

# Tiny town has community sports centre

**Daily Telegraph Reporter**  
**I**N the tiny country town of Bingham, Notts (pop. 5,000), an extra-comprehensive comprehensive school started this month. The school, Toot Hill, has a sports centre as well, open seven days a week for the recreation of 1,000 and more people a day.

Babies take their first dip in its shallow training pool, and fathers take a glass, after school hours, in the licensed bar with hotel-style lounge.

A secondary modern school already on the site becomes comprehensive as the building is completed, but the sports centre opened in April to all-comers.

Guides and Scouts have their own meeting rooms and there is a youth centre with its own snack bar.

There are play leader groups for younger children on Saturdays and in school holidays. The school concert hall and separate theatre will be available to local music and dramatic societies.

The response to the idea of a school with a community sports centre has been greater than was dreamed of, says Mr Noel Jones, Assistant Director of Education for Nottingham. All secondary schools in the county will now incorporate community facilities where possible.

## More centres

At Balderton a comprehensive school opens next month and its sports centre early next year. At Worksop a sports centre opens in October in advance of the comprehensive school next year.

Carlton has a centre opening in the spring and a school the following autumn. A fourth extra-comprehensive school is planned for Rainworth.

Bingham rural council contributed £130,000 towards the £640,000 cost of the project. In return it gets facilities that would have cost at least twice as much to build independently.

For everyone there is almost an alphabet of sporting activities from archery to weightlifting. Women get a special session, the only one for adults in school time, on Tuesday mornings, when staff mind up to 60 toddlers while perhaps 70 young wives swim and play games.

Mr Alan Jelley, the Sports superintendent, finished playing squash with a miner the other day and said: "Before the sports centre there was nothing to do in Bingham, and it was 10 miles to the nearest amusements. Now we have whole families coming for the day, and they picnic on the soccer field."

Children, mothers and grandmothers filled the sports centre snack bar overlooking two swimming pools, one only three feet deep, and brimming with small children while swimmers disported in the other.

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