



1960s Baths

The annual gala was an exciting occasion. My father used to collect and cart the chairs from the Council Depot to sit on the apron. They also built wooden steps and a platform to allow winning competitors to shake hands with the guests, who would be assembled on the curved patio in front of the cafe.

I loved the baths, but never ventured down the steps. They were often slippery with seaweed and barnacles clung to the side walls. It was much easier to just dive straight in, and I always avoided putting my feet on the bottom. You never knew just what you might stand on.

When I was taking my life-saving exams you had to retrieve a brick from the six foot area near the arms. You had to watch carefully just where the brick dropped into the water and then duck dive and grope about blindly in the mud to find it. My days at West Kirby Baths were the foundation of some very good friendships which continue to this very day.

It was a sad day when the Baths finally closed in the late 1960s. An era gone, and closely followed by the demolition of the old Hoylake (Hydro) Hotel.

Vision

My wishful vision is that the baths area be brought back to life. Newcomers to the area wonder just what the remaining baths structure is, as it looks derelict and neglected. I would love to see the story and pictures of the baths displayed with boards on the curved area. Maps and diagrams naming the Welsh mountains and places of interest across the estuary would be appreciated and the telescopes could be moved to this site. I think an additional seating area would be most welcome, the railings could be moved to the water's edge, and perhaps at some stage a small boating pool could be built.

Many thanks to Heather Chapman for the article and photographs.

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