

Swimming in the Rivers

Many children learnt to swim in the local rivers with competitions being for more serious bathers. School children in Wolverton had swimming lessons in the Great Ouse running under the iron trunk aqueduct.

For many years, Bletchley's residents learned to swim in the river Ouzel or even the gravel pits. Then, in 1958, following a long campaign and public subscription, the Queen's Pool was opened in Central Gardens. Soon after, Bletchley Swimming Club was formed and hundreds of local children benefited from the coaching, despite the cold open air facilities. Covered in 1969, it was replaced in 1974 by a revolutionary new leisure centre which provided a range of opportunities for sports participation, though, sadly, no swimming pool. Instead a new recreation pool was built in the award-winning pyramid and serious swimmers had to use Leon School or go to other pools in the area to follow their dream.



Children swimming in the River Ouzel
Courtesy of Living Archive



Bathing Competition, Newport Pagnell 1906
Courtesy of Don Hurst, Newport Pagnell Historical Society



Queen's Pool in Central Gardens 1968
Courtesy Bletchley Community Heritage Initiative