on the Swimming Club entrance list for several years, I was at last asked to join. This was when I was seven or eight years old, but my sister was already a member.

First of all I used to go to swimming sessions only on a Friday night. Then the club introduced more training sessions which were held three or four times a week. Each session lasted an hour, and I started to attend these sessions regularly.

I then began swimming competitively for the club, and my swimming activities have gone on from there. Now I find that most of my time is taken up with swimming and school work.

Swimming has provided me with a hobby, and with entertainment during the evenings. On most Saturday nights of the year, apart from the holidays I am busy swimming competitively in galas. In this way I have made new friends from other clubs such as those in Birmingham and Cambridge.

On Saturday nights, when we do not have a gala arranged, an inter-house gala is sometimes held. The whole club is split up into four sections which race against each other. These are named after the electoral wards — Sysonby, Newport, Wicklow and Warwick.

Three years ago, our club became friendly with another club from Voorburg, a suburb of The Hague, in Holland. Some members of their team came over then and stayed with English families.

The following year my sister and I were chosen as part of a team from Melton travelling to Voorburg. We participated in a gala against Voorburg swimming club and several other local clubs. We stayed with the Dutch family we had accommodated in Melton. My mother, father and brother went also, but they did not stay with Dutch families. Most Dutch people speak very good English and we still communicate with one Dutch family.

Several years ago, when the swimming baths was out of use, the club found it difficult to find any baths to train in so we had to travel to Loughborough and Uppingham. We did not realise just how conveniently situated the swimming baths are until this time.

The whole of my family is involved with the swimming club, my father helps to pick the team for matches, my mother sometimes acts as timekeeper or records all the times. Both my brother and sister have been to Dieppe with the club on a swimming trip. My sister swims for the county quite often. She is also going on a twinning trip to Germany at half-term with a Leicester swimming club.

The swimming club also offers the chance to take personal survival and life-saving examinations.

The swimming baths in Melton have given me a satisfying and enjoyable hobby, and have also given me confidence in the water. Swimming is a very healthy sport and it certainly keeps me fit.

Heather Whittle

3rd Year

THE BENEFITS OF MELTON SWIMMING BATHS

My parents were involved in collecting and raising funds which helped to build the Melton Swimming Pool. As they had been so involved with this venture they were regular attenders after the baths had been completed and opened.

My parents both attended swimming sessions regularly and took courses in water safety and life saving. Mummy gained her distinction in life saving. After gaining so much experience themselves they were very anxious that I should learn to swim as soon as possible. I was taken to the baths at the early age of eighteen months complete with armbands and made progress steadily. At the age of four I could swim at least several widths and was admitted to a weekly instruction class for stroke perfection.

Being able to swim before I started primary school helped me a great deal in swimming lessons organised by the school, as I did not have to waste time in learning to swim. I was able to go straight on to grade work, eventually gaining passes in grades one, two and three.

Apart from school swimming I gained badges for distance lengths of twenty-five, fifty and one hundred metres. Also I passed the test for the Royal Life Saving Junior Award.

Having the ability to swim has given me more independence during the school holidays, allowing me to go to the swimming pool whenever I like.

As a family we are keen members of the Melton Mowbray Sailing Club and sail regularly. The club organises yearly Cadet Proficiency courses. One of the tasks in the course is to swim twenty metres fully clothed. The fact that Melton has a swimming pool that I had learnt to swim in it helped me to pass this task without difficulty.

The Melton Swimming Baths have benefitted me in my interest in sailing and given me the confidence to tackle any water sport.

Nicholas Clark
2nd Year

A STORY

The River

One day last summer, I was mooning along the river bank, observing the wild life and ambling pleasantly through waist-high grasses and weeds. I was enjoying the tranquillity of the azure sky with the cotton wool puffs scudding merrily on an imaginary railway. The lazy droning of hidden honeybees, and somewhere a blackbird warbling its rich creamy whistle to its flattered mate was a pleasant background to the sound of little children, laughing and chattering and splashing with gay abandon.

I lay down in the grass, plucked a long, juicy grass stem and proceeded to nibble with great enjoyment.

Suddenly, screams made the blackbird give a chattering cry of warning and he flew away. The gargling screams continued, and up I scrambled, wondering who was brazen enough to disturb the peace with all his yells, though there seemed something urgent in the way the rest of the children stood, stared and pointed. As the frightened screams, combined with tremendous splashes continued, I was compelled to get up.

Irritated by the noise, I strode over and asked what they thought they were doing. I quickly grasped the situation when, to my horror and consternation, I caught sight of a little girl struggling frantically in the water.

Even as I kicked off my clumsy shoes and relieved myself of my burdensome jumper, I realised that she was caught in the weeds which were treacherous, if you didn't know where the patches were.

I leapt in and swam up to her, and with not a little difficulty, for the weeds were like slimy tentacles of a malevolent octopus, I freed her entangled legs, and pulled her to the shore using the 'chin-tow' method.

I suddenly felt my legs go like jelly, and I collapsed weakly in a heap, shivering uncontrollably. A little boy, who'd had the presence of mind to fetch help, was leading a party of anxious adults towards us. They came hurrying up and the little girl was rushed to hospital, where she recovered.

Later when I was thinking about the child's narrow escape, I realised that I wouldn't have been any use in this emergency if I hadn't had life-saving lessons during the school sessions at the swimming pool.

Claire Brewster

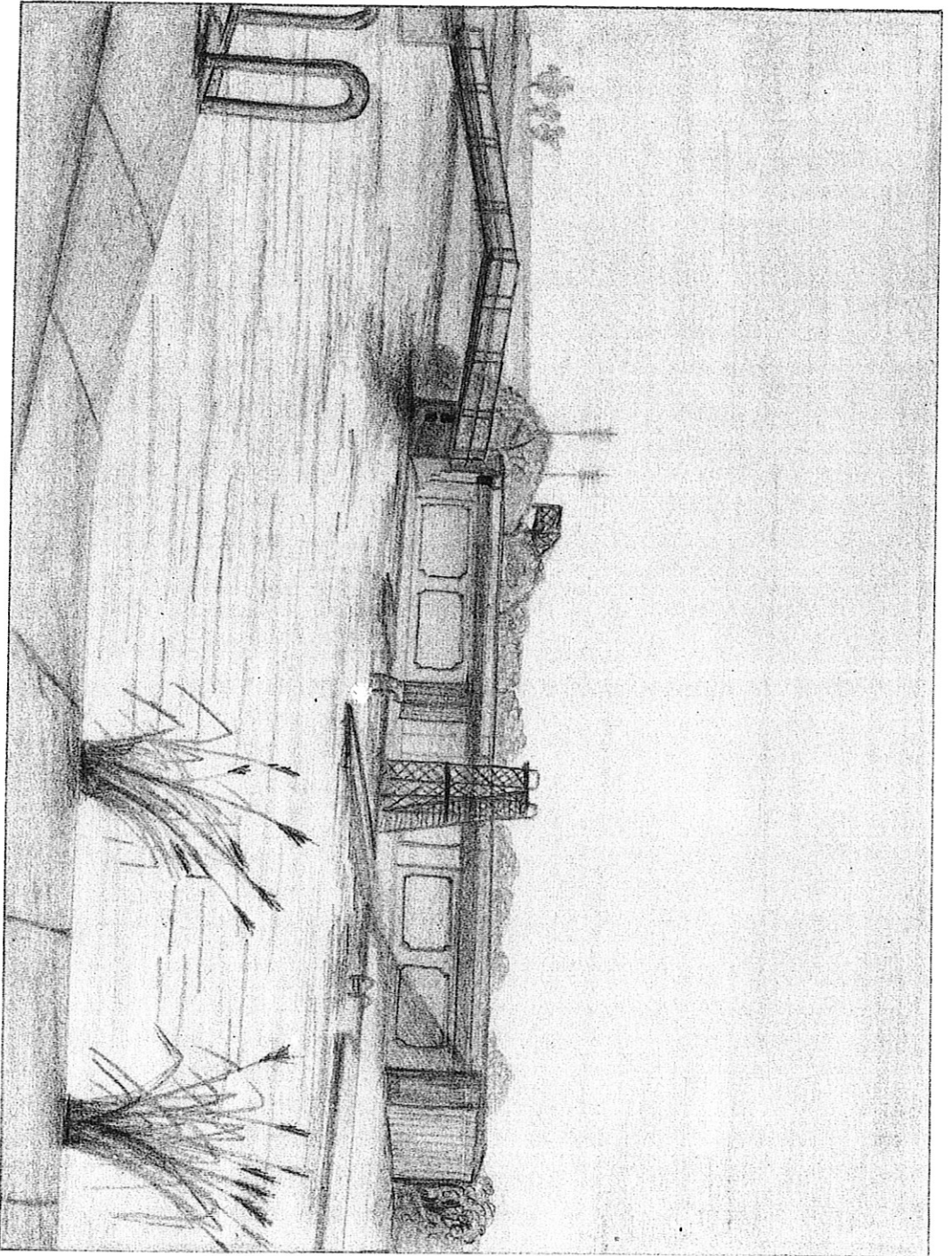
2nd Year

A STORY

My First Swimming Lesson

It was a hot, sunny, summer evening. Hordes of trainspotters were gathered on the banks of the River Eye near a small weir next to the industrial acres of Petfoods. The setting, often used by trainspotters as an alternative to the station, was to be the scene of an extremely nasty accident later that night. Many trains had passed when, late as usual, the six minutes past eight to Norwich arrived at the station several hundred yards away. The usual handful of passengers disembarked and several embarked. A distant drone could be heard as the driver responded to the guard's signal of a green flag.

Steadily the train accelerated until it reached us. Pens were poised, Locoshed Books were drawn from kit bags as the train approached. The scratching of pen on paper was heard as the train passed. I produced my Locoshed Book and looked for the number. I then leapt in the air as I discovered that I hadn't seen this Diesel Multiple Unit before. Then I felt my feet slipping and sliding on the muddy bank of the river. The next thing I knew I was immersed in cold, dirty, polluted water. I could hear screams of horror from the bank above. Or was it me screaming for help? I couldn't swim!



Swans' nest on the River Eye used for swimming before the Baths were built.

Stewart Tiltman

I groped around, trying to get a grip on the bank. I couldn't see anything as the dark, muddy water was in my eyes. I could still hear shouts and screams. I felt my head go under the water. I was spluttering and coughing. Then I bobbed back to the surface. This recurred repeatedly. Next there was a tremendous splash, Then I felt arms around my neck. By instinct I started to struggle, but I was suddenly struck on the back of my head.

The next thing I knew I was beginning to recover in hospital. The following afternoon I had a visitor who was one of my best friends by the name of Paul Brammer. He retold the whole story to me, from his point of view. He said the first thing he knew of the mishap was that he heard a tremendous splash and saw me floundering in the river. Some of the smaller trainspotters disappeared and others screamed. Then yellow caught his eye. It was a Permanent Way ganger who, on hearing the screams, had rushed from his re-ballasting on the nearby up goods loop. He had shed his clothes one by one on the way, vaulted over one of British Rail's weak, wire fences and dived headlong into the murky water. He then reached for my neck. As I was struggling he knocked me out to enable him to pull me to the bank. This was Paul's account of the incident. After my unplanned swimming lesson I spent two nights in hospital.

After the accident my mother offered the ganger a small reward for saving me. However, he refused this saying that the money would be better spent on paying for proper swimming lessons at Melton Mowbray Swimming Baths.

Robert Neale

3rd Year

THE SWIMMING BATHS

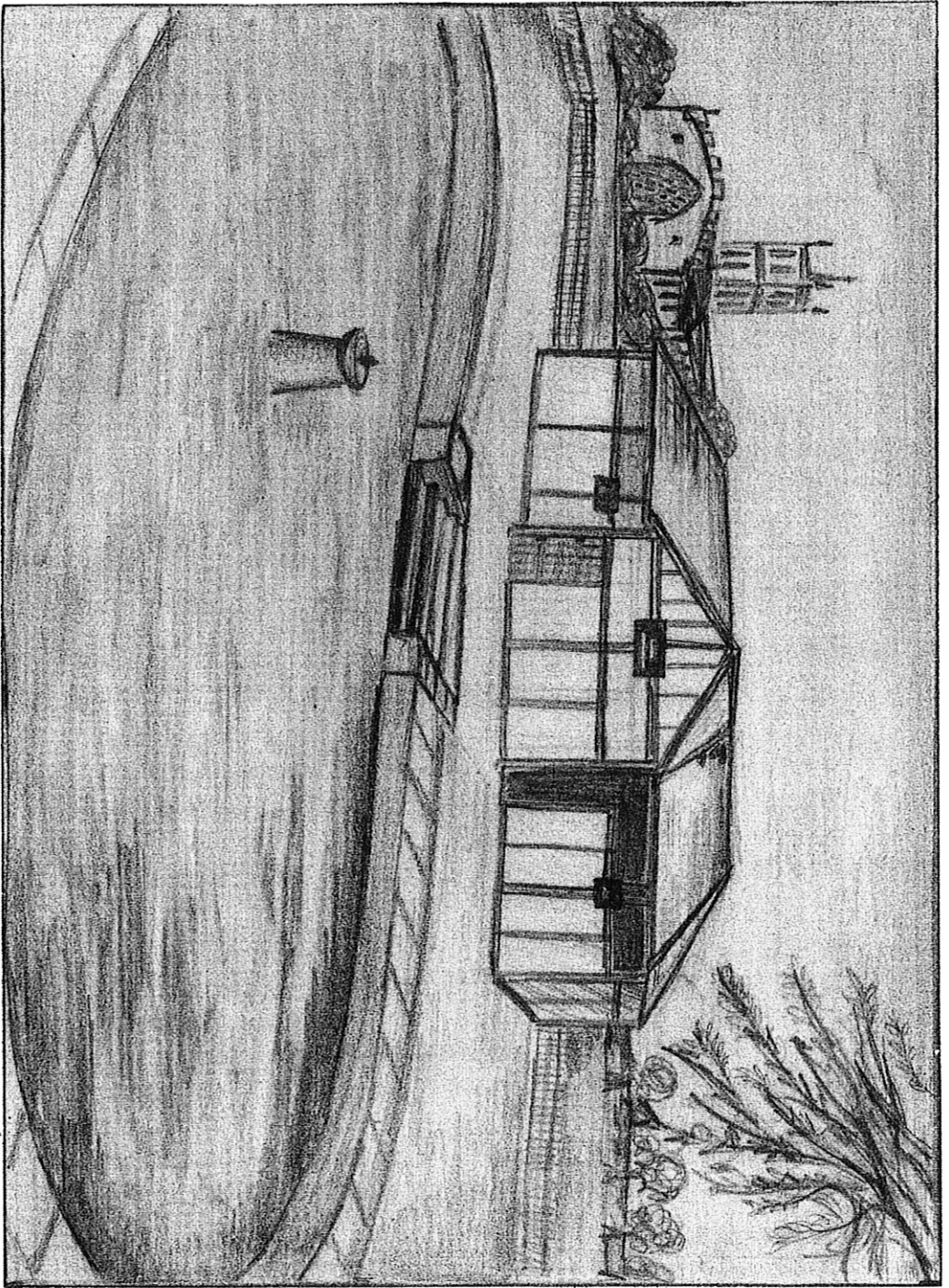
My parents can remember when Melton had no swimming baths and to swim you either went in the river or to Leicester. By having a swimming bath in Melton you don't need to travel about fifteen miles to swim. Also it has helped schools to teach their children to swim. My school took me to the baths, and even though I could swim I learnt to save lives which I might have to do one day. It has also helped scout troops and guide companies, in Melton and district, because they now can pass the special swimmers' badge. Melton baths in some way has helped the country by producing an international swimmer like Jean Jeavons.

I have gained a lot by there being a swimming bath in Melton. For one thing I have learnt to swim and because of this I can enjoy myself at the seaside and also in the baths. I can now go fishing without any worry and also, if I want to, I can go sailing.

There is a great disadvantage in having a swimming bath in Melton. It does cost a lot of money to keep it going!

Mark Jenner

2nd Year



The Playclose Pool used for swimming before the Baths were built

Nicholas Drane

MELTON SWIMMING BATHS

The Melton swimming baths have made a considerable change to my life, and my family's. When I came to the Sarson School, I went to the baths and was taught to swim. I didn't like being in the water up to my neck, but now I spend most of my time at the swimming baths, swimming under water.

If I have a football match after school on a Wednesday, after it, I walk down to the baths to meet my brother. I have learnt to swim and also dive off the top board, and the slide, which is there, makes the bath more fun. The swimming baths enable some people to relax or to go and meet new friends. After going swimming we go round to the fish and chip shop and have a large helping of chips, which, if I cannot eat, I save until the morning. In the last year my brother, Richard, has been going to the baths. He has learnt to swim, and now we go every week for some fun and chips after.

Mostly I go swimming to meet a friend, or to get my worries away.

If there wasn't a swimming bath there, I don't think that people would enjoy themselves so much.

Graham Miller

2nd Year

THE SWIMMING BATHS

Swimming is one of my favourite pastimes. Once I am in the water I relax and I feel trouble-free. In the summer holidays I swim in the river. That is fun if you don't mind being bitten by a water rat! Last summer my friend and I found a thick mud bank in the water, and we used it as a diving board.

Quite a few times we went to the swimming baths at Melton. I like the baths because it is warm, and on a cold day that is very welcome. Also if you get into difficulties there are many bath attendants to help you. After going in the river it is also very nice not to get bitten by water rats. Often when I go to the river it is after there has been much warm weather and sometimes a storm breaks out. If I am in the baths it is alright because of the roof. The baths are also better for changing facilities. At the river I have to change in the bushes or behind the trees, but in the baths there are proper cubicles.

My mother is also relieved when I go to the baths, for the river is full of mud and fish and also weed, this all makes my costume really smell. It takes a lot of washing to get rid of it. The baths do have the smell of chlorine but that doesn't take such a long time to get rid of. So the baths are what I call very useful.

Anastasia Drewery

2nd Year

WATERFIELD SWIMMING BATHS

A few years ago the only thing that I wanted to do was to learn to swim. I had only been to Melton Baths a few times and I had tried as hard as I could but all I could do was sink. I wanted to swim so much that I went to the baths regularly and soon, by the help of posters on the wall, I swam my first few strokes in the water. I looked at more posters and I soon learnt how to do the breast stroke and back stroke. Because I could swim I began to teach my brother and soon he could also swim.

When I moved up to Sarson we went regularly to Waterfield Baths where we had swimming lessons and I learnt to swim better and faster than I already could. In the baths I learnt to life-save, and I could now save a person from drowning, if necessary.

As I could swim quite strongly I did some sponsored swims in which I raised quite a lot of money for disabled children. I still go to the baths sometimes and my friends and I have great fun because we can all swim. We dive off the boards, swim lengths and widths, playing tig in the water, and swim underwater. We have such a lot of fun because we all learnt to swim at those baths.

If I hadn't been to the baths I wouldn't have as much fun as I do, I would still be learning to swim, and I wouldn't have been able to raise any money for charity, so you can tell that I owe a lot to the Waterfield Baths.

Heather Ward

2nd Year

EXTRACTS FROM ESSAYS

The people of Melton used to have to swim in the river. This was not very pleasant as it was invariably cold, muddy, dirty and unsafe for learners because of the depth.

Anita Smreczak

Before Melton Baths were built a favourite spot on the river was called "Swan's Nest". This was even in use during the war as my father recalls having been swimming there with his friends when he was stationed at Staveley Lodge which is now PERA.

Shelagh Smith

Before the baths were built people had to learn at Leicester or Nottingham, or even in the river like my father did.

Paul Bagshaw

When my Mum and Dad were little there wasn't a swimming pool in or near Melton. My Dad used to swim in the Lido near Petfoods but, because she was afraid to swim in the river when she was young, my Mum has never learnt to swim.

Debora Pycroft

When my parents were young and learning to swim in the river they always had to have an experienced swimmer with them as the river bed was muddy and slippery and the depth of the water varied.

Karen Arnell

One of the main joys of the Baths is that they are clean. People used to swim in the river which was muddy and dirty. Now they can drive their cars into a wide car park, undress in modern changing rooms and finally bathe in clean, heated water.

Julian Innes-Taylor

Eventually, I overcame my fears and became a fairly competent swimmer, although I could not master the art of diving and all its different techniques. Week after week instructors tried in vain to teach me various dives but all I could do was fall on my face, much to my teachers' exasperation.

Sharon Bagshaw

Although I didn't attain gala standard I enjoyed my lessons and learnt what I consider the most important aspect of swimming, life-saving.

Ian Abbott

I remember the boredom I suffered when the pool was being repaired; I realised then how important it was for the children of this area.

Graham Lockington

When one of the boys tumbled into the water and had to be rescued the rest of us stood on the edge of the pool feeling helpless. It was then that we decided to take the Royal Life-Saving Society's Preliminary Award.

Christopher Ranson

Melton Baths have already provided one Olympic swimmer, Jean Jeavons, and, no doubt, there are many more waiting to be discovered.

Anita Smreczak

When I joined the advanced swimming class I tended to stay too near the edge of the pool and was soon nicknamed "Wallflower" by my instructor.

Michelle Kent

One of the most beneficial improvements to the Swimming Baths was the addition of a small training pool. Here "The Water Babies" get used to the water at an early age and soon learn to swim.

Colin Baldry

Not only do I learn things when I go swimming, I also enjoy myself. I usually go swimming with my friend Jackie. We play games like Ducks, Mushrooms, Rescuers, and Captains. We enjoy going to the baths and are glad that we have them.

Mandy McAree

Competitive swimming is also held in the pool. There is one disadvantage in this as Melton pool only has five lanes and for league galas you need six. The pool is all right for friendly galas and it's still my favourite swimming pool.

Thomas Zbaraski

Some improvements I would like to see at the baths are higher diving boards and the teaching of water polo. I have seen water polo being played in other baths and think it would be good fun.

Paul Bagshaw

So, not only have the swimming baths given me plenty of enjoyment through Winter and Summer months, they have also helped me a great deal in learning how to save lives. The activities provided at the pool are open to all and are well worth the time and patience required. You never know, your life may be in someone else's hands one day.

Clive Cook

I'm sure that when I'm older I will look back on my swimming certificates and think of Melton Mowbray Swimming Baths. I will think of all the hard work I put into my grades and I will probably say, "How glad I am that I did all that training!"

Paul Smith

The teachers kept telling me to duck my head under the water but I just couldn't. I tried again and again but my nerves wouldn't let me. However, I eventually managed to do this when I saw a girl younger than me duck her head under and swim a width; my envy for her, a little girl, made me do it.

Nigel Bell

Everybody ought to learn to swim, and a good place to learn is Waterfield Baths, Melton Mowbray. The staff there are very helpful and last year while on holiday I had reason to be thankful for their help.

Tom Woodward

When I won my first badge I had a feeling of satisfaction of having done something worth while.

Margaret Pearse

When my turn came to collect my prize I went up and stood on the winner's dais. I felt most proud when the Mayor, wearing his chain of office, presented me with a trophy amidst the clapping and the cheering of the crowd. This occasion encouraged me to go on improving my strokes and speed. I have since gained more badges and certificates including a much treasured badge and certificate presented to me on the occasion of a sponsored swim for the disabled.

Jane Pakenham-Walsh

Many people have learnt to swim who would never have learnt if Melton did not have a swimming bath.

Colin Whitfield

I practised hard for my Bronze Survival Badge. I soon mastered diving, I could hold my breath for quite a while and I found it easy to fetch the brick. Treading water didn't give me much difficulty but taking my pyjamas off in the water caused me great difficulty – I always used to get in a tangle!

Alison Lawrence

I will never forget those Sunday mornings when I was only three splashing about in my Pollyotter swimsuit.

Anne Yates

I am a keen member of Melton Sailing Club and my lessons in Melton Baths have helped me to gain confidence to sail and I know that if anything should go wrong I can cope in the water.

Joanna Butler