

# DARTINGTON SWIMMING CLUB

and

# POOL



# **DARTINGTON SWIMMING CLUB**

**and**

## **POOL**

**My memories of working with a group of villagers, old and new, who constructed the village swimming pool.**

**E.A."Ted" Hicks**

**1 June 2014**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

to those who helped to form the Swimming Club, who got “\*down and dirty” constructing the pool and those who helped later in running the enterprise

John Bailey

Ray Billis

Bob Black

Bill Blinston

Peter Booth

Iris Brock

\*Tony Boyer (Bowyer?)

Janet Clarke

Maureen Heath

\*Ted Hicks

Janet Hicks

Lloyd Hughes

Wesley Jones

Ron Jordan

\*Terry Parsons

Frank Liggins

\*Ian Mc Gill

Rod Morley

\*David Norman

\*John Parrotte

\*Fred Redshaw

\*Joan Redshaw

\*Petter Sutcliffe

David Trout

\*Roy Tucker

Marion Tucker

Jeanette Widger

Jennifer White

Apologies for any omissions

### Clerk of Works

Jack Lippiatt

### DRA

Ernest Clake

George Little

Charles White

**For help in putting this  
story together**

Marie Lord

Clare Isherwood

Kate Isherwood

### Life Saving Instructor

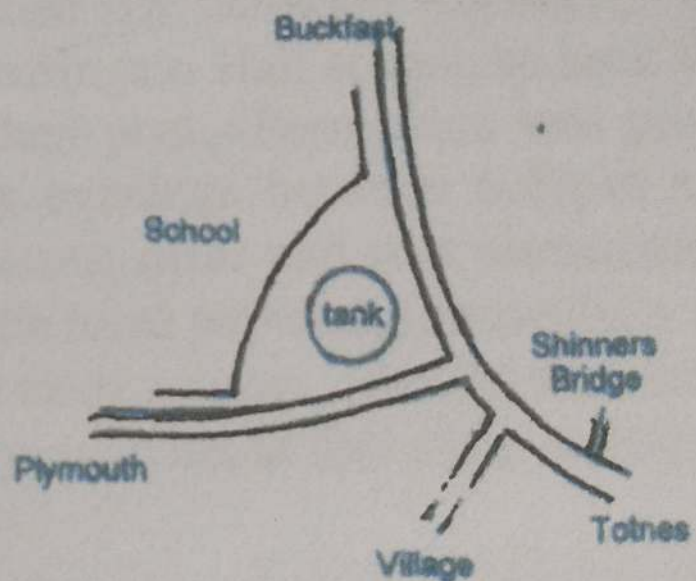
John Ballantyne

## DARTINGTON SWIMMING CLUB and POOL

I am "Ted" Hicks. My wife, Janet, and I came to live in Dartington a week before Christmas 1962. Our daughter, Caroline, joined us in August 1963 when she was born.

Our house, at 7 Droridge, was built for us by Mr Courtney Blake. Dartington was completely new to us as we had moved from Somerset. During and after the construction of our new home I had many conversations with Courtney Blake and learned something of our new surroundings. On one of those occasions he told me of the village during WWII and of a Static Water tank that had been on the green area by the village school.

For those not familiar with static water tanks I shall explain. Following the outbreak of the war in 1939 many parts of Britain were subjected to bombing. To provide an immediate supply of water to counter fires that did occur water tanks were put on any spare suitable ground. The tanks were constructed of corrugated iron panels which were bolted together and the joints sealed. They could be square, oblong or round. For the latter the panels were formed so they would form a circle. It may have been this shape that was put on the grass area at Shinner's Bridge.

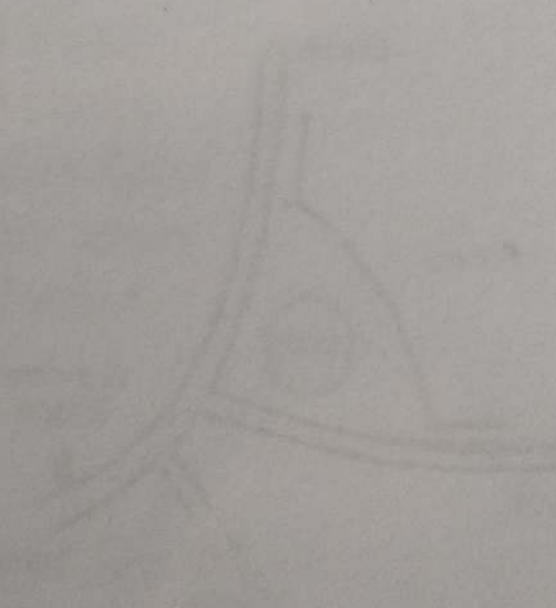


The young people of Dartington immediately found a use for

this new facility in the village. It became an unofficial bathing pool. No doubt the children were chased out of the water by parents and other adults but, evidently, they made their way back.

At the end of this conversation Courtney looked at me and said, "One day Dartington will have its own swimming pool".

The following narrative tells how his words became fact.



## DARTINGTON SWIMMING CLUB and POOL

The following is from my memories, of over forty years ago, of what happened in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

### **The Swimming Club (1970)**

The forming of the Swimming Club would almost seem to have been by accident. Perhaps, during the hot summer of 1970, something was mentioned to Bill Blinston, the village school headmaster, which lead him to offer the use of the learner pool to villagers, adults and children. The offer was gratefully taken up. Unfortunately, the pool was really too shallow for adults whose knees easily touched the bottom. Wesley Jones, a Devon County Youth organiser, who lived in the village, now came into the picture and he approached Dr Royston Lambert, the Headmaster of Foxhole, the Dartington Hall school, to seek the possibility of villagers using their pool. Permission was given for it to be used on weekday evenings between 6.45pm and 8.15pm. This was a very generous offer and was immediately accepted. The response from the local population, especially the younger generation, was most encouraging. Adults took turns in supervising the younger swimmers but at that stage no regular rota was imposed.

The formation of a Swimming Club seemed to be a natural progression.

### **1971**

The **Swimming Club** was officially inaugurated at a meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> January 1971 and it was reported in the Dartington Hall News (DHN) on the 29<sup>th</sup>. A Committee was formed and on

reading the report it would seem that everyone attending became a member. An Executive Committee was formed with the duties of managing swimming sessions at Foxhole and with the long term aims of looking into the possibility of providing a pool for Dartington village.

**Swimming Club:** there was good support for the new Dartington Swimming Club at its first meeting on 21 January. The club has two main objectives: short-term, to take on the responsibilities of liaison with Foxhole School and the supervision of any swimming sessions which can be arranged at the school pool; long-term, to look into the possibility of providing a pool in the village. The following were elected to the executive committee: Wesley Jones (chairman), Joan Redshaw (vice-chairman), Ted Hicks (secretary), Bob Black (treasurer), Lloyd Hughes (for Dartington Recreation Association), John Parrotte, Jennifer White, Maureen Heath, Marion Tucker. Other committee members are Janet Cooper, John Bailey, Janet Clarke, Ray Billis, Fred Redshaw, Roy Tucker, Ron Jordan, Peter Sutcliffe, Iris Brock, Peter Booth, David Trout, Jeanette Widger. It was agreed that there should be a family subscription of 10s and an individual subscription of 5s. The executive was asked to look into the question of club rules, fund raising and honorary members and report back to the full committee. The next meeting will be at Meadowbrook on Thursday 18 February at 7.45pm.

On the same page there was also a report that the Hall Trustees had offered a piece of land to Devon CC for a playground extension but this was not taken up.

DHN 29<sup>th</sup> January 1971

A further meeting held in February was reported in the DHN on the 5<sup>th</sup> March confirming the formation of the Swimming Club and arrangements for the use of Foxhole. Membership fees were kept low as the Club had little to offer but the future. Fees would be 50p (10/-) for a family and 25p (5/-) for an individual. A Committee Member was appointed for fund raising. Collecting newspaper and other activities had already started. Details of the Swimming Club's formation and its aims were spread into the community with the message that funds were being sought and contributions, of any size, would be most welcome.

It was agreed that swimming at Foxhole would be on two evenings each week, on Monday and Thursday evenings.

**Dartington Swimming Club:** Ted Hicks writes: Many Dartington people enjoyed swimming at the Foxhole pool on Monday and Thursday evenings last summer. May we express our gratitude to Wesley Jones for organising this and to Dr Royston Lambert and the students for allowing us the use of the pool? Due to the interest shown in this venture the Dartington Swimming Club has now been formed. Membership is open to villagers, the fees being 50p (10s) for a family and 25p (5s) for individuals. We have tried to keep the fees reasonable — especially for the family. Would all interested in membership contact either Wesley Jones at Meadowbrook or Ted Hicks, 7 Droridge, Dartington (telephone Totnes 3033) or the other officials — Bob Black and Joan Redshaw. Obviously the aim is one day to have a pool that we can call our own. In the meantime it is hoped that we might be allowed again the use of the Foxhole pool. Equally obvious for our long-term aim is the

need of funds, which membership fees alone will not provide. To start the ball rolling, Mr Lloyd Hughes has agreed to be in charge of fund raising activities with the full support of the committee. All sorts of ideas have been put forward for fund raising but any other would be welcome.

We are not asking people to dig into their pockets but jumble! Everyone must have some old bits and pieces no longer wanted. Of course we do not wish to take from the other jumble sales held in the village but if you can spare some jumble for the swimming club we should be grateful. Waste paper! Tons of newspapers and magazines are burned or thrown away each year. The swimming club members would be willing to collect this scrap from you periodically, or by arrangement, regularly. This would cost you nothing but would help the club. If you have either jumble or waste paper please let us know. May we help you to help us?

DHN 5<sup>th</sup> March 1971

Contributions did come in and each was acknowledged by letter which was hand delivered.

Waste paper was collected, sorted and tied into bundles ready for collection. A lot was collected but the return from paper merchants had fallen dramatically making it a rather worthless task. It was decided the returns did not warrant the work put in and, thus, abandoned.

Fund raising events included a Crazy Football match, a Fashion Show at Shinner's Bridge and contributions from various Fetes which the Club supported. A large board on which the sides and base were depicted as bricks in a "peel off" plastic was taken to many events. Under some "bricks" monetary prizes, ranging from 5/- to £5, were hidden. The cost of a brick was 6d (2 ½p). The punters were told that there were prizes — but not how many or what value, except that all were worthwhile. This board was always present at Dances and other events at the Adult Club and it made good contributions to Funds.

Behind the scenes some Club members were looking about the area to see if there was any land that might be available on

which a swimming pool might be constructed. Nothing could be found.

Up to this time the Dartington Recreation Association (DRA) had not been approached. There was a feeling that once the Association was involved the Club members would lose control of future events. On 23<sup>rd</sup> April Wes Jones, on behalf of the Swimming Club executive committee, wrote to the DRA inviting them to a meeting to discuss how the joint efforts of both groups might be beneficial in getting a pool built in the village. The meeting was due for the 5<sup>th</sup> May.

Obviously swimming at Foxhole was not possible during winter months so Wes Jones organised a trip, by coach, to the pool in Plymouth for the 2<sup>nd</sup>

May. This was very well attended and further visits were made but with members taking private cars.

**Sunday morning swim:** Dartington Swimming Club have arranged a coach trip to the indoor pool at Central Park, Plymouth for Sunday 2 May. The coach will leave the Recreation Car Park at 9.30am, returning at approximately 1.30pm. The cost of the ride will be 15p per person and admission to the pool is 15p for adults, 7p for children and 5p for spectators. This pool is 110 feet by 42 feet and about three feet deep at the shallow end, writes Ted Hicks, so it should be a worthwhile trip for both proficient swimmers and learners. Adequate supervision has been arranged, but children under the age of 7 should be accompanied by a parent. Contact Wesley Jones at Meadowbrook for a place on the coach. If the trip is a success the club plans to organise more.

These trips helped to keep an interest for the members especially the children.

DHN 23<sup>rd</sup> APRIL 1971

The meeting between the Swimming Club and the DRA took place as arranged by Wesley Jones and the reports shown on the following page tell the story. Had the fears of the Club been proved correct? Were their efforts now being hijacked? The reports indicate that no Government monies could be expected.

Avenues that had been already investigated by the Swimming Club had shown this especially if the project had started.

## DARTINGTON CLUB TO BUILD POOL

A NEW POOL is to be provided on the recreation ground at Dartington by the Dartington Recreation Association and Swimming Club.

The decision was taken to go ahead with the scheme for another pool at the association's annual meeting at Meadowbrook on Tuesday, despite the provision of Totnes's own pool having recently been confirmed.

Both association and club officials felt there was sufficient need in the village itself to merit the scheme and no direct competition with Totnes would result.

It was reported that club membership has risen to 120 since its foundation in January and the club treasurer, Mr B. Black, anticipated a membership of 240 by July. The association's chairman, Mr E. G. Clake, urged that they should therefore not wait three years or more until the money had been raised.

"I suggest we should go ahead and try and get a loan which we can pay back gradually, thus avoiding the problems of rising costs," he said.

The quoted estimate of £2,000 to £4,000 was challenged by the club's secretary, Mr E. Hicks, who said his own inquiries led him to think the final figure would be nearer £5,000.

Totnes Times 18<sup>th</sup> June 1971

The Dartington Recreation Association took the plunge at their annual meeting last week and confirmed the decision to build a swimming pool at Meadowbrook. It will measure about 60 feet by 26 feet — about the size of the Foxhole Pool — and work is to go ahead as soon as a satisfactory estimate has been approved. With a balance of £1046 in hand after their year's operations and a steady income from playing field rents, the parish precept and voluntary fund-raising events, the Association agreed that their financial position was secure enough to justify seeking a loan. When they heard that within a few months of its foundation Dartington Swimming Club has a total family membership of 120 (ten per cent of the population of the village) and that 30 villagers had turned out in the rain to swim at the last club session at Foxhole, they agreed that immediate need for a pool in the village had been proved as well. There would be no conflict of interest with the plans for a public pool at Totnes, they decided. But the meeting accepted the opinion of the chairman, Ernest Clake, that government grants were not likely to be available with Totnes ahead in the queue. All the officers were re-elected —

DHN 25<sup>th</sup> June '1971

A further report in the Totnes Times on 16<sup>th</sup> July seemed to repeat, partially, what had been reported on the 18<sup>th</sup> June. As

reported it would seem the DRA was now the leading light and would dictate what might happen in the future. Before the DRA came on the scene Club members had been looking into the many costs that there would be, ie, sizes of in-ground pools and costs, chlorination methods + costs, fencing, paving and future running costs. The size of the pool had not been properly discussed. The DRA seemed to be locked into the Foxhole pool. The meeting between the two parties had taken place on the 5<sup>th</sup> May. Why did this report have to be repeated.

In the earlier report the DRA Chairman had "urged that there should be no delay in going ahead with the project and that a source of funding should be sought.

The members of the Swimming Club welcomed what seemed to be a change of heart of the DRA. However, another problem reared it's head.

By a chance meeting of a Club member and a member of the DRA, it was announced that the pool would not be deeper than four feet. The reply given to this was that such a pool was generally considered dangerous but this was brushed aside. To this members intimated that they would resign and take no further part in providing a pool for the village. Fortunately, one of the

## Joint committee to help swim pool project

A JOINT committee is to be set up between Dartington Recreation Association and Dartington Swimming Club to bring the village a step nearer its own pool.

At a meeting of the recreation association's management committee on Tuesday the secretary, Mr C. E. White, said he had received a suggestion from the swimming club who had supported the scheme.

The chairman, Mr E. G. Clarke, said: "This is on the right lines. I think this idea should be taken up."

Members agreed and decided to elect three people from each body to form a committee. The treasurer, Mr W. G. Little, Mr Clarke and Mr White were elected to represent the association.

Totnes Times 16<sup>th</sup> July 1971

members, Jennifer White, was the wife of the Dartington Hall Steward who was also on the DRA Committee. She also helped at the village school with PE lessons. She happened to be at the school one day when an official from County Hall paid a visit and she took the opportunity to talk to him about the pool problem. He confirmed that mono depth pools were not as safe as those with reasonable deep and shallow areas. This information was obviously passed on and the subject was never again raised.

A piece of good news was reported in the Totnes Times on 30<sup>th</sup> July that the DRA was guaranteeing £1000 to enable the Dartington pool to go ahead. This would be matched by the Swimming Club as their fund raising progressed. From this report it will be seen that the DRA whilst appearing, now, to be the leading force has accepted that the pool would have a deep end of 6 ft and the cost has suddenly been re-estimated to £5,000.

Also reported in the same edition it was announced that Totnes had suffered another a set-back in their plans to build an indoor pool in the town. Mr C.J.Blake had informed Borough Councillors that all grants from the Sports Council had been frozen and a new system of allocation was being arranged. Bad news for Totnes and the whole District as this pool would have served a large area, including the High School, at all times of the year. ( It was Mr Blake who fore-told the village pool!)

30 July 71  
**£1,000 DONATION  
MATCHED**

A GUARANTEE of £1,000 towards a swimming pool at Dartington made by the Dartington Recreation Association has now been matched by an equal offer from Dartington Swimming Club.

Club members plan to combine with the association to raise funds to get the pool built as quickly as they can. It will be designed on the same lines as Foxhole pool—about 60 feet by 30 feet and up to six feet deep. The cost has been estimated at £5,000.

Totnes Times 30<sup>th</sup> July 1971

The AGM of the Swimming Club was held on the 11<sup>th</sup> October as will be seen on the report below. Members were told of the

■Members of Dartington Swimming Club heard about the success of their first year of existence at their annual meeting on 11 October — including nine children and one adult taught to swim at the Club's sessions. Thanks to the perseverance of Wesley Jones, writes Ted Hicks, the club finally got under way in 1971 and can now claim 268 members. Many of them have enjoyed swimming on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the Foxhole Pool, and much gratitude is due to Royston Lambert and Dartington Hall School for permitting the use of Foxhole pool. The club has set itself an annual target of £300 towards the building of a village pool. The treasurer was able to report that with donations from Meadowbrook and Dartington Wives Group, fund-raising activities and a sponsored swim had raised £250 in about five months. It is hoped that further fund-raising activities will raise the balance. The Committee would like to thank all those who helped to make the year so successful, especially the youngsters, who were the backbone of the sponsored swim. The Club looks forward to the future greatly encouraged.

achievements by several youngsters and an adult learning to swim at the Foxhole pool. This was probably largely due to the efforts of Frank Liggins who encouraged and helped all non swimmers.

Club membership had grown. Targets for the future had been set. The Wives Group had given great support and the future looked good.

With money guaranteed by the DRA it looked as if in the coming year it might be possible to get moving on the construction of the pool.

A meeting was due to take place, with the DRA, to discuss the future.

DHN 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1971

The following report is the last one of which a copy is available. The meeting of the DRA, which it reports, took place before the intended meeting between the DRA and the Swimming Club, as indicated above.

Once again the DRA jumped the gun and decided what the Swimming Club could have. Also the cost also changed – again.

This report tells that it “will be a family pool” as the Club had always intended. It also brought up a subject that had never been envisaged. Such a pool, as was foreseen, was certainly not intended for races. The comment about “design” was most amusing as never had

the DRA come up with anything except the size of the Foxhole pool which seemed to change with each report. Nothing had ever been considered for the area around the pool which the Club had in mind as a large leisure green within the total site.

A meeting did take place and agreement was reached to go ahead in 1972. An order for a plastic liner pool would be placed. The size ordered was 66ft x 33ft. The depth would be from 3ft to 3.5ft to 6ft, the deep end starting at the half-way point of the length.

The green area to one side of the pool was so large that the opportunity to include it within the scheme for future uses was too good to miss. As can be seen now the right decision was made.

●Dartington's village swimming pool is to cost not more than £3,000, Dartington Recreation Association decided at an executive meeting last week. It is to be a 60 feet x 40 feet pool (the same size as the Foxhole pool), and will be designed as a family pool, part of the general complex of family amenities around Meadowbrook. Swimmers who need facilities for competition swimming will have to wait for the projected Totnes town pool to get them locally. The Dartington Swimming Club executive and officials of the Recreation Association will meet to agree on the final details.

DHN 29<sup>th</sup> October 1971

Half way along, on the side nearest the Splash pool, a hole would provide the position for a "vacuum" hose to be fitted. This hose would be used to remove grit, etc. from the bottom of the pool.

At the centre of the deep end there would be a pot to extract water to the filtration house and recirculate it.

All the above work was done by Club members under supervision. Doctors turned into navvies, lorry drivers became plumbers, and so on. If something needed to be moved any free hands joined in, even mothers, children and the injured.

With the sides all fixed the base surfaces had to be levelled to give as smooth a surface as possible. Garden rakes were good for this.

The shallow end had to slope from 3'0 to 3'6". The sloping sides at the deep end had to have careful treatment. The base



John Parrotte at the Filtration House



Tony Bowyer and family backfilling

level throughout would be at least four inches below the final level as this was to be given a covering of sand and lime, about 4" thick, on which the liner would sit. This was not a job for Club members but, on cue, plasterers appeared and members acted as their labourers keeping them supplied with the sand and lime mixture.

When the base was completely covered and even, to the satisfaction of our Clerk of Works, the time had come for putting the liner into position. The box containing it was now opened, for the first time, and a mass of plastic lay waiting to be removed. To help, a tractor with front forks was borrowed. Straps were secured around the plastic which was then lifted and taken to the edge of the pool where it was eased out over the deep end and lowered to sit on the prepared base. It had to be manoeuvred to a position where it could be "unwrapped" and gradually spread out across the deep end and up into the shallow area. With a lot of tugging it was eased into position. The bag at the deep end fitted well and the corners were quickly dealt with to make a tidy finish. The shallow end was more easily dealt with.



Peter Sutcliffe was first in!

The Filters, bottom sumps, inlets and the "vacuum" point were all quickly connected and made tidy with their plastic covers and nozzles. Now the fire hose was brought over from the entrance to the Adult Club and filling the pool began.

At last a camera appeared when water was first put into the pool. It took about 24 hours to fill the pool estimated to contain 61,000 gallons, when filled up to the level of the skimmers two of which of can be seen either side of Peter Sutcliffe. He had been determined to be the first person into the pool. Who was the young man looking on and who was also in the water?

The pool had to be filled quickly to prevent water getting beneath the base which would cause it to float. Not desirable!

Note the fence. Not something that would be acceptable to Health and Safety these days. There was never any problem of interference with our workings on the site and children were controlled by their parents when "site inspecting".



Back filling the soil      The heavy roller was borrowed from the cricket club all around the pool brought it up to a level at which paving slabs could be placed in position on a bed of sand. Memory fails to let me say who were the members of that team.

When the work started on the pool site the number of people involved was initially rather few. With the occupation of the houses being built at Hunter's Moon more volunteers came forward. This helped to speed up the work.

The Club had been able to buy a large quantity of tongued and grooved timber planks from the Dartington Cattle Breeding Centre where concrete blocks were replacing the wooden walls. These would provide the fencing around three sides of the pool area. The picture on the right shows Fred Redshaw, supervised by Joan, his wife and helped by a young man who is not recognised.

The planks were about 10ft long. Fred had to cut some of these to make the uprights for the fence rather, like the steel stanchions used in the pool. The full length boards slotted into the uprights which had been set into the ground.



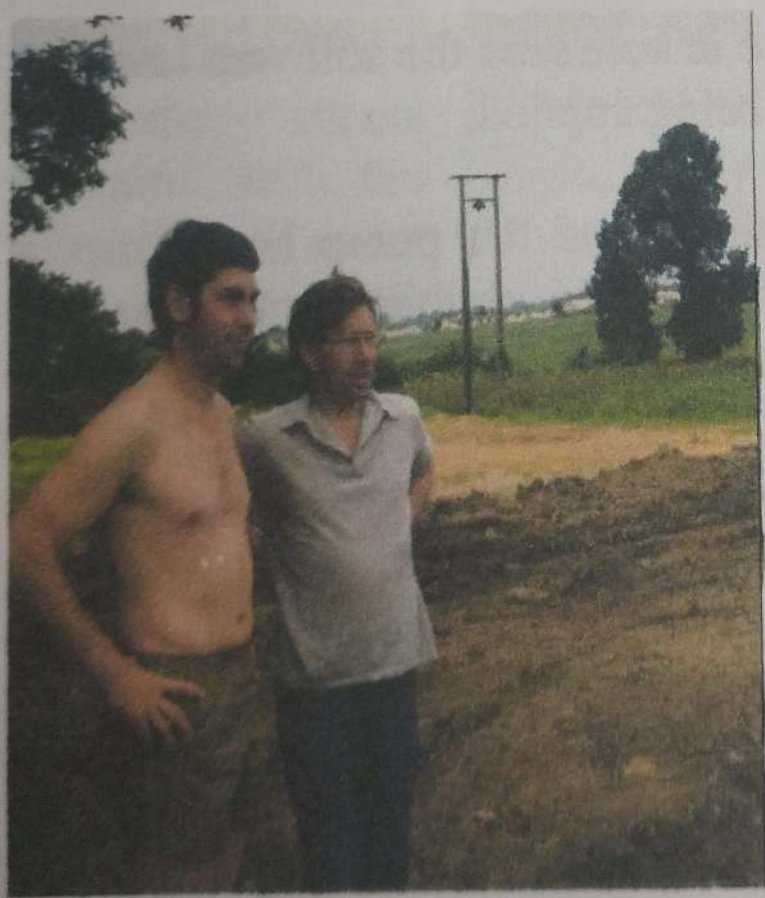
Fred Redshaw making the fence

On the side facing the splash pool a "chain link" fence was erected. This made the pool safe and created an air of openness and not an enclosed compound which would have been the effect with walls on four sides. Mothers could look in or out to keep an eye on their offspring. It was pleasing to note on a

recent visit that a higher fence has replaced the original and that this goes all round the perimeter giving greater security. It was not unknown for some young people to have used the pool, late at night, by climbing over the wooden fence.

There was an offer of a couple of old garden sheds if the Club had a use for them. Fred Redshaw quickly took the best parts of each and made a hut which was placed inside the chain link fence by the entrance gate. This provided a place in which domestic items were be kept.

When the pool came into use an electricity point was installed, together with a water supply, making it possible to make hot drinks. Then requests came for other light refreshments. These were obtained from a couple of large warehouses in Paignton.



*John Parrotte & Ted Hicks. What's next?*

difficulty in the pool. It was also long enough for a person each side of the pool to pull it along to aid anyone was in trouble.

Soft drinks, a variety of sweets of which Black Jacks were the most popular (4 for one penny), Crisps, Tea, Coffee and when someone kindly donated an Ice Cream freezer, ice creams were available.

Also kept in the hut was a long buoyant plastic rope which had a float fixed to one end. This was a safety device which could be thrown to anyone in

Whilst Fred continued with the wood-work other members now had the job of laying the paving slabs around the pool. Layers of sand were put down on top of the rolled earth. The sand was also rolled to compact it and then even more sand was put down and rolled. Eventually, when the levels were considered to be correct the slabs were put down each one being checked for being level and square to it's neighbours then tamped into place. How much sand and how many slabs were put down is not remembered (count them!) but no doubt we had sore hands and aching backs before the surrounds were completed.

Initially, a few slabs were put down at the shallow end. At week-ends the children came and begged to be allowed to go into the pool. It was agreed that they could when we worked as long as they behaved themselves. They did.

Behind the paving slabs in the leisure area the soil was levelled and raked prior to grass seed being applied.

At the deep end where the fence and the pump house met a small area of shelter was put where clothing could be put under-cover for people swimming during inclement weather conditions.

The pool was ready for swimming to begin. Most of the summer had been taken up with work but there was still time to enjoy our labours. There were still some things to be done but these could be done during the winter and following spring at a more leisurely pace.

Committee members took on the running of the pool for which one of the main tasks was water health. At first liquid chlorine was poured into the water with a small bucket. A system was

found that was similar to that used for Kidney Dialyses. A small motor would pump regular doses of chlorine into the filtration system when it was operating. The machine was purchased to do this automatically. The Ph of the water had to be checked daily and adjustments made to the chlorine input as necessary.

Turning thoughts to winter what could be done to keep the pool in good condition through the next months. Leaves would be a problem if the pool was left open. Sticks from the nearby trees and shrubs would also be a nuisance together with dust and any other wind blown items. The answer, which would not mean overspending, was to buy two large "rick sheets", the sort of things used to cover hay-ricks in the winter. Two of these plastic

sheets would more than cover the pool. On their own when the rain, inevitably, came the sheets would sink with the the weight of water that they would collect. Therefore plastic containers were obtained, as big



Summer 2012

as possible. These were tied with cords to make two rows of floats along the pool and secured at each end to the paving. The sheets were then pulled along and over the floats, thus they were unable to sink. The sides and ends of the rick-sheets were anchored by any heavy objects to hand.

How long this arrangement lasted is not known. It worked.

However, the two pool covers, shown in the picture above, on

rollers that allow the covers to be pulled out along the pool or can easily wind them back are a great improvement on what was done in the early days. They look tidier too.

### And after.....

For the help he had given in getting the pool built it was agreed by the Pool Committee that Jack's services should be recognized by creating him as our first Honorary Member. As such he was entitled to swim at the pool, free, whenever he wished. It is doubtful that he ever did but he was most pleased with this recognition.

One evening, in 1973, when some adult members were swimming, two uniformed policemen came to the pool. When asked if they could be helped they said "No" but then asked if they could help us. All the work had been done! Were they not a bit late?

They explained that the help they were offering was to teach members **life saving**. They explained more to those present and this was another offer to be taken up. Life saving sessions started the following week and they were well attended.

John Ballantyne was one of the policemen. He brought the latest RLSS (Royal Life Saving Society) book on the subject with him and suggested we should each buy a copy. When he wasn't able to attend himself, due to his duties, he would leave instructions for members to follow and go through them later.

On almost every visit to our pool someone could be seen practising these new skills. Eventually, John said some were ready to go to the pool in Plymouth and have their abilities

tested. Those considered ready submitted themselves for their examination at Plymouth. The results were pretty good considering that members, children and adults had only started recently.

Frank Liggins continued to teach children and adults to swim even though he was not a qualified instructor. He may have helped quite a number for at the end of the school year in 1974 the Headmaster of the village school, Bill Blinston, announced that every child who went on to the senior school, that year, could swim. There was an old saying "Every year the Dart claims a heart". It is hoped that the pool has helped to bring such occurrences to an end.

One weekend afternoon there was quite a commotion when it was noticed that a snake had slithered under the fence. It wriggled across the grass and into the pool. The disturbance it caused must have frightened it as much as the swimmers and sun-bathers. Never before had the pool and grass areas emptied so fast.

The snake made it's way to the deep end. So that it would not be drawn into the filters the pumps were turned off. Then one brave individual grabbed a dustbin lid and scooped the snake out and tossed it over the fence. It was never known what type of snake had visited the pool on that day.

My memories end here for in mid 1974 I moved to the London Head Office of the Company for which I worked. My wife, Janet, followed in December. We learned that we had also been made Honorary Members for the work we had done in helping to bring a swimming pool to Dartington. We were quite honoured to be so recognized. It is hoped that others who had been similarly involved also received recognition.

I visited Dartington in the mid 1990s but the pool was not open at that time. Having a look around the pool it appeared rather sad with the paving very higgledy with the paving very higgledy-piggledy due to water getting into the sand beneath.

Unfortunately, this will always be a problem with sand. Weeds were also to be seen around the edges of the paving.

(A Suggstion: When next paving slabs have to be re-laid perhaps consider using a mixture of sand and lime. It hardens but does not set like sand and cement. The slabs would need to be set in place quickly before the mixture set too hard.)

However, since my visit in the 1990s and my more recent one, in 2012, a lot has been done and on the latest occasion the pool and surroundings looked really good and it is a credit to those who have worked so hard to bring it up to such a standard.



Summer 2012

It was at Lunch time so not many were using the facility and I could not stay very long. I had not come prepared for a swim!

Whilst there I met Marie Lord who told me of what had been done. I also met several people in the "Adult Club" who reminded me of names of some of those who had been involved in building the pool. Sadly not many are now with us. They

Throughout this narrative an air of disagreement is shown to have existed between the Swimming Club and the DRA. Unfortunately, this was often the case. However, gratitude must be shown to the DRA for without them the pool might never have been built. They did come forth with the guarantee of £1,000 which was the catalyst to get things moving. Charles White, Jack and others were connected in many ways with the various Dartington Hall enterprises and through them, I'm sure, many things happened of which members were not aware. The digger came from Plant Hire. Perhaps the pumps, concrete mixer and the tractor did also. Electricians, plumbers and plasterers came just when wanted. Jack may only have had to say the word for things to happen. Late it may be but I thank them all.

The final costs of the pool is not known but it is doubtful that they much exceeded £3,000 considering all the outside help that was given by various Dartington Hall companies. The estimates that the members of the Swimming Club originally worked on were based on costs that had been given by other contractors. Consideration for this being a village enterprise would not have concerned them.

So far I have tried to avoid using words like "I" or "me". I was one of a group and it was "we" who built the pool. Now I shall use "I".



Summer 2012

would have been proud to see how the site has developed. The paving was good and the new style trim to the pool edges gives it a very professional appearance and the weeds had gone.

Do you recognise anyone here?



Following my visit I was contacted by Clare Isherwood who has given me a lot of help in getting information and also reminding me of names of people involved so many years ago. She also let me have some pictures and newspaper (Totnes Time?) reports which might bring back some memories.

Two of those reports bring up the need of continual fund raising. If the pool is to be enjoyed in the years to come the means for it's upkeep must be forthcoming. Unfortunately, there are very few people with deep pockets to give money freely. But working to keep this village asset going can also be fun, making it a worthwhile act. This also means fund raising. When these reports were made is not known but one mentions monies that have been spent. A sum of £2,500 came from a

grant but a further £5,000 was, no doubt, in part the result of fund raising. Do not compare the costs and membership charges with what we had in the days of over forty years ago.



Picture contributed

## Keeping cool in new-look pool

DARTINGTON Community Swimming Pool has reopened for the summer season with a splash.

The weekend heatwave brought families flocking to the outdoor pool for a refreshing dip as temperatures soared, as our picture shows.

A number of improvements have been made to the 20-metre pool after the Foun-

dation for Sports and Arts awarded the committee a grant of £2,500 to replace poolside paving and curb stones. Last year over £5,000 was spent on a new pool liner.

'It is a big improvement and the pool now looks much better,' said treasurer, Clare Isherwood.

After-school sessions are held from 3.15 to 5pm Mon-

day to Friday and evenings between 6.30 and 7.30pm. The pool is open at weekends from 2 to 5pm. A trained life-guard is on duty at all times.

If there is sufficient demand the committee is considering opening the pool for early morning sessions, starting at 7.30am. For more details call Clare Isherwood on 864464.

Alongside fund raising is the work of maintaining the pool and the areas around. As can be seen someone has to come forth to take on the various tasks. This brings back memories. Where we covered the pool with rick-sheets you have now got the two roller covers to give protection to the pool whenever it is necessary and making this task easier to do.

pool clean and tidy. The older children, having passed their Life Saving tests, were persuaded to take on some of the supervision of those using the pool to ensure safety at all times. This caused some very amusing incidents at first.

The ladies came into their own by helping to supervise the children who wanted to use the pool after school and taking turns in looking after the shop. The men took on the management role in the evenings and also dealt with any necessary maintenance and water hygiene.

Forty two years have passed since Janet, Caroline and I left Dartington. A lot has happened since then. Perhaps it should also be recorded for the folk who are to follow. Over to you!



Cleaning the pool. Who's doing what?

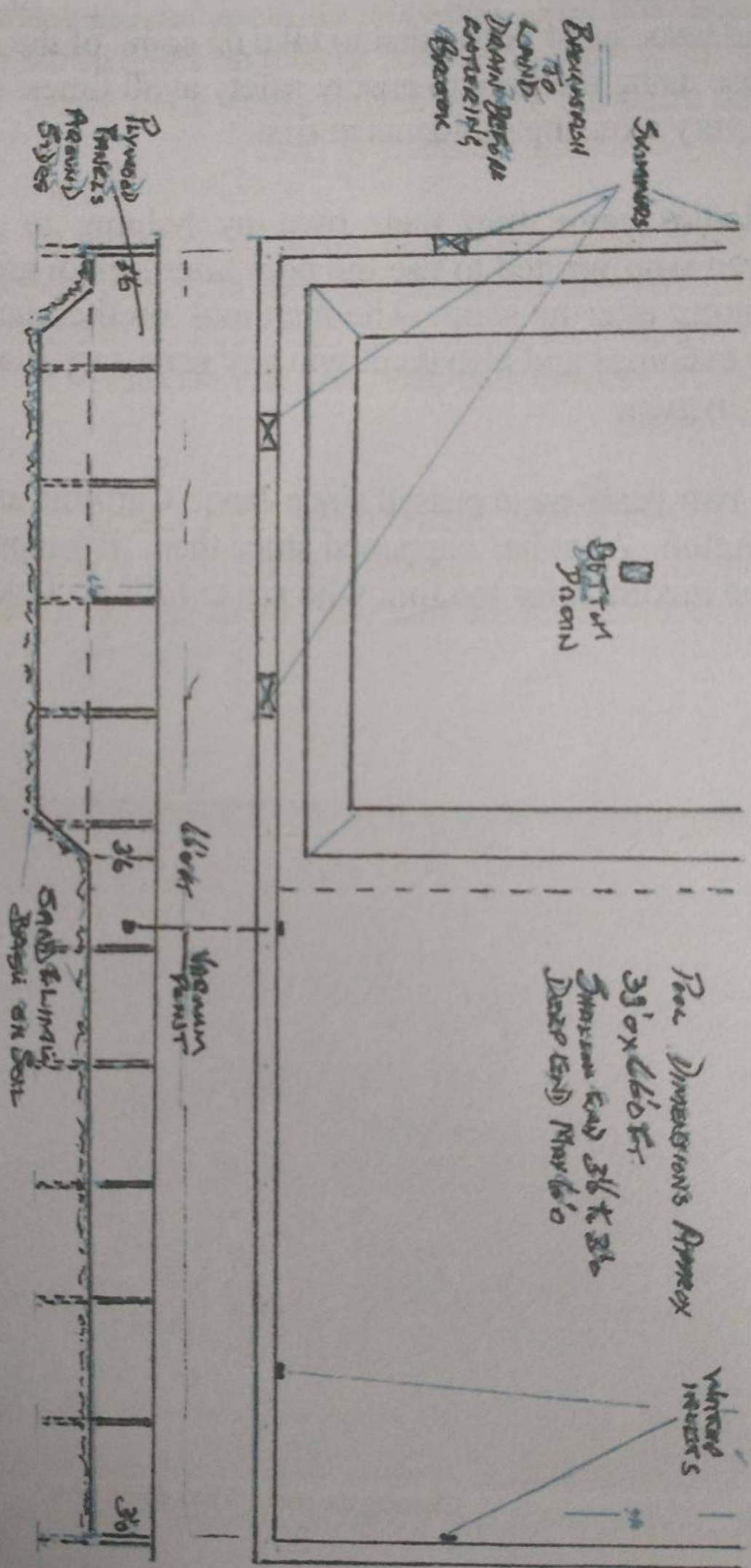
Wes Jones was an asset to the village and to the Swimming Club. He came up with ideas for fund raising one of which was a whole week with something going on each day. This was not solely for the benefit of the Swimming Club but also other functions that we had going on in the village.



Members attending to maintenance

The time has come for me to end but before I do I think back to what was quite an achievement in giving Dartington village it's own pool. This would not have been possible without a group of people in the village getting together to give their time and effort to make such a success. I cannot remember the names of everyone who took part in this endeavour but their efforts should not be forgotten.

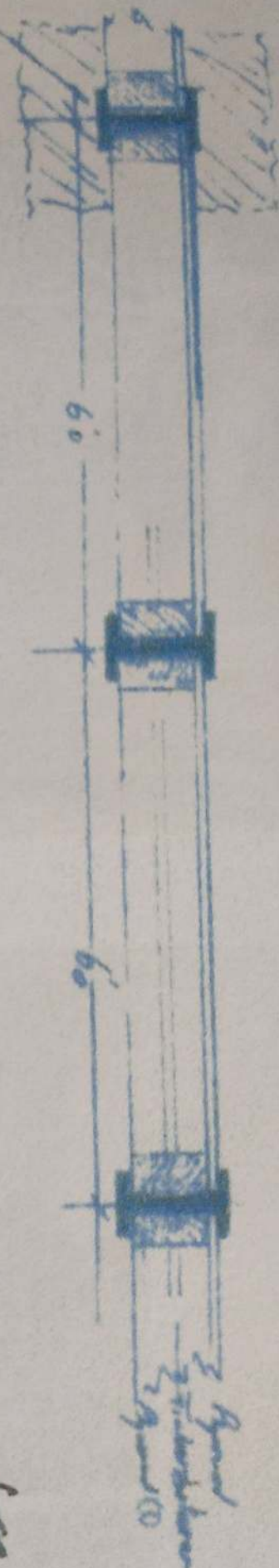
Many of the young people who should not be forgotten are now the parents, maybe grand-parents, of today's children. In those early years they were encouraged to help keep area around the



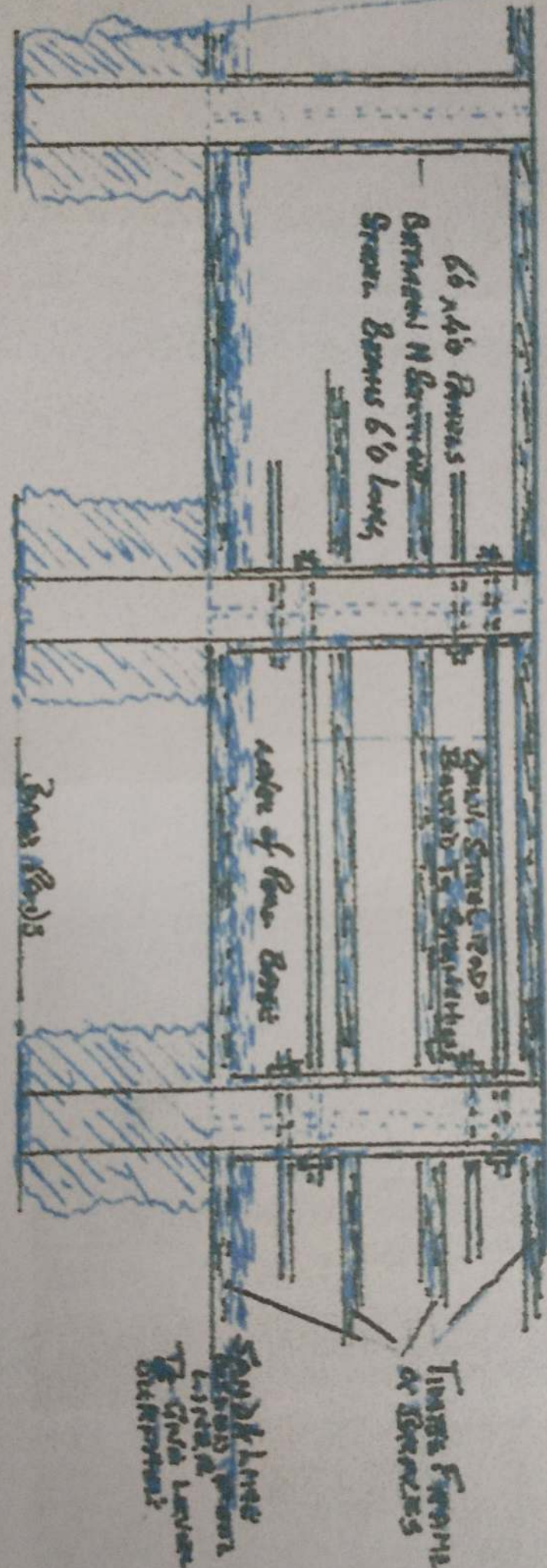
Pipes To Air Inlets Skimmers Pads To Pump House. Trap From Pump House Features To Back When To Land Drain

Battering Room

NTS



Concrete or  
base of sash windows



60 x 40 Panes  
Barnwood N. Barnwood  
Sash. Barnwood 6'0 inch

Small Steel Rods  
Barnwood to Barnwood

center of pane Barn

Iron Rods

Timber Frame  
or Barnwood

Small lines  
1.5 inch  
7.5 inch  
Barnwood

N.T.S

PAERINGTON Rev.  
Barnwood Rev.

Having put the booklet together an error has been pointed out to me. The man in charge of surveying the site and ensuring that the correct dimensions and shape were maintained was David Norman. My apologies to David and thanks to John Parrotte for informing me of this mistake. If any more errors are found please let me know. My excuse is the passing of time, distance (I now live in the Brecon Beacons) and it being 42 years since the pool was built.

Terry Parsons has told me that the name of the man who excavated the hole for the pool is John Payne. He currently lives abroad but has a son living in Totnes who some may know.

In conversation with Terry Parsons he told me of some problems with which I can only sympathise. In 1972 we had a pretty free run. Now, I understand, Devon County Council has a say in what can and cannot be done. Safety being one of those things.

Safety was always a concern without the need of pressure from other quarters. If you haven't got qualified Life Savers I can only urge you to get some. As explained, in 1972 a number of us did get qualified. It is not difficult and can be very rewarding.

Books giving instructions can be obtained from the RLSS as the details enclosed. One of the local police force helped us in 1972. Ask at the Police Station if there is a qualified officer who would help. The pool in Totnes must have qualified persons. Why not approach them.

My very best wishes. Ted Hicks