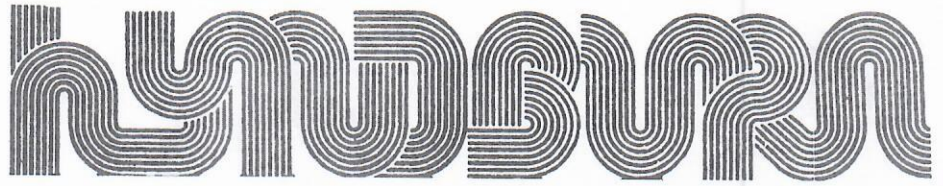


# Hyndburn Borough Council

# CENTRE



## FACILITIES

Sports Hall 33m x 32m; Swimming Pool 25m x 11m; Diving Pool 9m x 9m; Learners' Pool 9m x 9m; Projectile Hall 33m x 12m; Practice Hall 18m x 12m; Function Hall 18m x 13m; Squash Courts (4); Conditioning Room; Sauna and Solarium; Beauty Therapy Suite; Cafe and Lounge Bar; Outdoor Floodlit Area.

## EXAMPLES OF CHARGES

Membership Adult £2.50; Family £6.00.  
Badminton £1.00 per hour per court.  
Squash £1.50 per hour per court.  
Conditioning Room 25p.  
Swimming: adult 23p; child 13p.  
Sauna 75p.  
Solarium 40p per person per session.  
Bowls rink (per hour) 60p peak; £1.00 off peak.  
Half Sports Hall £4.00 per hour.  
Non-members 10p.

In 1973 the constituent districts of Hyndburn embarked on what was to be one of the largest projects of its type in the North West. The decision was taken to build a large multi-purpose sports centre in Church.

During the ensuing period of construction many doubts were expressed about the wisdom of such a decision. Who is going to use the centre? How much will the centre cost to run? Is it not too big? These were just some of the questions being asked.

Most of the doubts about the need to provide such a centre were dispelled soon after the opening. At 5.12 p.m. on Friday, 7th January, 1977, David Lloyd prepared to open the doors to the public for the first time. Unfortunately, the opening ceremony had fallen behind time—the doors were due to open at 5.00 p.m. Outside, several hundred people had gathered and as the doors were opened those inside the building fled for safety.

During that evening and the following day demonstrations were held throughout the centre and the public invited to view the facilities free of charge. Some 20,000 people passed through in those two days providing rather a hectic running in period. From then on, success has followed success, and by the end of the first year of operation there were in excess of 10,000 individual members.

The enormous success of the centre could perhaps be expected. Turning down Henry Street one would not normally expect to find a sparkling new Leisure Centre at the end of such a road, and the centre must have had as stimulating effect on the community as it has on the landscape.

## FACILITIES

The Sports Centre was completed at a cost of £1.2 million and provides first class accommodation. The facilities comprise:

Sports Hall; Pool Hall; 4 Squash Courts; Practice and Function Halls; Conditioning Room; Sauna/Solarium Suite; Cafeteria/Lounge Bar and all weather area. Hyndburn is provided with extensive spectator galleries.

This in itself has advantages in the promotion of the centre, as visitors are able to view activities in all areas and perhaps be attracted to take part themselves. A number of people who visit the centre have no inclination to take part but are content to come along and watch. By becoming a member or by paying a 10p entrance fee they can enjoy excellent spectator facilities.

Unfortunately, this has proved to be a major problem area. The misbehaviour of young people in the first few weeks of operation was such that it was necessary to impose a restriction on entry. This prohibited entry to people under 16 years of age unless accompanied by a responsible adult. The restriction was imposed largely to protect the majority of people who wished to use the centre in the accepted manner. Every encouragement was given to the under 16 age group to come and take part in activities being promoted.

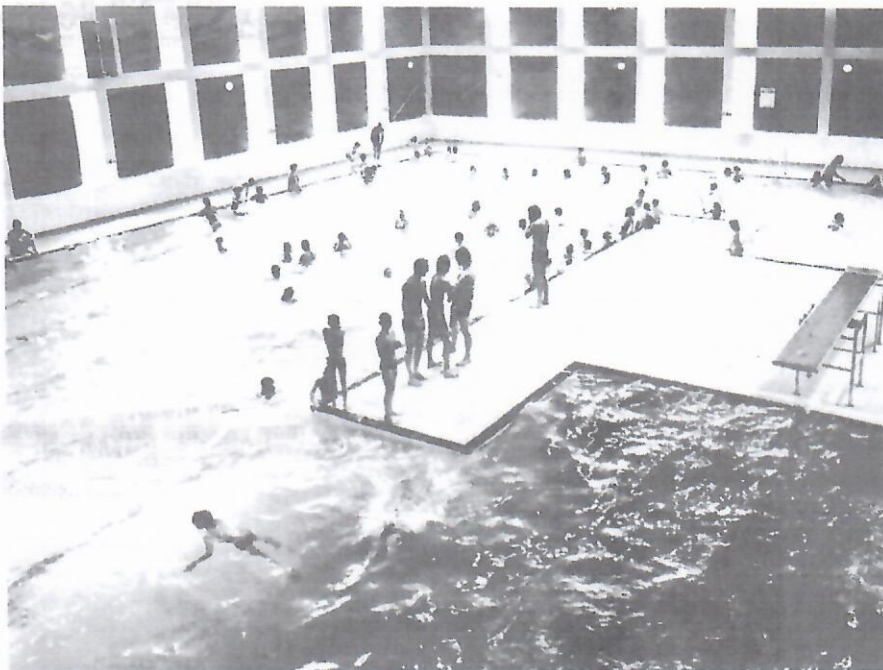
The measures taken proved successful although certain problems continue to arise with the 16 and 17 year olds, and a recommendation to exclude spectators under the age of 18 after 6.00 p.m. is before the Council. The original plan approved by the Council was to make the Sports Centre fully operational and to provide approximately 45 equivalent full time staff.

On receipt of Government instructions to reduce expenditure on this type of service, it was decided to operate on a limited basis and to provide approximately 27 staff. Very soon after the opening it became quite apparent that this level of staffing could not cope with the demands expected of them. In July, 1977, the Council reviewed the staffing position and decided to increase the level to 40.

Midland Catering Ltd, a subsidiary of Grand Metropolitan Hotels Ltd, have been employed throughout the year to run the cafe and bar. The operation has proved most satisfactory. The company are employed on a management fee paying basis. This has enabled the Council to retain full control over the service offered. The caterers have provided the necessary expertise, have been able to buy in goods at bulk purchasing rates, and have taken care of all the administration.

Operating a successful catering service in a Sports Centre is not easy. Customers' requirements vary enormously and with vast numbers passing through each day it is often difficult to maintain a high level of service. Hyndburn feel such problems have been largely overcome by the caterers at the same time producing a profit for the Council.

John Knowles, Recreation and Amenities Officer for the Borough, and Peter Johnson think highly of their existing catering and bar arrangements. Taking into account the difficulties which N.J.C. conditions impose upon a local authority opera-





# FOCUS

# SPORTS CENTRE

tion and the evidence they had of both local authority and concessionaire operations in other centres they sought an alternative. The management agreement which they came to with Midland Catering Ltd, has proved a complete success. Both the standards and the quality have remained excellent. Cost percentage on both the bar and cafeteria have remained on target and the level of profit (all of which comes to the authority) has even made the Treasurers Department raise their eyebrows.

The beauty therapy and massage service is they think a new departure for a local authority. Beauty treatments of face, hands and feet is offered as well as body massage. This service is run in conjunction with the sauna and solarium. The therapist is fully qualified, self-employed and pays no rent for use of the facilities. The authority takes all the income and pays an agreed percentage to the therapist—a mutual incentive scheme.

The centre has attempted to offer a broad programme appealing to the whole community. A host of special events have been arranged and most recently a folk concert was held with an audience of over 1000. The centre is to hold the first round of the Laing Badminton Grand Prix (the first badminton tournament with prize money) on 6th and 7th October. A visit to the centre reveals a high standard of cleanliness and maintenance. This reflects the management's enthusiasm to attract and satisfy customers. Hyndburn Sports Centre was highly recommended in the North West Region Assessment for the Sports Council's Award for Sports Centre Management. This certainly seems to be a well deserved accolade.

## FACTS AND FIGURES

Cost of building £1.2m (1977).  
1978-79 Estimated Expenditure (including debt charges) £430,961.  
Estimated Receipts (including County Council contribution) £156,600.  
Nett expenditure £274,361.  
Annual usage in excess of ½ million.



Creche facilities

*A regular series in which the Editor reports on a Centre managed by an Association Member. Based on a visit made to the Centre shortly after it opened.*

### MANAGEMENT TEAM MANAGER — Peter Johnson (A.R.M.M.).

Appointed March, 1975, as Section Head — Recreation, consequently being Manager is somewhat of a part-time job with the rest of his time being required to develop the Council's other recreation facilities. Previously having worked in Blackburn and at the Light-foot Sports Centre, Newcastle-upon-Tyne after four years teaching P.E. Enjoys most sports but claims to be an acknowledged expert in none. Feels old at thirty-one.

### ASSISTANT MANAGER — Mary Richardson (A.R.M.M.)

Has provided the feminine point of view, if it can be claimed that they have one, and been with the centre since its opening. A keen sports person in her younger days, has worked in administration in industry and immediately prior to this appointment was Assistant Sports Organiser at Shadworth Centre in Blackburn.

### ASSISTANT MANAGER — Geoff Pickles (M.I.B.M.)

Geoff has also been with the centre since it opened and was previously the Baths Manager for Hyndburn. His knowledge and experience has contributed greatly towards the development of the centre, and his leisure pursuits prove of great interest to all the staff.

### SPORTS ORGANISER — Eugene Erne (A.R.M.A.)

Appointed when the centre opened as a Supervisor and promoted to Sports Organiser, since that time has established a comprehensive and successful programme of both sporting and entertainment activities. Prior to his appointment taught P.E. in Northern Ireland, and thought that working in a Sports Centre would be easier than living in Belfast.

### CATERING AND BAR MANAGER — Ray Newton

Ray is employed by Midland Catering Ltd, and in his previous capacity as a Sales Consultant had negotiated the 'management agreement' with the authority. When appointed to this post he was put in the embarrassing position for any 'salesman' of having to live up to his extravagant claims and this he has undoubtedly done.



Main sports hall



Cafeteria



"Getting to grips with spectator events."