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## Settle Swimming Pool How it Started

Some years ago, before 1960, there had been a suggestion that a swimming pool should be built in Settle, and some money was raised towards this, but the scheme never came to fruition. At a meeting of the newly formed Community Council in 1965 Mrs. Nancy Ellis suggested that the matter should be re-opened and money raised towards this; at first £20,000 was the target figure. Besides coffee mornings, and sales of work, a number of bodies, notably Rotary and the Inner Wheel organised a number of appeals and events which brought in substantial sums. An important one among these was a popular weekly draw organised by the late Mrs. Kath Lambert from her shop which was very suitably placed for the purpose. The draw went on for about nine years.

A Committee was appointed under the chairmanship of Mr. Tom Dugdale, with Mrs. Ellis as Secretary and Mrs. Lambert as Treasurer to promote the money raising and plan the creation of the pool, whilst the funds collected were placed in the care of a Trust consisting of Sir Roger Stevens, Major-General T.H. Birkbeck, the Hon. Mrs. Jessica Koppel and Canon

Some readers may remember that this was a period of considerable national inflation culminating in the oil crisis of 1974 and during that period the estimated cost of building the pool rose steadily so that the money coming in did not do a lot more than cover the increase in the estimated cost. By 1973 it had reached a figure of £50,000. The Committee proposed to meet this by adding to the £20,000 that had been raised in Settle, a loan of £15,000 from Settle Rural District Council, a grant under negotiation from the Sports Council and hoped for grants to the extent of £1,500 from local Parish Councils.

A tremendous amount of work had been done by the Committee, both on the money side and particularly in planning the details and construction of the pool itself, and of this Mr. Dugdale bore the brunt. The race between money coming in and inflation gave the Committee a great deal of worry. At the beginning of 1974 it was felt that they must either go ahead and build or drop the whole scheme. The members decided on the former and with the money position as they then saw it placed a contract with Melvin Birkett (Otley) Ltd. to build the pool at a cost of £74,000. To help towards this Settle District Council turned their proposed loan of £15,000 into a grant of £20,000; a grant of

Coulthurst, who through the Trust set up by her late husband covered the architects with a grant of £6,000. These, with the money raised in the town and district, proved to be very nearly sufficient to build the pool, leaving an outstanding debt on completion of less than £200.

A site had been negotiated with The West Riding County Council, a thing requiring a lot of work and the ceremonial cutting of the first turf took place on the 27th July 1974 near the Middle School then being built. Some ten months later the pool was ready although one or two cost saving alterations had had to be made to keep within the money available. The pool was a simple one; no diving boards or other extras. The depth increases from 1 metre to 2 metres.

The County let the pool use the land at a nominal rent and the West Riding had promised running support. The latter arrangement fell through on County re-organisation in 1974, although North Yorkshire did pay the cost of school swimming each weekday morning for the first four and a half years. They had to withdraw this arrangement in 1979 as part of necessary economies. It is a great credit to the district that the Parent-Teachers Associations of all the primary schools except one found the cost of pool hire, transport and teachers from school instruction for many years.

Previous to the pools existence our hardy children could be seen regularly bathing in the River Ribble. But the coming of the pool changed all that. One of the first objectives of the Committee was to see that all children in the district, so far as was possible, should learn to swim; this has been realised. For the last decade Craven District Council has been funding the hire of the pool for swimming lessons by schools, although the schools, through Parents as a rule, have to find the cost of teachers and transport.

The pool is Settle District's own pool. It was founded by local initiative maintained by local support and, with the exception of representatives from North Yorkshire and Craven District, the management committee are all local representatives; two are elected each year at a meeting in late Spring from the electorate of Settle. And more people per thousand of the population use it than is the case for almost any other pool in the country. It is something Settle district can be proud of.

Kevin Petrie.

## Ragged Hall Nursery School

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