



Harlow to K2 and Beyond

A voluntary, national project to record the story of the UK community sports and leisure centre by the end of 2016

www.sportsleisurelegacy.co.uk

Sponsored by S+P

international sports and leisure architects

SPACE & PLACE
ARCHITECTURE FOR HUMAN BEINGS

Present and future centres not just the past

The Legacy Project is seeking information on many aspects of current indoor community sports & leisure centres. The project is not just about the proud past of centres. It is also about the present provision, management and operation of centres and the prospects for the future. If you think your centre or organisation has something of interest to contribute please let us know – sportslegacy@btinternet.com.

See below for more information.

The 1950s to 2006 is well covered for specific centres (except for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland!) Only the past decade is missing now –

Information about the operation of today's centres needed!

Please tell us something interesting about your centre and its community, it might be:

- How the Centre came about in the first place
- Anything unusual or successful about its design and/or facilities
- A recent refurbishment programme
- Innovative 'community' services by the centre
- Original or particularly successful activity programmes
- Specific community liaison schemes
- Special events hosted
- Successful staff development initiatives
- Or any interesting story or anecdote about your centre or group of centres

PLUS - with any centre: let us know the year the centre opened and the name of current owner & operator.

Editorial Meetings

The editorial team met for the sixth time, courtesy of Worthing Leisure, on August 1st 2016.

Previous copies of the Project Newsletters can be found in the News section of the [website](#).

Recent refurbishments



Larne Leisure Centre NI



Sobell Centre

EDITORIAL TEAM for meetings: David Fisher, John Birch, Jack Wilkinson, Hywel Griffiths, John Thorpe, John Stride, and Gerry Carver plus by email: Mike Fulford, Mike Fitzjohn, Malcolm Tungatt. Researcher - Liam Goodley.

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Architects Choice Section supported by



Project welcomed by national organisations



Can you put a pen or keyboard to work?

The creation and editing of Chapters is underway. However the Project, its new found archive resources, its support and the great interest in it, has meant that the writing task has grown enormously. We have identified some topics where some drafting of text by others would help greatly (general or specific to a centre or group). A few draft paragraphs, or more on the following topics would be of great assistance: -

- The relationship between sport, participation and centres [anything in the period from 'Sport for All' '76 to the London Olympic Legacy] and 2015/16.
- What sport specific gains have been achieved by centres?
- The decision making processes for new centres and indeed their eventual replacement and refurbishment.
- The art of programming sports halls, ice rinks and pools et al.
- The role of centres in sports coaching/development, major events and competitions, and holiday activities for children.
- Examples from 60 years of Dual Use and Joint Provision Centres.
- New centres recently opened, planned or recently refurbished.
- Developments to specific operational practices/policies over the decades.....or any other obvious theme or topic!!

Please don't be shy! Let us know and get writing!!

We still need more 'Gamechanger' nominations

As previously reported, a section of the final website will list many 'Gamechangers'. These will be managers or directors or others who have made an important contribution to a particular centre and/or recreation management at any stage of the past 6 decades. The Editorial Group, formed after the Project Seminar at K2 last July, has been considering nominations. If you would like to nominate someone, there is a Gamechanger form on the website, or simply email the editor with details and a 1-line justification. **Please get nominating!**

A QUESTION OF TRUST?

We are also seeking the facts and stories related to probably the biggest change in sports & leisure centres over the last 25 years – the outsourcing of centre management by local authorities. This is epitomised by the advent of private companies under CCT, and the development of leisure trusts, both those individual trusts spawned by councils from their own direct operations, and those developed by private companies. There will be those trusts that have remained solely focused on the facilities of a single council, those that have expanded to encompass some centres of other authorities, and those that are now part of quite large trusts, including trusts that emerged from private companies.

PHOTOS, NEWSPAPER CUTTINGS of CENTRE OPENINGS, EVENTS OR HAPPENINGS INVITED – scan & email – or post originals which can be returned.

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Gallery through the decades



1946 Bisham Abbey - 1st national centre



1966 Bracknell Sports Centre



1974 Bletchley Leisure Centre 1st leisure pool



1976 Pontypool LC - 1st SC Mgt Award Winner



1977 Crowtree opens - largest in Europe [demolished 2014]



2011 Billingham Forum [1967] re-opens after 3-year revamp

The sports hall in focus

This Legacy Project has, at its heart, the definition of an indoor community sports centre accepted by all from the 1960s. This definition is that the centre has a multi-purpose sports hall plus some other facilities, which may or may not include a swimming pool. As much as night follows day, a new sports centre always had a sports hall, and that is almost as true today, in all the new centres being built, as it was in the 1960s.

From the earliest days the design and size may have varied (4, 6, 8, 10 or 12 badminton courts) SASH may have come and gone, and the wall and line colours might have changed, but in goes a sports hall. In the earliest days the intense peak usage of a sports hall revolved around booked badminton courts and five-a-side football games, for recreation and physical activity. With Club bookings for basketball and volleyball usually thrown in, there was not a lot of space for much else.

Now we can find demand for these activities has declined, with other interests biting into badminton, and floodlit, outdoor 3G pitches the de rigeur for football. This does leave the question 'whither or wither the sports hall?' Has the fitness gym taken over from the sports hall and squash courts? Billingham Forum has converted its sports hall into a GOclimb Centre and a martial arts room. WHAT CAN YOU PLEASE TELL US ABOUT SPORTS HALLS TODAY - What programming policy do you work to? Who uses your sports hall now and for what activities? How entrepreneurial do you have to be these days to sell the space/promote activity? Is use driven simply by who pays the most for hire? A fascinating issue!

Academia



Sports hall floor being laid at Birmingham

University sports centres are becoming a significant part of the development of new centres across the country and being accessed by students and public alike. The editorial group visited the superb Surrey Sports Park in /May. The University of Birmingham also has a splendid new centre due to open in the autumn.

Lost treasures of the deep

As the Project has developed it became clear that an archive would be created by the research and material collated. One of the greatest organisational influences on the provision of sports centres came from the Sports Council [SC], now renamed Sport England. We are delighted with the support and information given to the Project by ex-SC staff, not least at the Seminar last July and now on the Editorial Group. We discovered a Sports Council Archive held by UCLAN, the university in Preston. Thanks to the great efforts of **Mike Fitzjohn** and **Malcolm Tungatt**, formerly Sports Council Officers in the North-West, we have agreed a 6-month loan of 341 items from the Archive that the two identified as relevant to the Project on their visits to UCLAN. We are grateful not only to Mike and Malcolm for locating the best selection and delivering it to us in Sussex on July 29, but also to Annette and her library staff at UCLAN.



Archive delivered!



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APOLOGIES IF OMITTED BY MISTAKE (please tell us)

National Sporting Heritage Day

30th September 2016

Celebrating the nation's sporting past

www.nationalsportingheritageday.org.uk

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